IRHA POLICY UPDATE:

IRHA Donation Policy Update:

During the annual March 2018 Board of Commissioners regular meeting the IRHA donation policy was amended by the Board of Commissioners. Prior to the amendment the allowable donation amount was $250 for donations which include: regular donations, burial assistance and other exceptional circumstances. The current donation policy now states the allowable donation amount is $200 for regular donations, burial assistance and other exceptional circumstances.

IRHA will continue to provide donations per policy until December 31st, 2018. IRHA will no longer provide donations to the public starting in 2019.

SEEKING

IRHA has an open recruitment for the Fairbanks area and is accepting applicants for the 2018 Construction season. IRHA is seeking Carpenters, Laborers, and Electricians.

Applications are held on a calendar year basis. To be considered for the 2018 season please submit an application.

Applications can be accessed through the website at www.irha.org or are available at the main office.

Other vacant positions will be posted to the IRHA website and Facebook page.

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Spring is always an exciting time in the Interior with the brightest days yet to come. The spring and summer is a busy time for our communities as we start to prepare for spring cleanup, fishing, gathering and hunting. Blessings of safety, wellness, abundance and prosperity to all. Let us share together, teach one another, be patient with each other, and let us all be respectful. The renewal of life is a hopeful promise for what lies ahead.

The same can be said of this time of year at IRHA. We are busy as ever here at the main office preparing for the upcoming season and the new and exciting developments of what lies ahead. Several staff members have had the honor of traveling to many of the communities we serve this season. IRHA would like to express our gratitude and thanks to all of you for the generous out pour of hospitality. We are all looking to the future with positive energy to serve each community in the most beneficial capacity.

I would like to thank our staff for their dedication and innovative contributions that has provided IRHA the opportunity to build six-star energy efficient homes.

The building science IRHA is utilizing is cutting edge technology that allows us to build efficient and affordable homes. With investing up front in the design process and research of energy efficiency for each home, this offers an opportunity of long term savings to the families we serve. IRHA will continue to be attentive to the evolving technology being developed to maintain our commitment of providing six-star homes.

Our Board of Commissioners recently reviewed the adopted 2017-2020 strategic plan in December of 2017. From this review there were several important changes that were implemented as key components to help better serve our communities. The Board of Commissioners identified the need to increase service lines and expand the available activities to those we serve. The staff here is diligently working on program requirements and concepts to offer to our communities.
Teisha Simmons was elected to the IRHA Board of Commissioners in March 2018 for Commissioner Seat B. The term expires March 2021. Teisha is a tribal member of the Louden & Huslia Tribes. She has strong family ties in Galena, Koyukuk and Huslia. Teisha worked in senior management positions throughout her professional career but now has her own private consulting business. She has a Master’s degree in Psychology from the University of Alaska Fairbanks and is a past member of the Doyon Limited Board, the Doyon Foundation Board, and the Alaska Statewide Independent Living Council. Teisha has previously served on the Interior Regional Housing Authority Board. Teisha is the mother of a 13-year-old daughter.

METHAMPHETAMINE PROBLEMS IN ALASKA

By Stephan Roberts

Methamphetamine is the most seized drug in native communities throughout the United States. In 2016, meth related seizure increased by 106% over 2015 totals, and is not getting better. One major problem with meth use is the moving of meth and residue from property to property. This can contaminate vehicles, hotel rooms, and anywhere it is used or transported. One individual who uses meth can contaminate up to 50 homes per year, by residue, smoking, and other forms of contact. Children crawling and playing on contaminated floors and furniture absorb the most particulates compared to adults. They can develop respiratory problems and behavior problems which are similar to asthma and ADHD.

We want to stop this process before any problems occur.

Crystal meth can be made out of your common household ingredients. The ingredients are mixed and cooked together to make meth and the harmful chemical mixtures remain in the house until it is physically removed.

IRHA has recently started conducting meth testing and decontamination. IRHA has seen the need and took a proactive approach to provide certified staff. We want to provide a safe and clean living environment for homeowners and their families.

