

Hello ROC Residents! It's been a busy and exciting six months. Here are some of the highlights you'll see in this newsletter:

- Many of you are working on major infrastructure projects and making impressive progress in your communities, often with the help of grants and low-cost loans.
- The Community Leadership Institute was again an inspirational success for attendees. We will keep working on ways to help you interact more with your peers nationally, in Montana, in person and through myROCUSA.org
- Home rehab and repair continues to be a goal for many of you. We have tried some new approaches with residents at Buena Vista that we hope may be of interest to you and your community.

All of the great work you are accomplishing in your ROCs is in powerful contrast to some of the news we have heard recently about park closures. In October residents of a 34 home community in Missoula called Skyview received eviction notices. They have six months to move, and not a lot of options for affordable housing. The property will be redeveloped. We co-hosted a resident resource night with the North Missoula Community Development Corporation and hope that gave residents some options for future housing, but we know how difficult it will be for them as the costs of housing continue to rise. As we look at the start of a new year it is a time when many of us take a moment to recognize all that we have to be thankful for. I hope that resident ownership and the communities you are building are on your list. We at NeighborWorks Montana are grateful for everything you do to preserve affordable housing and create strong communities.



SAVE THE DATE

JUNE 6-9, 2018

ROC USA will be holding the ROC Leadership Institute Training in Concord, New Hampshire. This training will replace the NeighborWorks America CLI usually held in the fall. ROC USA will be able to send a larger group of ROC Residents to this training and it will be even more ROC focused. Look for more details on attending soon.



OCTOBER 5-6, 2018

NeighborWorks Montana will be holding the Montana ROC Summit in Kalispell, MT. This will be a great opportunity to connect with ROC residents from across Montana.



COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Resident leaders from Montana and across the country spent a few days in LA in October learning skills and sharing best practices to help grow their communities. Here are a few things a couple of the resident attendees from Montana had to share:

“I am so thankful for the opportunity to attend CLI. I came home with some great information that I am excited to apply to our community. It was a great experience and I left there knowing that I am not alone. The support from ROC and also from the other communities is amazing. I left there feeling much stronger than I did before I attended.”

Laurie Westendorff
Morning Star, Kalispell

“I am very thankful that I was able to attend CLI. Prior to attending I was feeling a lot of frustration at the lack of interest in our community. When I got to CLI, it was confirmed that other communities face the same challenges. I learned most importantly that there is an amazing support system and lots of resources to help us succeed. I left CLI feeling positive and excited to share what I learned with the rest of the community.”

Susan Villarreal
River Acres, Missoula



Stay tuned for more great national and state training opportunities!

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COMMUNITY

MINI-GRANT PROJECTS

TRAILER TERRACE

Trailer Terrace, a community just south of Great Falls, is enjoying drinkable water for the first time in many years. A new well and water main line to the community brought in the clean water, starting in December. Clothes, cars and homes are no longer being stained with orange minerals, another benefit to the new well. Plans are just being finalized for the new waste water treatment plant, which will replace an aging lagoon system, eliminating the smell and other problems of a sewage lagoon. The last phase of the work is replacement of water and sewer distribution lines, scheduled for the summer of 2018. The work, completed by the South Wind Water and Sewer District, is funded by grants and loans from the State of Montana and the Western Water Administration.



LARGE COMMUNITY PROJECTS COMPLETED

Green Acres	Connection to public sewer.
Missouri Meadows	Connection to public sewer and water.
Mountain Springs Villas	New roads, water system and sewer system.
Buena Vista	Connection to public sewer.
Northwood	Rehab duplex rental property, and improve roads and drainage.
Trailer Terrace	New well and waste water plant, with new lines and service.

Communities that had representation at the ROC Leadership Training, held in Great Falls this past April, had the opportunity to apply for a \$500 mini-grant. Check out a few of the ways those grants were used!

NORTHWOOD

Northwood spent their \$500 mini-grant on the lumber that was needed to build a structure over their mailboxes and their billboard. They will not complete the construction of the structure until Spring of 2018, however all the materials have been delivered and will be stored in the barn through the winter months.

