

## President's Report

Thank you for reading my column, but I want you to stop right here and flip to Page 2. Strange request, I know, but there's an article there about the Noble Homes Video Contest, and I'm writing about it because I'm so excited by it.

Go ahead, read it. I'll wait right here.

OK, Noble Homes is a pretty cool idea, right?

But I want to go back to Laurie Westendorf, and what she said about her friend — her *friend* — asking her why she'd celebrate buying a "trailer." The first time [I saw that clip](#), I literally gasped. So have most people when we've shown them the video.

But it's not the first time I've heard that. That exact same quote.

And worse.

Words are important. Well-crafted words can comfort us, inspire us, and bring us great joy. Think of Ronald Reagan after the Challenger disaster: "The future doesn't belong to the fainthearted. It belongs to the brave." Think of Jim Valvano: "We need money for (cancer) research, it may not save my life, it may save my children's, it may save someone you love." I think of the midwife who delivered my daughters: "She's healthy, 10 fingers, 10 toes!" Her words certainly brought me untold joy.

But words can also hurt us, anger us, or drain our enthusiasm as quickly as a crack in a dam. I think people's words, good or bad, come from their hearts. That's why if you listen to our words, you'll hear us talk about "homes" and "communities." We believe in the worth of manufactured homes, be they pre-HUD code or the Marlette by Clayton Homes [my Mom bought in 2016](#)

» See **BRADLEY**, Page 7



Bradley



Workers install one of 384 solar panels in a 100-kilowatt array at Mascoma Meadows cooperative in Lebanon, N.H. Mascoma will be the first ROC in the Granite State to develop a revenue-generating solar project.

## ROCs catching some rays

### Projects shine light on solar possibilities

Mascoma Meadows, a 50-home resident-owned community, is the first ROC in New Hampshire to use solar power to generate some of its electricity.

The 384-panel solar array was operational by the end of 2018. The energy produced by the pan-

els will be sold back into the grid and is the pollution-reduction equivalent of taking 17 cars off the road each year. Board Members will use the profit from the array to reduce the lot rent by \$22 each month for homeowners in the neighborhood.

» See **Solar**, Page 10

The project is expected to generate enough revenue to give homeowners a monthly \$22 rent reduction.

## Affiliate brings ROC model to Boise

**BOISE, Idaho** — Work to preserve homeownership in affordable neighborhoods in the fastest growing state has been bolstered after a new affiliate joined ROC USA® Network.

LEAP ROC, a program of [LEAP Charities](#) will work to help bring resident ownership to communities throughout Idaho, with a focus on the

Boise metro area. According to the market research, an overwhelming majority of Idaho's manufactured home communities are located there.

"Recognizing that preserving manufactured housing communities as a type of affordable housing, community owners, leaders, Network



**LEAPROC**

» See **LEAP ROC**, Page 8

# Video contest takes aim at stigma

## Noble Homes project will harness power of filmmakers to challenge stereotypes

Learn more, including how to enter the contest at [www.noblenotmobile.com](http://www.noblenotmobile.com)

When ROC USA® President Paul Bradley asked how many of the group gathered at the inaugural ROC Leadership Institute felt looked down upon due to where they live, the entire room raised their hands.

Though disturbing, the results were an unsurprising reality about the stigma manufactured home owners must deal with every day.

For more than three decades, major strides have been made in the resident-ownership movement across the country. Those living in cooperatively owned manufactured home communities are in control of the decisions that impact the costs of living in their neighborhood, allowing them to maintain this vital source of affordable housing. Since residents now control their own destiny, their homes and neighborhoods are safe for generations to come. Hard-working community members volunteer their time to help facilitate decisions that benefit themselves and their neighbors.

Stories like these inspire us every day, and they're ones we love to share.

As we enter into the next chapter of the resident-ownership story, we want to continue raising up residents as the voice of the movement. Their communities are more than just someone's home, and the characterizations that they are less than that are unjust and unfair.

That's where the [Noble Homes Video Contest](#) comes in.

In early 2018, the [National Cooperative Bank](#) commissioned a video for ROC USA's 10th anniversary. One of the most powerful pieces of the stellar video was part of [an interview with Laurie Westendorf](#), president of [Morning Star cooperative](#) in Kalispell, Mont., in which she talked about an open house party she wanted to host after moving into her home.

"When we were purchasing our home, we were going to throw a housewarming party and I had a friend say, 'Why are you going to throw a housewarming party when you're just buying a trailer?'" she said.

This from a [friend](#).

"But once people come into the community and they come into our home, they just fall in love with it," she said.

ROC USA is asking filmmakers across the U.S. to capture the truth as we all know it in two short video contests: one that will produce 30- to 60-second clips, and one that will produce short videos up to three minutes long.

Each film will have to meet some key points in order to be considered.

