

## News Release

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### Western Arizona Council of Governments honored at 2010 Brian Mickelsen Housing Hero Awards

**Tucson** – At a mid-day luncheon during the Seventh Annual Arizona Housing Forum, the Western Arizona Council of Governments (WACOG) will be recognized with a Housing Hero Award. With six different categories, the awards serve to recognize individuals and organizations who exhibit exemplary efforts to support affordable housing for moderate and low-income Arizona families and support individuals in the community dealing with a myriad of housing issues. The award recognitions will feature Arizona Republic journalist Catherine Reagor as emcee, and will be held at the J.W. Marriot Starr Pass, in Tucson.

The awards are named in honor of the outstanding service that the late Brian Mickelsen shared with the Arizona Housing Finance Authority and serves as a lasting tribute to the former Cottonwood city manager's public service.

For their great work in their local communities WACOG was deserving of the **Outstanding Local Housing Program Award** which recognizes the efforts of a local program that creates, improves, or promotes affordable housing. The housing programs offered by WACOG focuses on: deposit, rent and mortgage assistance, homelessness prevention services, housing counseling programs, owner-occupied emergency repairs, owner-occupied housing rehabilitation, weatherization, and appliance replacement program. In 2009 alone WACOG was able to provide nearly 5,000 households with direct assistance. Many of these services are supported by grants received through the Arizona Department of Housing.

Through new and innovative programs, WACOG is able to expand and reach out to more individuals and their support continues to grow each year. Their new program in Yuma County, designed to combine energy conservation with affordable housing in a multi-phased mixed income setting of single-family homes and condominiums, already has

plans for expansion to La Paz and Mohave counties and is expected to benefit over 20,000 individuals in 2010.

**Additional 2010 Honorees:**

Additional annual housing awards will be presented in five other categories. The San Carlos Apache Housing Authority will receive the **Tribal Initiatives Award** recognizing their achievements to help meet the housing needs of tribal members in Arizona and for their collaboration with the Arizona Department of Housing and the LIHTC program, for the building and rehabilitation of nearly \$27 million dollars of housing in a five-year period.

The **Superior Sustainable Design Award** will be awarded to GreenStreet Development for their creative and innovative ways of developing cost affordable units, in the Phoenix area, that are energy efficient; with the end goal of creating environmental friendly and sustainable communities for the future.

Project H3 will be recognized with the **Innovative Partnerships Award** for their innovative and creative strategies to help fight homelessness and their continued dedication to providing valuable resources for those in the homeless community.

The **Exemplary Multifamily Project Award** will be presented to McCarty on Monroe for the construction of an affordable housing complex for low income seniors in the downtown Phoenix area.

The final annual award, **Arthur Crozier Partner in Housing Award**, will recognize Helen Hudgens Ferrell for her lifetime of service and commitment to improving the lives of Flagstaff's low-income and homeless residents.

**About the 2010 Housing Forum:**

Now in its seventh year, the Annual Arizona Housing Forum continues to attract large numbers of housing professionals looking to explore new strategies and ideas on the housing industry's foremost issues. This year's conference highlights include keynotes by Michael Traylor, Director of the Arizona Department of Housing; Arizona State University Research Professor, Dr. Lee McPheters; and Mercedes Marquez, HUD Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development.

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