Our process starts with an initial test. We then would remove all belongings in the home. We will try to save anything irreplaceable such as family pictures and family heirlooms. Next we would do a spraying and scrubbing process using a chemical product formulated for removing meth residue. We would repeat the process until we remove the contamination. Finally, we would start the home rehabilitation process. This is a tough process, especially for the homeowner, but necessary for the family’s safety and health.

IRHA WELCOMES
OUR NEWEST BOARD MEMBER

By Stephan Roberts

One program requirement to take note of is IRHA recently changed the homeownership programs base minimum income. Homeowners will now be required to have a minimum income of $20,000.00 per year. This will facilitate the success of families owning their home.

In effort to assure needs are met and to promote self-sufficiency within each sub-region, IRHA develops projects by tribal resolutions, therefore tailoring each community activity to specific needs requested by the Tribes. Our objective for this upcoming planning season will be attracting a larger network of partners to work together to invest in mutual projects that are directly related to housing in turn positively contributing to the people and the communities.

IRHA is always open to the community member’s ideas and positive solutions to aid in increasing our services to you. We encourage your voice and will be offering many opportunities for tribal input to enhance our level of services as we ARE and want to continue to be the housing authority of choice in the interior.

IRHA would like to thank all of the Tribal Leaders and tribal members for welcoming our staff and Board of Commissioners into your communities and homes. By traveling to communities, we have an understanding of the challenges each community faces and how we can work together to support one another to offer housing opportunities and support self-sufficiency through housing. We want to ensure that we remain flexible in our growth strategy as the seasons and needs of our communities change and we could not do it without the input and direction from all of you.

IRHA’s commitment to our region is about much more than just acquisitions and construction, which are very important but equally important is homeownership opportunities and investing in our people. By providing a safe and healthy home to a family it in turn creates an environment for stability and growth to foster a stronger future for our children. It reminds me of spring and how one seed planted will grow, thrive, and strengthen over time.

Jana George
Chief Executive Officer
I have had the privilege of working for Interior Regional Housing Authority going on 7 years. I have seen the homes we build become more efficient for the homeowner, which is the goal of IRHA. We have managed to bring the cost of the construction down and the quality up. The sustainability of a home is very important, especially here in Alaska and is paramount to the quality of the home.

“*The best thing I can say about an IRHA home, is as a builder, if I were to build a new home for anyone in my family, I would absolutely use the same building methods used by IRHA.*”

The difference of an IRHA home and other homes built along the same style; starts with the beginning of construction. We have found that using a foam SIP (structurally insulated panel) wall with an R-38 minimum rating along with an R-60+ of cellulose in the ceiling makes our homes super insulated. With using these, it brings the cost of living lower for the homeowner. Anyone living in Alaska especially in a remote village knows this is very important.

We are achieving an energy rating of 6 Star on our homes due to the SIP panel system, the insulation in the ceiling, and using windows and doors rated for Alaska’s cold winters. I feel we are bringing our homeowners the best quality of homes. Not only with our insulation but the HRV systems are providing the proper humidity levels, thus allowing air exchanges to constantly provide fresh clean air inside while exhausting the stale air out.

The best thing I can say about an IRHA home is, as a builder, if I were to build a new home for anyone in my family, I would absolutely use the same building methods used by IRHA. I feel that I would be building the best, safest, and cost-efficient home for my family.

“The best thing I can say about an IRHA home, is as a builder, if I were to build a new home for anyone in my family, I would absolutely use the same building methods used by IRHA.”

Building Better for Alaska

By Albert Lawson

### Self-Help Program Update

By Jolene Malamute

If you haven’t heard yet, the Self-Help program is being improved. The basic requirements now are: (1) land ownership; (2) income eligibility; (3) proof of tribal enrollment.

To be approved for the program, you no longer need the foundation and four walls. If you are interested, contact your Tribe if the program isn’t already open in your village.

Some things to consider if you would like to apply are: get familiar with the application and gather the required documentation because once the Tribe decides to offer the program, the process can take up to 3 months.

In the meantime, start designing a floor plan, creating a list of materials, and setting a financial timeline. Preparation is key and be mindful that the expected project completion for the Self-Help is two years. Contact IRHA’s Planning and Housing Department for more details about the program.