Much of the anti-stigma work out there points to the improvements in construction and design of new homes. But that does little to help those whose homes are not brand new. While newer homes can mean savings and energy efficiency for residents, replacing a home is not always a viable options. Or something homeowners even want. That's why we want a wide variety of homes represented in these videos.

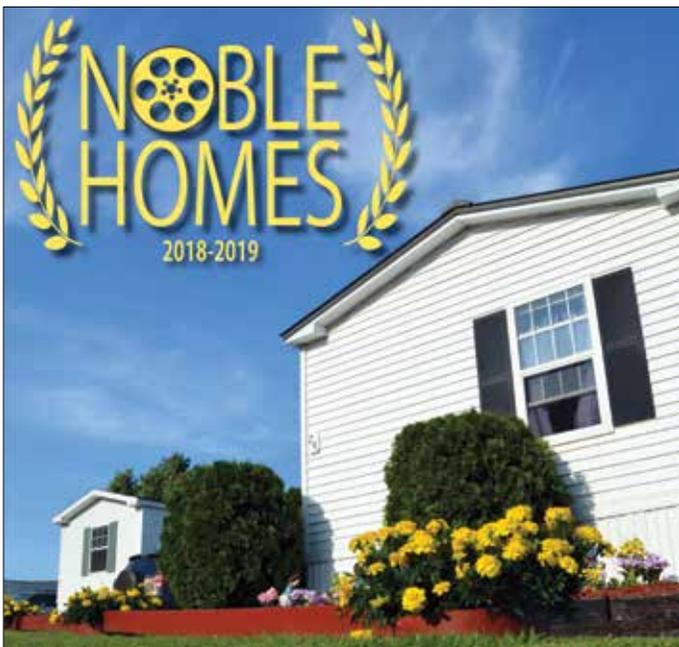
It's also why the communities showcased in the videos don't have to be resident-owned. The stigma isn't just something that ROC residents face, but rather by nearly everyone who lives in a manufactured home.

By showing the benefits of manufactured home living, and the solid homeowners who choose to live there, the contest works to destroy the stigma around these homes and homeowners.

The contest is open through March 17, 2019 at 11:59 p.m. PST. After that, we'll be engaging the ROC Leadership Institute graduates to pick which entries they think should move on to the second round. We'll then have the [ROC Association Directors](#) — three regional leaders elected by their peers — as well as donors and sponsors pick the finalists. The winners will be announced May 6.

The first place winners in each of the contests will receive \$5,000 prizes and two runners-up will get \$1,000.

Keep an eye out on our social media pages for posts about the contest and make sure to share it with anyone who might be interested in entering. We can't wait to see how it goes.



# ROC broadcasts meetings for Members who can't get out

**CARVER, Mass.** — Thanks to a community leader's ingenuity, [Cranberry Village](#) residents can attend the monthly Board of Directors meetings virtually.

For just over a year, Brenda Bakal, president of the democratically elected Board, has been live-streaming the meetings to the 279-home community's Facebook Group online.

Bakal experimented with the idea for a few months before bringing it to the Board meetings, practicing while at a farmers' market in Pennsyl-



A volunteer uses a mobile phone to broadcast a board meeting for Cranberry Village residents who struggle to get out of their homes.

vania and when cooking at her home to figure out how it worked.

"It kind of took off from

there," she said.

The livestream gives residents of the 55+ community the flexibility to stay up

to date with what's going on easily if they're unable to attend the meetings in person.

At the end of the meetings when Members are invited to ask any questions they might have or make a comment, Bakal will turn to whoever is on the live-stream and invite them to share questions.

Along with increased accessibility for the Members, Bakal said this also helps to promote transparency with the board as well.

Bakal said feedback from

» See **LIVESTREAM**, Page 4

## ROC leaders visit other co-ops to learn, share expertise

**TAUNTON, Mass.** — After promising at the inaugural ROC Leadership Institute to build more connections with her regional neighbors, Kathy Zorotheos and other members of the [Oak Hill Manufactured Home Community](#) Board of Directors have hit the road to attend the Board meetings at other Massachusetts ROCs.

Zorotheos, along with Bill Fisher and Merrie Levy, have already visited two communities: [Colonial Estates](#), which is right across the street from their Taunton, Mass., neighborhood, and [Conifer Green](#), a Kingston, Mass., community that's one of the newest ROCs in the state.

"I found it very educational," she said.

Zorotheos said she's always been curious to see how others govern their communities. She and the other Board Members use the Community bylaws and receive coaching from their ROC USA® Network affiliate, [Cooperative Development Institute](#), but she always wanted to see if there were other ways to do business.

"We didn't have anything to compare it to," she said.

Learning about matters like how to

"That's a perfect example. Just seeing their layout was perfect for us."

KATHY ZOROTHEOS,  
Oak Hill Taunton



work with a Maintenance Committee has been educational, but not all of the lessons have been as technical as this. Zorotheos said one of the biggest lessons the group learned was just how the Board at Colonial Estates sets up its table for meetings.