Northwood also recently received a grant from ROC USA to install a playground in their community. Many community organizations volunteered time and services to see this playground come together for the kids at Northwood. Spirit Excavation leveled the area, Glacier Lake Sand & Gravel donated gravel, and Glacier Bank provided lunch for the volunteers. There were also 15 volunteers from the community and Missoula Federal Credit Union. Thanks to everyone for making this project such a success!



BUENA VISTA

Buena Vista used their funds to have a neighborhood watch training take place at their community. They used the grant funds to supply snacks at the meeting, make handouts to market the training and have neighborhood watch signs made and installed on posts in their community.



TRAILER TERRACE

Trailer Terrace completed their community clean up day, they rented dumpsters and had them on-site for their community members to dump their unneeded trash and household items. They spent \$730 on the rental of the dumpsters.

GREEN ACRES

Green Acres spent their \$500 on landscaping materials, they created a community garden in the heart of their community near the mailboxes. They also used the funds to create landscaping around the communities' signs and beautify the community.

RIVER ACRES

River Acres used the funds received from the ROC mini-grant (\$500), along with money received from ROC USA (\$1660.59) to purchase 9 6-foot speed bumps for their community. The speed bumps have been delivered, and they will be stored at the community until Spring 2018 for installation on their roads.

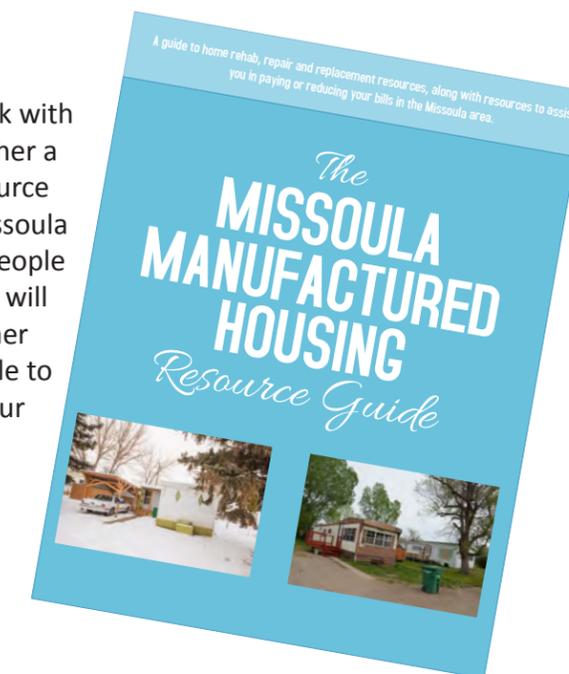


HEALTH AND HOUSING

Over the past year residents of Buena Vista have been working with a team of organizations in the Missoula area to find new ways to make improvements to manufactured homes. Out of 36 homes we had 16 households work with us over the past year. Below is a summary of that work. Thanks to all the residents who participated! Thanks in particular to community resident Darryl Branning who was a member of our project team! Our work is not done, so look for more opportunities for home improvements coming soon.

PATH	CURRENT SITUATION	NEXT STEP	OUTCOME
1	My home is in pretty good shape, I just have one particular project I'd like help to complete.	Identify specific project needs - typically materials and labor - and work with NeighborWorks Montana to fill the gap between what you can do on your own and what the project requires.	One household used project funds to get the HVAC cleaned and now don't need additional support. Another is working on their own to resurface their roof.
2	My income is too high to qualify for weatherization, but I'd like to make improvements on my home.		Two households applied for weatherization but their incomes were too high to qualify. We are still working with them to find low cost materials, and support for the costs of labor.
3	My home has already been weatherized but I want to make more improvements.		One household had already been weatherized. She attended a financial workshop and received some program funding to buy materials so she could complete improvements on her own.
4	I would like my home to be weatherized, and I already receive LIEAP.	You already qualify for weatherization; work with the HRC.	Two households completed weatherization with over \$10,000 in improvements to the two homes.
5	I would like my home to be weatherized, and I don't currently receive LIEAP.	Apply for weatherization.	Three households have been encouraged to apply for LIEAP and weatherization this fall. They will get preference on the waiting list because they are working through this program with NeighborWorks Montana.
6	I tried to get weatherized but my home is in rough shape and the work couldn't be completed.	Identify specific project needs, and work with NeighborWorks Montana to find effective ways to address structural and safety issues so you can then potentially access weatherization.	None of the participants at Buena Vista were in this situation, but we know this is an issue for many households. We are working with the HRC on this over the next 12 months. Some of the more difficult challenges we are trying to address are roofs, windows and the underbelly including skirting and insulation.
7	My home is in rough shape and I want to replace my home.	Work on your budget and financing options with the help of free financial counseling.	After counseling one household decided home rehab was a better option, and two are working on saving money and finding homes to purchase.

