



Inside of the McDonnell Avenue Apartments



Newly Renovated Covenant Square Apartments

Entering the McDonnell Avenue Apartments



Gulf Shores Apartments – Available to residents 62 and older

BHA now providing more housing, services than before the hurricane



By Delmar P. Robinson
Chairman, Biloxi
Housing Authority

The Biloxi Housing Authority was created on May 26, 1939. For almost 70 years, the authority has been the agency for affordable and public housing for the citizens of

Biloxi, serving the mission of providing safe, decent, sanitary and affordable housing to the residents of the City of Biloxi. The agency is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The Biloxi Housing Authority has enjoyed another successful year, achieving one of our major goals by surpassing the number of public housing units in operation before Hurricane Katrina.

In 1994, the Biloxi Housing Authority had 912 public housing units. As part of the rehabilitation of public housing through a \$35 million HOPE VI grant, 433 units were demolished to make way for the new HOPE VI development.

Immediately before Hurricane Katrina, the Biloxi Housing Authority had 474 public housing units online. On August 30, 2005, only 202 habitable units had survived the storm. However, as of March 10, 2009, the Biloxi Housing Authority has 656 occupied rental units, and 39 homeownership units (8 units have been sold) with an additional 162 units coming on line by March 31, 2009. As of April 2009, the Biloxi Housing Authority will have housing to assist a total of 818 families.

We are also currently in a partnership with a private developer that will result in the construction of 354 single-family Low Income Housing Tax Credit units. Construction of those units will be completed by the end of 2009. By the end of 2009, the Biloxi

Housing Authority will have 1,172 units of rental housing online.

Among the new units on line is the recently purchased Gulf Shores Apartments on Atkinson Road, which will be home to 100 seniors-only (62 years and older) public housing units. Also new to the Biloxi Housing Authority is the McDonnell Avenue Apartments, which will be home to 162 families.

We have also increased the number of Housing Choice Vouchers (formerly known as "Section 8 Vouchers") from 199 before Hurricane Katrina, to 427 as of March 2009.

The Biloxi Housing Authority sold its first HOPE VI Bayview Oaks Homeownership Unit this year. Bayview Oaks homeownership units are available to those earning 80 percent or less of the Area Median Income. If anyone is interested in finding out if they qualify to purchase one of these homes, they should contact Hunter McClure, Development Coordinator at the Biloxi Housing Authority, at (228) 374-7771 ext. 213.

This year we also completed the Bayview Place rental phase of HOPE VI, as well as the Cadet Point Senior Village. Bayview Place consists of 196 family rental units, and the Cadet Point Senior Village is home to 76 seniors (55 years old and over). If you are interested in renting a unit at Bayview Place or the Cadet Point Senior Village, please contact Sharon Ray or Wendy Hering at (228) 436-7767.

We have also been busy expanding the services offered to our residents through our many partnerships with local non-profit organizations. We have partnered with Bethel Clinic to open a free health clinic at our Suncoast Villa development. The clinic offers free routine health related services to the public. We have also partnered with HOPE Credit Union, which will offer credit union services to our residents, with no cost to join.

Homeownership education is being offered through

referrals to Visions of Hope and Mercy Housing, and we have partnered with Moore Community House, which will open an Early Head Start Center on the grounds of our Bayview Place community.

Through a partnership with the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation we are working on a revitalization plan for parts of east Biloxi devastated by Hurricane Katrina, and are working on plans to develop homeownership and rental opportunities in that area.

We partner with numerous groups daily in our development efforts as well. Among those agencies are Habitat for Humanity of the Gulf Coast, Mercy Housing, Back Bay Mission, the United Way, Gulf Coast Renaissance Corporation, LISC, Enterprise Corporation of the Delta, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and numerous financial and business partners.

The Biloxi Housing Authority was also recently awarded an additional \$1.46 million under President Barack Obama's stimulus package for capital improvement projects for public housing units.

Through a grant provided by Enterprise Community Partners, the Biloxi Housing Authority recently commissioned Novogradac & Company to perform a Rental Housing Market Study. The study revealed that there is still a great need for housing to serve the very low income and elderly populations. This has helped to clarify and reinforce our mission of providing safe, decent and affordable housing to the residents of the City of Biloxi.

If you are interested in applying for public housing, you may apply on Wednesdays between 8:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. and 4 p.m. at the Beatrice Brown Community Center, which is on George Quint Circle just behind our main office on Benachi Avenue. The Housing Choice Voucher waiting list is currently closed.