"They have theirs in an 'L' shape," she said.

This small thing was something the Board has already implemented for when they hold their meetings now, allowing those who attend to hear and engage better with what's going on.

"That's a perfect example," she said. "Just seeing their layout was perfect for us."

Board Members from Colonial Es-

tates and Conifer Green have also come to Oak Hill for a tour of the community, helping to further strengthen the relationship between ROCs. Building this network among their local peers is a vital way to help others, particularly newer ROCs, learn.

"If they have a question, they know they could always ask us," Zorotheos said. "They know we're available if they need assistance."

Zorotheos said they plan to visit more communities in the coming months, like [Halifax Estates](#) in Halifax, Mass., and [Town and Country Estates](#) in Kingston, Mass. She said she's particularly interested in how the Halifax Estates Board runs, since the 430-home community is nearly twice the size of Oak Hill.

"If people have communities near them, they should absolutely visit them," she said.

Along with the new tips they picked up, the experience also reinforced a lot of the things the Oak Hill Board is already doing by seeing others do the same.

"It made me feel even more confident about ourselves," Zorotheos said.

# Minnesota ROC comes to the rescue

## Hillcrest Community Co-op gives Fire Department a home after tornado

**CLARKS GROVE, Minn.** — Walking through [Hillcrest Community Cooperative](#) after a tornado tore through in March 2017, Gary Olson was grateful that his neighborhood was spared.

“We had a lot of damage, but we were very fortunate,” said the President of the Board of Directors.

But as he walked further through the rest of city, he noticed that not all were as lucky, like the town’s fire station. Though the damage was not apparent when Olson looked at the building, the space was unusable.

“I didn’t realize they were hit the way they were,” he said. “I thought to myself, ‘Where do you put four firetrucks and the other equipment?’”

Luckily, Olson knew just the place. Clarks Grove residents inherited a 6,000-square-foot heated maintenance building that belonged to an old car dealership when they purchased their community in 2015. The unused space had sat vacant while the Board, which works with ROC USA Network affiliate [Northcountry Cooperative Foundation](#) for technical assistance, tried to decide what to do with it.

Olson knew the space would be the perfect temporary home for the volunteer department.

“The last thing we wanted to do was lose the fire department,” Olson said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GARY OLSON

Hillcrest Community Cooperative rented unused space to the local fire department after a tornado damaged the station .

Within 24 hours, everything was moved into the building. Clarks Grove Fire Chief Steven Thisius said he was grateful for the quick solution to the daunting problem he faced.

“The next day (after the tornado), Hillcrest came and said they had this building available, so the next day we were moving our stuff out and into our temporary fire hall,” he told ABC News 6.

Since March 2017, the Fire Department has been housed in the building, paying the ROC \$2,000 a month. This money adds to the savings of the com-

munity that can then be used for capital improvement projects or any other work that needs to be done.

“It’s generated a lot of income for us,” Olson said.

A new fire station and community center is expected to be finished by the beginning of 2019. What to do next with the building has not yet been decided, but the hope is to continue to rent it.

Though glad the department will have a space all of their own once again, Olson said the move will be bittersweet.

“They’ve been great to have here,” he said. “We’re going to miss them.”

## *Technology means even remote meeting attendees can ask questions*

» **Livestream**, From Page 3

residents has been great. She bought a stabilizer for her phone, which has helped tremendously with video quality.

Peggy Damiano watches the videos from the comfort of her

home when she can’t attend meetings for health reasons.

“You’re able to ask questions,” she said. “You’re able to see what’s going on, you know what’s going on.”

ROC USA® Network’s National Training Manager,

Gary Faucher, agreed.

“What a great resource and way to engage the membership,” he said. “Livestreaming helps to make the meetings more inclusive by accommodating the needs of those who aren’t able to attend in person.

This is just one example of the creative ways Boards are working to drive member participation across the entire network.”

Cranberry Village became a ROC in June 2012. Learn more at: [www.cranberryvillage.coop](http://www.cranberryvillage.coop).



# ‘Everything starts at home’



ROC USA President Paul Bradley, at right with his family and above delivering an acceptance speech, was inducted into the Cooperative Hall of Fame this spring during ceremonies at The National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

## Bradley receives highest recognition in cooperative sector

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Home and community have held a valued role for ROC USA® Founding President Paul Bradley his entire life.

Growing up, he was fortunate to have [a stable home in a community he loved](#). As an adult, he and his family have been able to achieve the same.

This passion has inspired his career, where he’s made his focus helping others achieve this stability and safety.

“Everything starts at home,” he said.

The hard, meaningful work that’s made positive changes in thousands of households has not gone unnoticed.

Bradley was inducted into the Cooperative Hall of Fame at the celebration in Washington, D.C., this spring.