### 504 Home Repair Loan/Grant Program

504 Repair Loans and Grants provide funds to elderly and low-income homeowners to remove health and safety hazards, perform necessary repairs, improve or modernize a home, make homes accessible for people with disabilities, or make homes more energy efficient.

For more information on the 504 Home Repair Program please contact: Jane Gibson, Interior Area Director @ 479-6767 ext. 103 or Spud Williams, Area Loan Specialist, @ 479-6767 ext. 102

### Scattered Sites

ANTHC provides private homeowners and entire communities with installing wells and septic systems. Contact ANTHC at this address or phone number:

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
Division of Environmental Health & Engineering
4500 Diplomacy Drive, Suite 454
Anchorage, Alaska 99508
(907)729-3600
You can visit their webpage for more information at: https://anthc.org/clean-water-and-sanitation

### 502 Direct & 502 Guaranteed Loan Programs

**The 502 Direct Loan Program Assists Low-Income Applicants to Obtain Decent, Safe and Sanitary Housing in Eligible Rural Areas by Providing Payment Assistance to Increase an Applicant’s Repayment Ability.**

**The 502 Guaranteed Loan Program Assists Approved Lenders in Providing Low- and Moderate-Income Households the Opportunity to Own Adequate, Modest, Decent, Safe and Sanitary Dwellings as Their Primary Residence in Eligible Rural Areas.**

For more information on either the 502 Direct or 502 Guaranteed Loan Programs please contact: Jane Gibson, Interior Area Director @ 479-6767 ext. 103
IRHA installs LED lights - we use a commercial grade Lithonia light fixture that has a proven track record listed to run 50,000 hours. IRHA installs LED lights.

For years IRHA has been installing BRK safety devices as their lifetime is 10 years compared to other devices that only last 5 years. We replace regular batteries with Lithium batteries to get a longer life span. We install combination Fire Alarm/CO2 devices as we want redundant CO2 protection.

The breakers and panel boards we use are commercial grade as well. IRHA installs only grade Square D gear, and we insist upon GFCI breakers on the heat trace. We install a GFCI breaker, per the National Electrical Code (NEC), on the heat trace using a 30 ma breaker which cost about $250 dollars. These breakers protect the heat trace from shorting out and starting a fire. Heat trace, has been the culprit of many house fires, they are often installed incorrectly and the electrical grounds cut off, so it’s very important to use GFCI breakers to protect against fire.

Another added value we have been installing on many of the new construction projects are generator plugs. Recently, electrical suppliers have come out with an interlock so a homeowner can feed their house power with a generator. We’ve been installing a plug outside where a homeowner can plug in their own generator, if the power goes out.

Focusing on safety, we insure a fire rated door on the mechanical room is installed as well as 5/8” sheetrock on the ceiling. These 2 items alone help with fire safety aspect of the house. We also use a 3/8” thick fire rated paneling in the interior of the house, which is more expensive, but aids in the safety of the homeowner.

For the mechanical work IRHA installs HRV’s in all new construction projects, they balance the pressure of the home and produce a healthy indoor air quality. We have found that fans, fresh 80’s and fresh 100’s do not work because homes are too airtight and can cause potential mold issues.

Using boilers and baseboard heat on all our projects provide adequate heat throughout the house, including the back corners of the bedrooms, closets and under bathtubs, where cold spots can cause frost and lead to mold build up. Also keeping the fins open on the top part of the baseboard will make sure you’re getting the adequate convectional heat.

Zone valves seem to have a 3 year lifespan, by eliminating use of the zone valves and moving to a circulating pump this has produced a lower failure rate and provides a long lasting heating source. Installing a circulating pump on your water main keeps the water flowing which gives the homeowner the opportunity to shut off their heat trace and save money on electricity. It is also good to use your heat trace when you know you may be gone for long periods of time to keep water from freezing.

By providing these additional features, we are adding durability and sustainability to the home.

In conclusion, we want to provide the best materials to make our homes affordable for the homeowners and make these projects something we all can be proud of for years to come.

For more information please contact the IRHA construction staff at (907) 452-8315 or 1-800-478-IRHA (4742).