



It has been a very busy and exciting summer around NeighborWorks Montana. Take a look at some of the exciting things we have going on. You can stay on top of our day to day activities by following us on [Facebook!](#)

Take a Look at NWMT's Newest Resident-Owned Community, Morning Star, in Kalispell!

Morning Star Community, Inc., a community of 41 manufactured homes, in Kalispell became resident-owned on June 6th, 2017. Late in the summer of 2016, Tim Ohler, the owner of Morning Star contacted NeighborWorks Montana (NWMt) regarding the Resident Owned Community (ROC) program and his interest in selling the property to the residents of the community. Tim was aware of the program because adjacent to Morning Star, is Green Acres Community a ROC since 2006. A five member Board of Directors has worked with their Technical Assistant from NWMt to complete all the policies and procedures necessary for the members to purchase the community, the Board Members have been instrumental in the purchase process.



On June 22nd, the community had a Closing Celebration Member Party BBQ to celebrate the purchase of their own community. There are many things to look forward to as Morning Star is now resident owned, the community members are already getting even more pride in their community and their accomplishments as neighbors. There are two households in the community who plan to attend the Community Leadership Institute through NeighborWorks America this October in Los Angeles, and the residents look forward to further improving their community. The community has planned improvements that include connecting to municipal sewer and continuing to beautify their neighborhood.



[To find out more about Morning Star take a look at the story from The Daily Inter Lake](#)



NWMT is now a USDA RD 502 Direct Intermediary

USDA RD has two types of mortgage loans: Direct and Guaranteed. The Guaranteed program allows a borrower to apply through a lender. The Direct program invites a borrower to apply directly through RD. The Direct program is designed for those borrowers whose income does not qualify for most other mortgage loan programs. The RD Direct loan



has an interest rate that is subsidized by the program, so that a borrower with a lower income can find housing that is safe and conveniently located, as well as affordable. When the borrower decides to sell the property, that subsidy is paid back to the program, assuming the borrower profited from the sale of that home.

Because borrowers apply directly through RD for the 502 Direct program, the review and oversight of applications causes a staffing burden for RD. This staffing burden is eased by the Intermediary and the Loan Packager Program. In the fall of 2016, NWMT applied for and was awarded Intermediary status for the USDA RD 502 Direct Loan Packager Program.

NWMT's partner housing counseling organizations that are interested are training counselors to become certified RD loan packagers. Counselors will then work with borrowers one-on-one to collect required documents and package the loan. The packagers then send the loan package to NWMT, the Intermediary. NWMT will then perform a quality control review of the package to ensure documentation is complete and complies with program requirements and confirm program eligibility. It is only after the package has passed NWMT's review that it is sent to RD for approval.

This program is a great fit for NWMT and our partner housing counseling organizations. Housing counselors across the state have the time and the training and skills to work with these borrowers through the application and purchase process, and ensure these Montana families understand the benefits and requirements of both the loan program as well as homeownership in general. Borrowers will have an advocate on their side throughout the process, and this RD loan program will have the capacity to reach many more Montana families that are in need of safe and affordable housing.



A Story From Our Work

On Thursday, June 22nd, staff from NWMT joined a large group of community members in Billings to celebrate the two new families who have purchased the recently completed twin homes. We wanted to share with you the story of one of the families. Take a few minutes to read Christine's story:



"The path to home ownership started with the Section 8 program. There was doubt in my mind at the time I had started with the program about being a home owner; it was all about survival. A few years later, Carrie Sharp, became my occupancy specialist and she encouraged me to sign up for the program towards home ownership, so I did. I learned the details of the bypass thoughts I used to have concerning purchasing a home. I actually started to take this more seriously.

When Carrie changed jobs and moved over to The Home Center, I stayed in touch with Carrie and joined The Home Center. I started the Match Savings Program, and met with Carrie periodically, she would contact me on a fairly regular basis to check on my progress, coaching me on what step(s) I needed to complete. I believe I was walking the walk, but wondering how? I am a firm believer that God answered our prayers and He placed us in a position to meet and work with some phenomenal people.

Owning a home is a relief in many ways and a big responsibility in so many ways. I look forward to this journey. Knowing this beautiful home is ours is a chance of a lifetime for someone in my financial bracket; I could maintain rent and utilities, that is what I did for so many years, but to be able to save enough to accumulate a down payment, a substantial savings, and debt deduction was not easy. This program, this blessing, made the thought and effort of owning a home possible. If not for this teamwork effort by all involved we would possibly never have owned a home.

I have already told other people in my situation to go apply, take the courses, join the savings program - NOW! Do not give up or lose hope. We are a true example of testimony to the outcome of this program, my children and I are living a dream we have talked and prayed about for many years. There are good programs with great information on home ownership available, so do not think yourself unworthy or unfit financially because help is attainable, whether you are wanting to learn about paying off debt, saving for a down, how to get financed, and the list goes on. The information can be overwhelming, but that is where agencies, such as, The Home Center, comes in. The training and guidance they offer is invaluable."

We are so pleased to say "welcome home Povsha family!" Thank you to our many partners who went into making this project possible. We couldn't have done it without each and every one of you!