“Thank you for this honor,” Bradley said. “It is very meaningful to me, and to all of us in the ROC movement.”

That network of LLC members, Board of Directors, national staff, affiliates, bankers, lawyers, philanthropists, fellow cooperators and friends has been

vital to that movement.

“We are out to prove one thing: An aligned and focused social venture together with co-op leaders can scale grassroots cooperative ownership,” Bradley said.

Induction into the Cooperative Hall of Fame is the highest honor that the U.S. cooperative community bestows on the extraordinary men and women who have made genuinely heroic contributions in support of the cooperative form of enterprise.

Bradley began working with ROCs in 1988 at the New Hampshire Community Loan Fund, where the model was pioneered. Using that work as a foundation, he launched ROC USA in 2008 to take the model to scale.

Ten years later, more than 14,500 homeowners in 15 states now live in ROCs, and have gained affordable and stable housing through cooperative ownership.

“The 220 communities and 14,000

homeowners we serve include many heroes,” Bradley said at the May induction ceremony at The National Press Club. “We count more than 1,200 who are elected Directors, and many more who are active Members.”

Andrea Levere, chair of ROC USA’s Board of Directors and president of [Prosperity Now](#), said Bradley’s commitment to his vision and goal is what has bolstered those in ROC USA® Network. She nominated Bradley for induction.

“Paul structured ROC USA with a business model designed for scale and with cooperative principles embedded at every level of the enterprise,” she said. “It is Paul’s commitment to this vision that ensured that all the members of the cooperative community that contribute to the mission of ROC USA — homeowners, TA providers, LLC members, lenders and investors, policy advocates, the extraordinary staff and, perhaps, most important of all, his family — are in the room today.”

## New ROC websites to feature vacant site marketing platform

A key resource for ROCs has a new look thanks to the new template for marketing websites.

ROC USA® has built more than 50 websites for ROCs all across the country. The sites serve as a thorough online real estate brochure designed to attract new Members to either homes for sale or vacant sites.

Along with the streamlined look, the new sites have some added features. Those looking to sell their home can do so through the marketing website. While the homes can still be listed on MHVillage.com for a discounted rate, listing the homes on the marketing websites is free.

A place to list vacant sites is also in the works.

Take a look at one of the new style co-op websites:  
[www.dexteroaks.coop](http://www.dexteroaks.coop)

The sites still include popular features from the old template, like the Frequently Asked Questions, the virtual tour and self-managed members-only portals to help share information about what's going on in the community.

The service is part of the ROC Marketing Program and is free to ROCs that formed since ROC USA's launch in 2008.

Older ROCs can contract for a similar site for a fee. To learn more, write to us at [contact\\_us@rocusa.org](mailto:contact_us@rocusa.org).

Do have a question other ROC leaders might be able to answer? Post it in the Discussion Forums at [www.myROCUSA.org](http://www.myROCUSA.org)

# Leadership Institute



Bonnie Johnson and Mara Rosario Hernandez of Park Plaza Cooperative grab a quick selfie before the event.

## New ROC-only format doubles capacity

When Shirlene Stoven first heard about the [ROC Leadership Institute](http://www.ROCUSA.org), she was unsure whether to apply.

This would have been the first time she'd attend a conference like this after she and her neighbors purchased their neighborhood in January 2018 and she didn't want to take the opportunity away from another member of the Board of Directors whom she served with at [Applewood Homeowners Cooperative](http://www.ApplewoodHomeownersCooperative.com) in Midvale, Utah.

But she's glad she did.

"It was time well spent," she said. "I enjoyed every minute of it."

Seventy-nine leaders left inspired and energized to further the positive work they've been doing in their communities

after the inaugural Institute in June. This networking opportunity was one of the key highlights for Stoven. She was able to go over what she learned with the two other Board members from her ROC as well as

her peers from across the nation.

"It was like everybody wanted to know everyone," Stoven said. "Everybody was there to help each other. Everybody was there to learn. Everybody was there to share what they knew."

The 2019 three-day training will be held on June 6 to 9 at Southern New Hampshire University. The registration process is set to open on March 1 and anyone who lives in a ROC can register to come.

The event was filled with workshops, learning labs, speakers and entertainment, all focused on helping those in attendance enhance their skills and gain new ones to benefit their communities.

Workshops and labs covered topics like effective communication, business basics, building your community brand, infill strategies, emotional intelligence and conflict resolution, visiting a local ROC and facilitating group

Be sure to visit [www.ROCUSA.org](http://www.ROCUSA.org) & [www.myROCUSA.org](http://www.myROCUSA.org) this winter to learn how to register and what to expect at the event. Recordings from last year's event are also available online.

# ROC USA gets 79 thumbs up



More than 79 ROC Leadership Institute Class of 2018 posed for a group shot in June.

## ROC USA gets 79 thumbs up for community leaders to learn together

decision making.

