

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**“SMART REHAB” WILL PRESERVE AFFORDABLE APARTMENTS
ENERGY EFFICIENCY IS KEY**

*Funding provides much-needed boost to rental housing in Western and Central
Pennsylvania*

(Greensburg) West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund (WPPSEF) and the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency have joined forces to preserve affordable apartment units in 23 western and central Commonwealth counties. The two organizations will work together to lower the expense of heating and cooling multifamily dwellings to make sure high energy prices don't force up costs for fixed-income older Pennsylvanians, families of modest means, or persons with disabilities.

Under the two-year “Preservation through Smart Rehab Program” WPPSEF and PHFA will provide funds to determine how apartment buildings use energy, and to pay for modifications to make them more efficient. As much as \$600,000 (WPPSEF has committed \$150,000) will be expended on this pioneering joint venture, which should affect no fewer than 30 complexes.

“The cost of energy is one of the most important components in affordable housing,” said Brian A. Hudson, PHFA Executive Director. “It is *the* deciding factor in the economic feasibility for many older properties. That’s why WPPSEF and PHFA view this effort as being so important.”

PHFA will select properties to participate in the program, arrange for energy audits, and review the resulting reports. These “diagnostic” reviews become the basis for replacing, repairing or improving energy delivery and conservations systems in the subject projects. The two organizations believe that by determining the present status of energy use, actions that enhance efficiency, improve delivery, hold down costs to consumers, and keep the apartments affordable can be achieved.

Michele Ponchione, WPPSEF President, said such cooperation between the nonprofit and public sectors encourages other mutual efforts. “PHFA’s focus on improving the quality of affordable housing is the perfect match for our residential energy efficiency programs,” she remarked. “Together, we can build the quality of older apartments while reducing energy usage. It helps everyone in the Commonwealth.”

WPPSEF-PHFA Smart Rehab helps rental housing

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Announcement of the new agreement took place at the PHFA's annual Housing Services Conference, taking place in Gettysburg on June 16, 17 and 18th. WPPSEF is an exhibitor at the Conference, which brings owners and managers of affordable multifamily rental developments together with residential services providers. Many residents who live in PHFA-financed developments have fixed incomes, and lowering energy costs is a significant step toward enhancing their quality-of-life issues.

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