

WCRA In Action!

Spring 2006

Meeting Washington's affordable housing needs through partnership

News and Views:

Ground Swells in 2006

By Judy Reed

Olympia proved to be a particularly challenging place for the Governor and our legislators this year. As the result of a dynamic real estate industry and a growing economy, they were faced with the unusual dilemma of dealing with abundance! The many hours of hearings, discussion and debate this session, gave strong evidence that deciding how to handle a surplus of revenues is equally as difficult as dealing with revenue shortfalls. Balancing immediate vs. future needs and insuring that a broad range of interests are served, is a fine line to walk. I commend our elected representatives for stepping up and making some difficult choices.

Fortunately for the residents of this State, those choices did not leave out the housing needs of the lower income and special needs members of our community. Thanks to the leadership of the Washington State Low Income Housing Alliance, the hard work of advocates in all parts of the State and the support of members of both parties in the Legislature, we gained new ground on which to build toward the solution to the housing crisis in our State. The gains this year include:

- \$121 million for the Housing Trust Fund, the largest biennial appropriation since it was created;
- Legislation which empowers local governments to create incentive programs to encourage the development of affordable housing;
- An increase to the Washington State Housing Finance Commission's debt limit, resulting in \$1.5 billion in new bonding authority!

These gains join the solid ground we have been building over many years, ground that has created an island of hope in a sea of need. In this moment, let's take a deep breath, acknowledge what has been accomplished and thank those that made it possible. A deep breath, a moment.....and then it's back to work laying the groundwork and preparing the way for 2007.



Judy Reed, President

Property Profile:

The Urban Rest Stop Revisited

By Amy E. Besunder



Men and women line up before the sun rises to use the facilities at Urban Rest Stop.

Supporters of the Urban Rest Stop (URS), a public hygiene facility in downtown Seattle, knew from the get-go that the facility was going to be busy but no one could have predicted just how busy it would be. Before the sun rises, men and women line up waiting to shower and prepare for their days. Many of URS clients have jobs they need to get to. Access to restrooms, laundry facilities, and personal hygiene supplies are essential to their employability.

“Over sixty percent of the people who visit URS hold minimum wage jobs,” says Ronni Gilboa, Facilities Manager. “They don’t make enough to keep an apartment so they come to us from the shelters each morning. The problem is we’re operating at full capacity. For every one person we serve we wind up turning away three or four.”

As a result of the great demand, the Low Income Housing Institute, a dynamic nonprofit housing organization dedicated to improving the lives of low-income and home-

less people, has launched a capital campaign geared at raising the funds necessary to expand URS. They will soon renovate the third and final storefront in the building thus increasing the waiting area, doubling laundry capacity, and adding a women’s restroom. They also plan to open a part-time public healthcare center, with a half-time nurse on duty.

The Urban Rest Stop estimates that it has served over 19,000 individuals since opening its doors in March of 2000. Gilboa believes demand is increasing and that expanding alone won’t solve the problem. “Urban Rest Stop can serve as a model,” she suggests. “Having other hygiene centers open throughout the city using the same principles we’ve put in place here would be ideal.”

When asked what has affected her the most about her work at URS, Gilboa reflects on the nature of the patrons. “I am truly surprised by the amazing grace of our clients. The respect they show for the facilities, our staff, and each other is humbling.”

The Urban Rest Stop was collaboratively financed through low income housing and historic tax credits, funding from the City of Seattle, Federal Home Loan Bank, Downtown Seattle Association, a Seattle Community Development Block grant and the WCRA.

URS is looking for paperback books, periodicals, and graphic novels. Should you be in a position to donate any of these items, please contact Ronni Gilboa at 206-332-0110 to arrange delivery. To contribute to the expansion effort, contact LIHI at 206-443-9935.

The Lending Queue:

Your Customers, Our Economic Development Products

By Susan M. Duren

Our member banks are the eyes and ears of their communities and we rely on their input for “on the ground” economic development loan and bond referrals. In addition to our affordable rental housing programs, we have loan and bond financing for economic development. The program was originated to give emphasis to those communities where economic development loans are most difficult to obtain and, as with all our programs, to mitigate any risks by using a WCRA loan pool.

The products are available for acquisition, rehabilitation and permanent long term loans in areas that qualify as economic revitalization of a community, serve a low income population or properties occupied partially or in full, by a nonprofit developer. Property types include commercial, public facilities, retail or warehouse. Some examples of uses include a food bank, day care center or senior center or any other community supportive or service oriented facility or related office space.

The loans/bonds are available with up to a 15-year

maturity and a maximum 30-year amortization at a fixed interest rate for the term. The interest rates are based on a “like term” treasury plus an approved margin. Short term loans for acquisition are available with no prepayment penalty when the loan is paid in full. There is no short term bond opportunity. Unlike the WCRA economic development loan pool, all bond transactions require that members commit to fund on a transaction-by-transaction basis.