Many grads wrote in their final evaluations that the event was a huge success.

“This was my first event,” one woman wrote. “I enjoyed all the knowledge I gained and will bring it back to my ROC.”

Another participant agreed.

“The training and workshops were excellent and will be useful to facilitate the info to have our community run more smoothly. I was impressed with the enthusiasm of the trainers and other ROC members.”

The ROC Leadership Institute is modeled after NeighborWorks® America Community Leadership Institute (CLI). This national training event aims to strengthen the voices and skills of volunteer leaders from resident-owned communities. Participants attend with other members from their ROCs and other ROC leaders from across the country.

For years, ROC leaders who attended CLI raved about the experience. They loved the connections made with peers, with technical assistance providers and with ROC USA staff. While they valued the sessions with non-ROC leaders, overwhelmingly their feedback asked for more



ROC USA President Paul Bradley pauses for a photo with ROC leaders (from left) Barbara Gibbs of Rustic Pines, and Christine Baker, Sally Smith and Shirlene Stoven, all of Applewood Homeowners Cooperative.

time with their peers. That’s why ROC USA launched the ROC Leadership Institute exclusively for ROC leaders.

The change also allowed almost twice the number of participants to attend.

“It was more positive having this event with ROCs only,” one participant summed up. “Thank you for doing this for us.”

*Help ROC USA make the most of film contest*

» **Bradley**, From Page 1

and moved to [Freedom Village Cooperative](#). We believe in resilient communities owned by the people who live there. And most importantly, we believe in those people themselves.

Words contribute to the unfair stigma around manufactured housing. It’s hurtful to the millions who choose to live in a manufactured home and community. It also hurts their chances for equal treatment: I think of the vendors who won’t return calls to Members of ROCs. I think of the home improvement resources and quality home financing programs that are available to low- and moderate-income owners of site-built homes or condos. But not to owners of manufactured homes.

This ugly stigma is a very real economic and social detriment to the homeowners who are our singular focus. These unfair stereotypes of a whole class of homeowners as merely transient or not worth respect because their home was delivered by a truck are maddening.

We have reason to be angry about it. We all do.

I can’t wait to see so many tools to counter the old vision, misleading at best and probably more often malicious, of “tenants” who can pick up and move their house any time they please.

But it’s an immensely complicated task. ROC USA will never have the advertising and marketing pros of Madison Avenue backing us up, but we do have a public relations staff of thousands and that’s you. We need your help both now to spread the word about the contest far and wide, and later to share the videos that come from it.

I challenge you to think of someone who could contribute to the contest and tell them why knocking down the stigma is important. You could inspire a video that goes on to plant the seed of equality in the minds of the wider population because

**Your Words Matter.**

*Paul Bradley*

# New trainings and resources available on myROCUSA

With a new platform conducive to growing its offerings, ROC USA's online community center continues to be the one stop shop for ROC Members across the country.

Already, you can find online trainings on topics like improving energy efficiency in your home, building relationships with community Members, and communicating effectively at [myROCUSA.org](http://myROCUSA.org).

We've also added materials from the workshops and labs held at the inaugural ROC Leadership Institute this past June, along with a training on working with your property manager.

Expanding the training offerings is just one of the motivations for launching the site on the new platform. The new site still houses many of the great resources from the previous one.

The ROC Mall features discounts of which ROC Members can take advantage, including savings on waste and junk removal; flooring; banking; fuel; paint; office supplies; job postings; and background and tenant screening.

There are also state-specific guides for home and community improvement resources, including tips on making your case for capital improvement projects and finding different sources of funding.

Best of all, you can collaborate with other ROC Leaders and Members all across the country and share your experiences on the discussion forums. Chat with others about topics like recruiting volunteer or celebrating successes in your neighborhood.

If you registered on the old site, you don't have to set up a new account since

we were able to bring over most of the user data. However, you will need to reset your password since that was the only piece to which we don't have access.

Those who haven't yet set up an account can do so here by filling out the form. Make sure you're registering as a ROC Member and choose your community from the pull-down menu.

Let us know what you like about the new site as well as anything you might want to see in the future. We welcome any feedback that people might have about the new site and set up a discussion forum for people to post any of the suggestions they may have. If you have any questions or need help, contact Melissa Proulx, Digital Media Manager at 603-513-2815 or at [mproulx@rocusa.org](mailto:mproulx@rocusa.org).

## *ROC work veteran to lead Idaho team*

» **LEAP ROC**, From Page 1

affiliates and affordable housing proponents all came together around LEAP becoming an affiliate in Idaho," said ROC USA® Network Director Mary O'Hara. "We are thrilled. The addition of LEAP really fills out our Northwest affiliates."

About 82 percent of all Idaho manufactured home communities are within a 50 mile radius of LEAP's Boise office. More than 50 percent of the state's population falls within this radius as well.

