

**Important Information About our Newsletter:** You will notice that the format of our newsletter has changed. Beginning with the March newsletter, we will no longer be sending hard copies of the newsletters with the project worksheets. The newsletter will be sent via email, and it will also be posted to the Maine Rural Development Internet website at [www.rurdev.usda.gov/me](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/me). Once you access the website, click on the multi-family housing link to view general information about our MFH program and then click on the newsletter link on the left-hand side of the page to view the current and/or previous editions of the newsletter.

In order to build an email distribution list, we have attached a form that needs to be completed and returned to this office. Emily Farkas in Public Affairs will be maintaining the email distribution list as well as emailing out the newsletters. You may send her your mailing address to continue to receive this newsletter at [emily.farkas@me.usda.gov](mailto:emily.farkas@me.usda.gov).

**Whether we are emailing you this newsletter or you are viewing it at our website, we cannot stress enough how important it is for you and your staff to read these newsletters and utilize the information provided. Topics include problems we may be seeing, experiences of other managers that could happen to you to, links to resources that may aid you in the management of your properties, and other pieces in information relative to the multi-family housing program in general. If you are using the information and reminders that are provided, it will make everybody's job a little easier in the long run.**

### Rural Development Welcomes New Multi-Family Housing Specialist

State Director Michael W. Aube is pleased to announce the selection of Mr. Robert Nadeau as the new MFH Specialist for the Maine State Office. Mr. Nadeau was born and raised in Maine and received his B.S. Degree from the University of Maine at Orono. After graduation, he began his work with USDA Rural Development. He has worked in California, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Florida, where he currently resides. He is looking forward to learning more about the Multi-Family Housing Program in Maine and the challenges facing our aging portfolio. Mr. Nadeau will start his new job on March 8.

**Circle the Date!**

March							2004
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
28	29	30	31				

### Rural Development Wishes Trudy Best Wishes on Her Retirement

**Yes, Trudy Ellis is REALLY Retiring!**

March 3, 2004, will be the last workday for Trudy Ellis of the Lewiston Area Office. For the past seven years, the Multi-Family Housing Program has been privileged to have her as part of our staff. She has put in her time, and we have not been able to convince her to stay one day longer! **Best Wishes, Trudy!**

### Maintenance Seminar

A Maintenance Seminar, "Doing It Right" is coming to the Augusta Civic Center on Tuesday, April 27, 2004. A pamphlet is enclosed for your information. As always we recommend you register early as seating is limited.

Look for this  
item on our  
Website

[www.rurdev.usda.gov/me](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/me)

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## **A Warning about Theft from Project Accounts**

We recently received correspondence from a management agent who thought it might be worthwhile to share a recent experience of his with other housing managers. A recent bank statement for this project's Tenant Security Account showed several electronic payments. Knowing they do not use that type of service, the management company contacted the bank. The bank indicated that these checks were processed by a web-based check paying company and that the checks went to a name that sounded questionable.

After turning this matter over to the local Sheriff's Office, further investigation revealed the name of the person who had accessed a tenant security deposit check and took the information from it. The management agent did not recognize this individual as a former tenant. The only information needed to commit this crime was the bank's routing number and the account number, which are right on the check. Be aware of how easy it is for someone to commit fraud, and be diligent in verifying account transactions.

## **Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act**

The Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act was established to protect those who serve in the Armed Forces. Recent deployments require that management be aware of these protections as they apply to tenants at Rural Development properties.

Administrative Notice (AN) No. 3846 provides guidance on this issue. This and other AN's are available on our Rural Development regulations website at <http://rdinit.usda.gov/regis/>.



## **Arts and Rural Community Assistance Grants Now Available**

The National Endowment for the Arts, the Forest Service, and the North East State Foresters Association (FS) have announced the opportunity for Arts and Rural Community Assistance Grants for arts-based rural community development projects eligible under FS Economic Action Programs (EAP) guidelines.

The grants will be available to communities, organizations, and artists in the rural, forest-based communities in Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont. Application information is enclosed for your information. The deadline for submission of proposals is March 1, 2004.

## **Revision to January's Item Titled: Are your Management Documents Up To Date?**

We would like to remind you to review the expiration dates of your Management Agreements, Management Plans, Identity of Interest forms, and Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plans (AFHMP). You should also determine if any changes need to be made at this time.

Has your annual marketing per your AFHMP been completed? Please take a few minutes to review the above plans and agreements to make sure they are renewed on a timely basis.

## **REMINDER: Faxes are the Exception**

Recently the CPC has noticed an increased number of faxed tenant certifications. We would like to remind you that **faxing of tenant certifications should be the exception, NOT the rule.** Please ensure that your tenant certifications are submitted in a timely manner either through Industry Interface/MINC or by mail.

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