The WCRA wants to provide financing for the whole community. We are sure that housing and economic development go hand in hand to help create long-standing, viable and sustainable communities around the State of Washington.

Susan M. Duren is Vice President and Director of Lending for the WCRA. She is a board member of the Office of Rural and Farmworker Housing as well as the Downtown Action to Save Housing. She is a member of an Impact Capital Regional Credit Committee, the King County Credit Enhancement Committee, the WA State Policy Advisory Committee and the CTED Housing Trust Fund Credit Committee.



NOTES OF INTEREST:

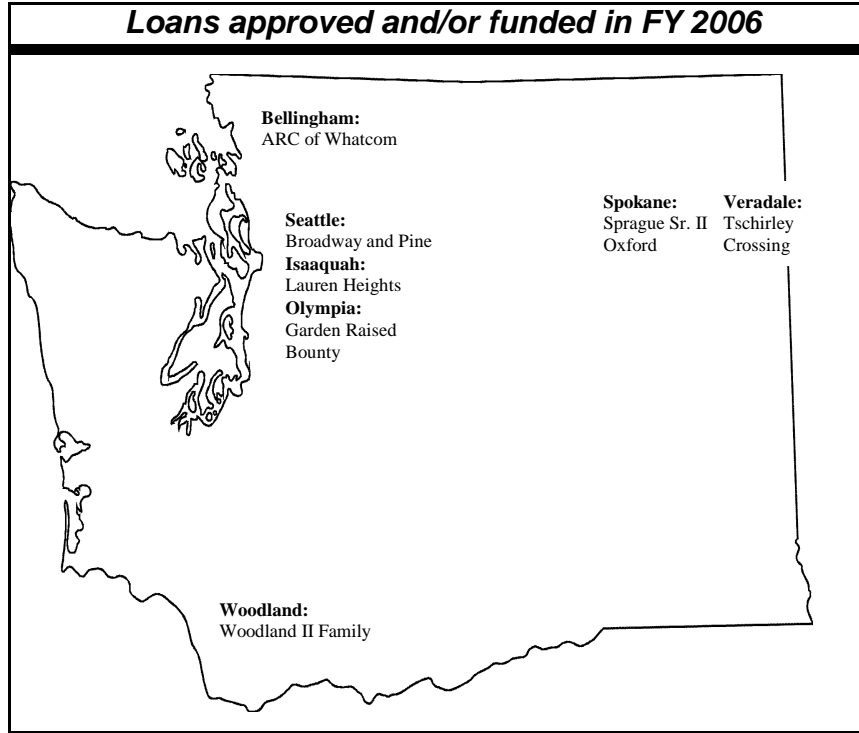
- A new board was elected at the 2006 Annual Meeting of the Members, held February the 3rd, at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, Seattle Branch. The **2006 Board** consists of the following directors:

Chair	James A. Boora , Anchor Bank
Vice Chair	Judith Olsen , Wells Fargo Bank
Secretary	Loren Dixon , Banner Bank
Treasurer	John R. Swanson , U.S. Bank
President	Judy Reed , WCRA
	Larry Burke , Key Bank
	Stephen Buxbaum , WA State DCTED
	Michael Dotson , Bank of America
	Paul Edwards , Washington State Housing Finance Commission
	M.A. Leonard , The National Equity Fund, Inc.
	Karen McCormick , First Federal S & L of Port Angeles
	Robert Morris , Washington Mutual
	Bill Richards , Sterling Savings Bank

- Please join us in welcoming **1st Security Bank of Washington and Cathay Bank** to the WCRA. We are happy to have them as new members.
- The WCRA recently completed an expansion of our office. Please drop in and see our new digs!

2006 Members

1st Security Bank of WA
 American Marine Bank
 AmericanWest Bank
 Anchor Bank
 Bank of America
 Bank of the Pacific
 Bank of the West
 Banner Bank
 Cascade Bank
 Cashmere Valley Bank
 Cathay Bank
 Charter Bank
 City Bank
 Columbia Bank
 Columbia River Bank
 The Commerce Bank
 of WA, N.A.
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2006 Members

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 Sterling Savings Bank
 Timberland Bank
 Union Bank of California
 U.S. Bank
 Venture Bank
 Washington Federal
 Savings
 Washington First
 International Bank
 Washington Mutual Bank
 Washington Trust Bank
 Wells Fargo Bank
 West Coast Bank
 Whidbey Island Bank
 Yakima Federal S&L Assn.

WCRA In Action! is published for WCRA's members and friends. It contains member and project profiles, CRA-related topics, and other items of interest about affordable housing in Washington. Please contact the editor, Amy E. Besunder at abesunder@wcra.net with any comments or suggestions.

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