With Idaho being the fastest growing state in the nation in 2017, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the need to preserve affordable housing is vital. Already, the state is losing affordable housing faster than it's creating it, with a housing deficit of more than 8,000 units.

However, adding more units isn't the only solution to the problem.

"We really see the ROC piece as a key preservation piece," said Bart Cochran, President and CEO of LEAP ROC.

Cochran said the goal is to convert 15 communities to resident ownership within five years. The team at LEAP will be split-

ting the state with [Northwest Cooperative Development Center](#), the ROC USA Network affiliate based out of Washington State.

LEAP and NWCDC will split the state up by the Mountain and Pacific time zones, respectively.

Though new to supporting residents as they adopt the ROC cooperative model, much of the work done at LEAP is routed in helping homeowners.

The idea of supporting homeowners at all levels to achieve affordability and security is one rooted in the work already being done at LEAP. Two of the programs are the Welcome Home program, which has connected 160 refugees with temporary transitional housing over the last two years, and the Yes You Can program, which has helped more than a dozen people purchase homes by coaching them through the process.

With this background, the team will also be utilizing the prior experience of Matt Fast, a veteran of ROC work who will

serve as the Program Manager for LEAP ROC. Prior to working at LEAP, Fast was the Program Director for ROC Northwest at NWCDC. One of his main jobs there was identifying and helping communities that were for sale become resident-owned.

"It's really a unique skill set," Cochran said of ROC work and the conversion process. "Matt has an eye for keeping us on track for where we want to go."

Fast is one of several who have taken their skills the other organizations throughout Network, something ROC USA President Bradley said shows the versatility of the work.

"One of the great things about this work is people are able to take what they've learned to new regions to help spread and implement the ROC model in new states," Bradley said. "It's a testament to the success of this model."

O'Hara said the addition and collaboration between the Network affiliates will be a boon for the state.

"A regional market development group has already been launched between ROC Northwest, [CASA of Oregon](#), [NeighborWorks Montana](#) and LEAP," she said.



**FAST**

# Building for best and worst of times

**FRIDLEY, Minn.** — [Park Plaza Cooperative](#) residents are set to achieve the goal they've had since becoming resident-owned in 2011: replacing their old storm shelter with a new one to better protect the community in an emergency.

Park Plaza's existing shelter is a small, windowless underground bunker that can accommodate only a fraction of the ROC's 200-plus residents. It also lacks electricity and is prone to flooding.

For years, the co-op has directed residents to a nearby hospital in times of severe weather, but for residents with



PHOTO COURTESY OF NATIVIDAD SEEFELD

The staging is set for construction on the new community center at Park Plaza Cooperative.

physical disabilities or without cars, the chances of making it to the hospital in time to avoid a weather event are slim, making the shelter's replacement a top priority.

Manufactured homes are typically built without a below-grade basement. That's

why Minnesota requires all manufactured home communities to have an on-site storm shelter in case of a tornado or other emergency.

In August, construction began on a combination storm shelter and community center, which will provide a safe, pleas-

ant place for the Co-op to gather for generations to come.

The bulk of the project was funded through a one-time Minnesota Housing grant program and a large chunk of the Co-op's reserve fund. Staff from the Northcountry Cooperative Foundation are helping Park Plaza with the project as well.

Park Plaza Board President Natividad Seefeld said, "I hope our success with this project will encourage other community owners to build or update their shelters in order to keep residents safe."

The work is expected to finish late this year.

## AFFILIATE PROFILE: ROC NORTHWEST

**MOSES LAKE, Wash.** — ROC USA's tagline, Better Together, is something we talk about often, be it our partnerships with affiliates or events like ROC Leadership Institute at which we gather to learn and share, and plenty more.

It also speaks to the benefits of scale: the efficiencies and savings made possible by working from the same script, using the same platforms and doing one thing one way really well — making resident ownership viable from coast to coast.

That cooperative mentality shaped ROC USA from the start as a way to allow affiliates to do the same work thousands of miles apart without reinventing the wheel at each turn. But a technical assistance provider in Washington is putting those same principles to work in Moses Lake, a city of about 20,000.

With the residents' purchase of [Up-](#)

[per Lake Shore](#) in October, Moses Lake and the immediate surrounding area is now home to five ROCs. ROC Northwest's Cristina Klatovsky sees this as an opportunity for each community to save and strengthen their collective voice. She said the ROC leaders see opportunities to approach the governments, vendors and more.



KLATOVSKY

"You've got 200 households that are taking action in affordable housing and preserving it for themselves," Klatovsky said. "How can you support them, celebrate what they have done?"

Moses Lake is in an isolated part of the state, far from other ROCs in western and eastern Washington. Leaders there say they want to use their strength in numbers to negotiate discounts locally the way ROC USA does nationally.

"They want to be able to negotiate preferred vendors," Klatovsky said. "If they use same septic, lawyer, plumb-



ROC Northwest

er, etc., would they extend a benefit to these ROC homeowners?"