In addition to the direct work with residents we also put together a Manufactured Housing Resource Guide for residents in the Missoula area. We're seeing whether people like it, and if it is valuable we will create similar guides for other areas of the state. You'll be able to find the Missoula guide on our new website in January.



Thanks to the organizations who were part of this effort:



Paths 1-3 can be accomplished with a combination of existing and new resources, often in a fairly short time frame.

Paths 4 and 5 will take a little bit longer but can be completed with existing funding.

Path 6 requires more support to find effective ways to affordably improve your home.

Path 7 requires long-term planning on the part of the homeowners, and a variety of potential supports from financing, to the supply of homes, to siting and construction.

Are you interested in this kind of support for your home or community? Talk with your TA provider and we can work with you to build resources in your area.

ROC USA STRATEGIC PLANNING

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Every three years ROC USA develops a strategic plan. The plan then guides the activities of the organization over the following 3 to 5 years. ROC USA always works to get the input of a variety of individuals and organizations, with ROC residents and communities among the most important voices.



Do you have recommendations for ROC USA? What could be done that would help your community thrive? Post your ideas on myROCU-SA.org. Log on, go to ROC Talk and you'll see a forum for the Strategic Plan. You can read responses and post your own! If you're not already registered on myROCUSA.org, it is easy. Go online and click "Haven't Registered Yet?" The site, myROCUSA.org, is an online community center exclusively for ROC members.

At the Community Leadership Institute 42 ROC resident leaders participated in a full day conversation about their priorities for ROC USA. Here are the five issue areas they identified that they think need to be addressed by the plan:

1. ROC leaders need more communications support that helps them build an "ownership culture" to engage new and existing members – for example, welcome packets for new members.
2. ROC USA and its affiliated TA providers need to expand online platforms and regional programs for more peer exchange among ROC leaders.
3. Residents want access to deep knowledge and information, with material beyond ROC 101.
4. "Resident leaders are not property managers, they're relationship builders." (Credit: Bill Hodgkins, Maine) We need strategies and systems for ensuring that ROCs can develop the right roles for resident leaders, and the right roles for others such as property managers and TA providers.
5. Communities need better access to infrastructure, housing rehab and home finance resources.

Are these the right priorities? What other ideas do you have?



Communities across the state have been hard at work making major infrastructure improvements to their communities. We wanted to highlight a few of those projects here!

MISSOURI MEADOWS

Missouri Meadows, a community just south of Great Falls, has applied for a \$700,000 grant from the Federal Home Loan Bank to bring their community out of the flood plain, allowing for new homes and home repairs. The community, although never flooded, is technically in the Missouri River flood plain, so homes in the community cannot be replaced and repairs are limited to 50% of the value of the home. The work involves bringing in fill dirt, compacting it, then installing utilities and roads to the community. All of the homes will be moved to a new pad. Once funding is secured the work will be completed in phases, so no one will have to move out of their home.



BUENA VISTA

At purchase, residents of Buena Vista, in Missoula, agreed to pursue grants to abandon their old sewer lagoon system and connect the community to the municipal sewer system. The community used a Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP) planning grant to get the preliminary engineering work done, and then applied for and were awarded RRGL (Rural Resource Grant and Loan Program) and CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) funds, as well as local Water Quality District funding, bringing the total grant funding to over \$480,000. Work will be completed by spring of 2018. From there the community will be working on raising funds to do the next phase of the project, replacing the lines within the community and possibly adding more home lots.



TOTAL MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS SINCE 2010

State Money	\$3,005,000
Federal Money	\$3,470,000
Local Government	\$40,000
NeighborWorks Montana	\$300,000
ROC USA	\$90,000
Community Funds	\$25,000
Total	\$6,930,000

Funds include grants and low interest loans.

State: Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP), the Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program (RRGL), and the State Revolving Loan Funds (SRF)

Federal: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Water Resource Development Act funds (WRDA) and HOME funds

Local: Water Quality District