

Public Housing Takes the Stage at Hall of Fame

Nearly 80 participants attended “Energy Opportunities in Public Housing,” a conference presented by **Rebuild Ohio**, and **Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority** (SMHA) on November 15-16 at the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, OH.

Attendees represented 20 public housing authorities and six partnerships, says conference organizer **Mike Williams**, maintenance and development director for SMHA.

“They came to learn about Rebuild America, HUD [U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development] incentives and partnerships,” Williams said, “and they walked away with a sense of excitement about energy issues.”

Rebuild Ohio’s **Manny Anunike**, a conference organizer, agreed. “We want to work with many more public housing authorities in our Rebuild Ohio partnership, and at this conference we formed a real focus on their issues.”

Conference speakers addressed electric industry deregulation and the opportunities it holds for public housing authorities. Representatives from HUD and state agencies also discussed innovative approaches authorities around the country are taking.

Rebuild America Business Partners FirstEnergy Corporation and Viron Energy Services sponsored the conference and participated as presenters. Along with national laboratory

representatives, they discussed performance contracting and energy audits, the role of energy service companies, and tools available to help authorities manage their resources.

Rebuild America representatives **Juli Pollitt** and **Geri Perrotte** provided an in-depth look at Rebuild America and the resources available through the U.S. Department of Energy to assist partnerships. They also assembled a “Building Partnerships” roundtable featuring Ohio partnership leaders.

Attendees were enthusiastic about their time in Canton, ranking the overall conference near-excellent on their evaluations. “The topic is timely and there was a good level of interest from the audience,” wrote one participant. And, from another: “My expectations were both met and exceeded.”

For his part, Williams is focusing on next steps. “We already have added one new member to Rebuild America, and several others have an interest in aggregation,” he says. “With such a small percentage of public housing authorities taking advantage of Rebuild America, we definitely plan more conferences like this.”

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