She said the ROC population in Moses Lake is largely Hispanic farmworker immigrants — young families with three to four kids. They are very tight-knot neighborhoods whose Members are eager to help one another, despite being exhausted from demanding field work, which can be a seven-days-a-week proposition. Leaders want to be able to better help their neighbors with home repairs, for example, and Klatovsky sees an opportunity for them to come together for training.

"We need someone to teach them the basics of home improvement," she said. "We have the volunteers, but not the expertise. They can't do it alone, but they're very willing to help if they had some guidance."

# ROC USA publications offer a glance back and long look forward

After a decade of work, we're taking inventory of the past as we get ready for the future.

ROC USA® recently published our [10-year Report](#) and [Strategic Plan](#), both of which have been mailed out to the more than 200 ROCs across the U.S.

Our 10-year report tells the story of ROC USA primarily through the lens of three ROC Leaders. It's been an incredible decade for ROC USA and the entire Network, full of amazing achieve-

ments and innovations. We can't wait to see this growth continue over the next decade.

In this next phase, the goals laid out in the Strategic Plan include supporting ROC Leaders to build and drive the national resident-ownership movement; helping preserve another 4,000 homes through resident ownership; strengthening our Network Affiliates; and generating more resources for home and community improvements.

Engaging ROC Members in the process helps to create sustainable community changes. Our reason for being is the economic security and well-being of homeowners in ROCs, so raising up their voices and experiences in resident-ownership is vital to a healthy and growing network.

The documents are available for download online on [www.ROCUSA.org](http://www.ROCUSA.org) and [www.myROCUSA.org](http://www.myROCUSA.org). The Strategic Plan is also available in Spanish.

## *Income from solar array will fund improvements*

» **Solar**, From Page 1

The array will be built on a half-acre of land donated to the co-op by the neighboring Abundant Life Church of God. Construction began in early November. Steel stands were erected to hold the flat and deceptively heavy panels that face out from the front of the community.

The array's cost is covered by a \$168,000 grant from the Renewable Energy Fund managed by the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission, and by an impact investor through a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). The array will be installed by Brentwood-based Revision Energy

The PPA enables [Mascoma Meadows](#) co-op to access the long-term economic and environmental benefits of solar electricity, while providing an opportunity for investors who share their values. After five years, Mascoma Meadows can purchase the array, at a discount, with financing from the [New Hampshire Community Loan Fund](#).

Mascoma Board President Calvin Goude said he's excited for Mascoma Meadows to be the first ROC in the state to tackle this project.

"Manufactured home communities like ours are perfect places for sustainable-energy projects, and it will make the homes here even more affordable," he

said. "We appreciate the work the Vermont Law School and ROC-NH did to pull this project together and, of course, our neighbors at Abundant Life Church for donating the land. We never expected that!"

Though the first in New Hampshire, other ROCs are starting to tap solar energy to create extra savings for their residents as well.

Residents at [Lakeville Village](#) in Geneseo, N.Y., are working to install a solar field on a piece of land on their property.

They, too, have received help from their ROC USA Network® affiliate, [Pathstone Corporation](#). This, said Richard Nereau, head of the Solar Committee at Lakeville, has been vital in keeping the project going.

The 4-megawatt system (about 40 times bigger than the New Hampshire array) will be built on 20 acres by fall 2019. All the power produced by the system will be used in the surrounding area. Nereau said an estimated 2,500 homes and businesses are expected to benefit from the system.

RER Energy Group out of Reading, Pa., will lease the land from the cooperative, and cover the entire cost of installation and maintenance of the array.

Lakeville Estates residents will receive

a 10-percent discount on the cost of their electricity and about \$17,000 in income will be generated a year from the lease.

The revenue will be used to fund capital improvement projects, like road paving and creating a community center.

"It's guaranteed income and we get to use it to improve the community," said Board President Anne Radesi.

The money can also be used to maintain the lot rents for the community, as well as in cases of emergency, according to Alice Dunn, Board Treasurer.

For those interested in undergoing a similar project in their neighborhood, Nereau advised seeing what resources can be leveraged through town,

county or state governments.

Radesi agreed, adding that tax incentives are often available for businesses working with communities to install solar equipment. RER Energy Group is doing just that in order to get reimbursement for some of the costs for installing the array and will also working with the town to leverage a tax incentive program.

"Within New York state, they have different programs they are promoting for clean energy," she said. "You have to get a company that's ready to invest in your area."



**RADESI**

# 1st regional Spanish training a giant hit



Members of seven ROCs in Washington and Oregon came together for a regional training delivered entirely in Spanish, a first in ROC USA® Network. Trainers from CASA of Oregon and ROC Northwest said they wanted to make ROC Members whose first language is Spanish feel more included and comfortable — and that it was a resounding success.

