

News Release

National American Indian Housing Council



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NAIHC Chairman Promotes Tribal Housing as Economic Development Tool;

In speech at NCAI convention on building self-sufficient Indian nations

SACRAMENTO, CA (10-05-06) — The Chairman of the National American Indian Housing Council spoke on the importance of robust housing programs at the National Congress of American Indians 63rd Annual Convention in Sacramento today. Marty Shuravloff, who is also Executive Director of Kodiak Island Housing Authority in Alaska, saluted tribal self-determination as key to housing and socio-economic gains of recent years, while acknowledging that Native communities are still far from parity.

“Housing creates economic opportunities because it employs people to build houses and manage and maintain housing developments in their communities,” said Shuravloff, who is a member of the Leisnoi Village in Alaska. “Housing also generates activity in related industries and services.” Further, households in Indian Country represent a mortgage market potential of \$257 billion, he said, citing a study released by the Fannie Mae Foundation in 2004. Unleashing that market would foster economic development, which would, in turn, bolster further housing improvement, generating a cycle of job and wealth creation. Construction alone would employ 9,000 workers. Full realization of the mortgage market potential would create 50,000 new jobs, \$1.1 billion in additional income, and \$1.4 billion in wealth annually, according to the study.

Leveraging for Expanded Value

The above numbers derive in part from the fact that modern economy runs on credit—and a house, over time, can be a valuable resource or asset to borrow against, Shuravloff explained.

“It is how families can leverage their resources,” he said. “And when tribal housing authorities leverage their basic funds to gain access to more funds, in order to do larger housing projects, they are operating on the same principle,” as envisioned in the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (NAHASDA), he explained. With that in mind, tribal housing leaders must continue to get creative with their Native American Housing Block Grant, their primary resource, which is administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Shuravloff advised, noting that NAHBG funds can be combined with those of other federal agencies such as USDA’s Rural Development; State Housing Finance Agency programs, such as Low-Income Housing Tax Credits; HOME funds; New Markets Tax

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Credits; and homeownership vouchers and private sector financing through the Government Sponsored Entities: Fannie Mae, Ginnie Mae, and the Federal Home Loan Banks.

“I just cannot overemphasize the importance of leveraging as a source of adding capital to your housing development strategy,” he said.

Collaboration Is Key

Housing can most assuredly be a vehicle for economic development through collaboration with public and private entities, said Shuravloff.

“We need to work closely with the federal family, particularly HUD’s Office of Native American Programs. I am a proponent of greater collaboration. I am pleased to be able to tell you that collaboration has already begun.”

Just last Friday, Shuravloff reported, two NAIHC field staff representatives met with ONAP’s Director of Loan Guarantee to map a strategic collaboration to help tribes and housing organizations develop housing plans that include the considered use of ONAP’s Section 184 and Title VI programs, which encourage private lending institutions to invest in tribal communities and households. NAIHC has been promoting awareness of HUD’s 184 program and training extensively for the past 8 years.

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The National American Indian Housing Council assists tribes and tribal housing entities in reaching their self-determined goals of providing culturally relevant, decent, safe, sanitary, and quality affordable housing for Native people in Indian communities and Alaska Native villages.

“A Tradition of Native American Housing”

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