



# HOUSING NEWS

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## Housing, Hurricanes, and the Fight for Funding Begins

With over 545 conference registrants, the Florida Housing Coalition's 17th Annual Conference, held in Tampa, Sept. 20-22<sup>nd</sup> was fortunate to have come off sandwiched between hurricanes and tropical storms. Forty registrants were unable to attend, because they were hard hit from hurricane devastation to their homes or offices. We missed them all, especially a few folks like long time board member Dan Horvath from CEIL, and Florida Housing Coalition Partners for Better Housing; Janice Boone from AmSouth and Deanna Lewis from SunTrust, all regular conference participants.

The Conference was a huge success—from the public policy plenary with a panel of national experts debating **"Home Ownership... Is it for Everyone,"** the success stories across the state, the keynote by Darren Walker of the Rockefeller Foundation, bus tours of housing success stories in St. Petersburg and Tampa, in-depth workshops, and roundtables for SHIP Administrators and Public Housing Authorities. The devastation from hurricanes and storms and the effect it has had on low-income families in Florida was abuzz.

In my opening comments at the conference, I stated: "If there is one silver lining that we can find in these storm clouds, it is that there should be no question that we should not have to fight too hard to get full funding from the Sadowski Act state and local housing trust funds in 2005."

But no sooner than that was said, the fight for full funding has definitely begun. The Sadowski Act Coalition is presently meeting to ensure that we do not see a repeat of last year's diversion of more than 50% of our dedicated affordable housing dollars from the state and local housing trust funds in FY 2005-06. Advocates are also making a strong argument for recovering the \$221 million we lost in 2004-05 to assist the thousands of low income hurricane

disaster victims in Florida. Conference and hurricane coverage continues on pages 9 through 14. Many thanks to all of you who attended the 2004 Conference. We look forward to seeing you all again at next year's statewide conference in Orlando, Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>, 2005.



Melvin Philpot, Board Chair delivering his welcome address.