**HOOD RIVER, Ore.** — A regional training designed to meet the needs of Spanish-speaking ROC Leaders was a resounding success, leaving leaders feeling empowered and inspired to further help their communities flourish.

This is the fifth year the Cascade ROC Conference (CROCC) was held, but the first time it was done entirely in Spanish. The region has many communities in which members either speak only Spanish or are more comfortable with the language. The idea was to help them understand information about their finances, board roles and more in a day-long training in their preferred language.

“We want you here. We want to connect with you,” said Julie Massa, Real Estate and Cooperative Development Organizing & Technical Assistance Manager for CASA of Oregon.

The learning started right away: The seven co-ops represented introduced themselves and their stories of how they became resident-owned.

“I’ve made a lot of notes and I want to learn more,” said Sophia Avalos of [Bella Vista Estates Cooperative](#) in Boardman, Ore.

Some of the other key take-aways included a better understanding of the importance of communications among Board Members; compassion when it comes to listening to other people’s opinions; identifying and learning how to utilize financial resources; how to make better decisions; and working with other communities to help make better decisions or consider more options.

A glossary of terms that can be used when going over balance sheets and other financial documents will prove to be immensely helpful as well, giving leaders a better understanding of what they are looking for.

“I think this is the beginning of good things to come for all of us,” said Gary Faucher, ROC USA Network’s National Training Manager.

The group consisted of ROC members who have been involved for as little as three days and as long as 10 years, when ROC USA took the resident-ownership model built at the New Hampshire Community Loan Fund to scale. For many, this was the first such training they had attended.

Many left feeling united, empowered

and ready to apply what they’d learned in their communities. Others said they felt better prepared to deal with any issues that might arise.

“First I’ll share how others deal with problems and how to be a better Board Member,” said Jose Cruz Farias of [Clackamas River Community Co-op](#) in Clackamas, Ore. “I feel we could do more.”

CROCC is hosted by both CASA of Oregon and ROC Northwest, the ROC USA Network affiliate in Washington. The inspiration to host the training for the dozen primarily Spanish-speaking ROCs was to facilitate and accommodate the learning of Spanish-speaking leaders.

Massa said having to pause to translate during English trainings is laborious and can double the time of the training sessions. Having either simultaneous translation or break-out groups is recommended for more successful trainings, she said.

“To me, we proved that the best practice is correct,” she said.

Regional trainings were also held in Massachusetts, Montana and Maine over the last few months. The collaborative events are a great way for ROC Leaders to learn both from the groups who support their communities as well as one another.

*[Some quotes have been translated.]*

Check us out online

 [www.facebook.com/rocusa.bettertogether](http://www.facebook.com/rocusa.bettertogether)

 @ROCUSAorg  
 [myROCUSA.org](http://myROCUSA.org)

## Texas ROC spared thanks to Board's diligence

After taking on a major project to improve the safety and quality of life in their community, the Board of Directors at [Pasadena Trails](#) is thrilled with the impact it's had on their ROC, particularly when Hurricane Harvey devastated much of the surrounding area.

For years, the Pasadena, Texas, community would flood during heavy rainfalls. This was a particular problem at the entrances of the community, making it unsafe for those coming and going. The back entrance was also used as the bus stop, and the flooding would leave kids soaked as they went to and from school.

Water would encroach on the houses as well, putting them at risk for damage.

"There were times when the water would come up to the first step of some homes," said Odalma Ortiz Rodriguez, treasurer for the democratically elected Board of Directors, which happens to be made up entirely of women.

But when Hurricane Harvey brought in record breaking winds and rain, the 127-



PHOTO COURTESY OF MILENA POLAK

Thanks to a project to address stormwater management, Pasadena Trails weathered the devastating Hurricane Harvey largely unscathed.

home ROC weathered the storm with no major damage. Though there was some brief flooding during the height of the storm, the water did not come up as high or stay nearly as long as it had in the past.

The Board planned a three-pronged approach to combat the flooding and other. First, the drainage ways were cleaned and new plumbing was installed to prevent build up from blocking the draining water.

Crews then installed more permanent, larger speed bumps. Many use the

neighborhood as a cut-through, at times driving faster than the posted speed limit. Board members said they've seen traffic slow down significantly, making it safer for those who live there.

The front entrances were widened, making it easier and safer for people to come in and out of Pasadena Trails.

Board Members said they were grateful for the support residents gave during the project, which took just over six months to complete. Though there was little disturbance of the daily traffic in the neighborhood, the bus stop did need to be temporarily moved to accommodate the widening work.

"People were very, very patient," Ortiz Rodriguez said. "It was a big adjustment, but people didn't complain. They knew it was going to be great when it was finished."

Pasadena Trails be a ROC since June 2009. Learn more about it at: [www.pasadenatrails.coop](http://www.pasadenatrails.coop).

*[Quotes have been translated.]*