



## Tax Credits in Missouri

### Interview with Director for Housing Development at NECAC

**Randy Porter, partner at Wallace Architects, interviewed Carla Potts, Deputy Director for Housing Development with the North East Community Action Corporation (NECAC), about Tax Credits issues of interest in Missouri.**

*Randy Porter: Congratulations on your recent election to serve as President of the Missouri Workforce Housing Association. What affordable housing challenges do you see in the immediate future and what can your colleagues in the affordable housing industry do to help overcome these challenges?*

Carla Potts: First, thank you. It is a great honor to be President of the Association and to work with so many people who are committed to affordable housing. There are many challenges as well as many opportunities. One of the biggest challenges are the recommendations from the Governor's Committee on Simple, Fair and Low Taxes. All of us in the affordable housing industry need to take this opportunity to invite our legislators to our LIHTC developments. All of us need to introduce our legislators to the people who make these developments their home; let them tell their stories about how decent, safe and affordable housing has enriched their lives. No one tells our story better than the people who call our developments home. All of us need to make sure our legislators see the faces behind numbers.

*Randy Porter: As Missouri's population continues to increase and our existing affordable housing inventory ages, how do we balance the need to revitalize the existing inventory with the need to increase the total quantity of units through new construction?*

Carla Potts: This is really the age-old issue for developers. We know we have an aging housing stock that needs to be revitalized. We also know that there is a shortage of quality affordable housing for families and for seniors. I think, as developers, we have to work with the community in each area of the state to determine their needs and desires. We need to always ensure that we work with each community and develop what best suits the needs of that community. That may be rehabilitating an existing building, a combination of rehabilitating and building new, or building new that meets the unique needs of each community.

*Randy Porter: You have an impressive history of service to affordable housing; can you share an example of how the state's affordable housing program has effected the life of a fellow Missourian.*

Carla Potts: I would love to do that. I have spent forty years in affordable housing and have seen firsthand the difference it makes in the lives of our residents. I have been very blessed to be a small part of the changes quality housing makes as people climb that ladder of opportunity. I will tell you the story of Marcia and Daniel. They moved into one of our LIHTC developments and became part of

the community. Marcia helped form and became President of the Resident Council. She and Daniel volunteered at every event and she always talked about how she wanted to help the children. They worked with other residents on Back to School Fairs; Easter and Christmas parties for the children; after school programs and many others. Both Daniel and Marcia wanted to get their GED's and knew others in the development did too. They worked and were able to find teachers and developed a GED program. Daniel has now completed his GED and has received 2 job promotions and is now a manager at this company. His future plans are to enroll in college courses in business management. Marcia is still working on her GED and plans to take the test soon. They have moved out of the LIHTC development and into a home of their own. They are just one example of the difference the LIHTC program makes in the lives of families and individuals.

*Randy Porter: The Governor's Committee on Simple, Fair and Low Taxes issued its recommendations on June 30. What impact do you see the recommendations having on the quantity of affordable housing units placed in production service annually?*

Carla Potts: I think it could have a large impact on the quantity of affordable housing units developed. However, I do want to emphasize that while this is a large challenge to the creation of affordable housing in Missouri, it can become an opportunity. This creates the opportunity for all affordable housing developers to let our residents tell our story. There is an image of LIHTC that we need to change. Who is better to tell that story than the people whose lives are being changed? Have your legislators visit; arrange events with them; have the media there. We can take this challenge and turn it into an opportunity for the affordable housing community.

## Kurt Wallace Honored at Missouri Workforce Housing Association Annual Meeting



The Missouri Workforce Housing Association held its annual meeting at Lodge of the Four Seasons

in Lake Ozark, Missouri, with over 250 attendees registered for the event. During the Conference, the 2017 Vision Award was presented posthumously to Kurt Wallace and received/accepted by Charlotte Wallace, his wife, and sons, Zac Wallace and Drew Wallace. The purpose of the award is to recognize an individual who has made an exemplary contribution in advocating for the preservation of the Affordable Housing State Tax Credit Program in the State of Missouri.

During the time that Kurt had served as president of the MOWHA Board, the Association membership grew from approximately 20 members just 8 years ago, to an over 120-member organization today. Kurt was a supporter of Affordable Housing well before MOWHA was established in 2009, partnering with developers, construction companies, management companies, and State agencies during his 40-year plus career, finding ways to improve the program both in rural and urban communities, in Missouri and on a National level. Kurt was more than an Architect, he was a conductor.

As part of the award recognition, gratitude for Kurt's mentorship was expressed by Chris Hite, of Sugar Creek Realty, and Jeff Smith, the Executive Director of MOWHA. Chris announced that this annual award will now be known as the Kurt Wallace Vision Award and that a scholarship fund has been established in Kurt's name with many of the MOWHA members providing generous contributions to the scholarship fund. These scholarships will be awarded to well deserving graduates of Windsor High School of Henry County, Missouri, where Kurt and Charlotte raised their family.

The award was graciously presented by Donald J. Rosemann of Rosemann & Associates, PC of Kansas City, Missouri. Don shared that he and Kurt, even though competing Architects, shared their struggles and achievements as professionals through the years. Don expressed that the goal of both firms was the improvement and availability of affordable housing rather than competing with each other. Don further expressed his heartfelt appreciation for their relationship that included a mutual concern for and love of family.

## Wallace Architects Volunteers Their Time for Humanity

Wallace Architects has partnered with Habitat for Humanity to give a hand up to families in their time of need.

This initiative provides opportunity for Wallace employees to volunteer their time and talents in helping their fellow Missouri residents.



This year, Wallace employees are working on site as a team to build beautiful homes, providing drafting services, and volunteering in the Habitat for Humanity ReStore. Wallace Architects LLC. has also donated a base package of Personal Protective Equipment including high visibility shirts, safety glasses, gloves and hard hats.

"Working with Habitat just seemed like such a natural fit for our organization" said Zac Wallace, partner at Wallace Architects. "I have wanted our firm to get involved with Habitat for a longtime and this year seemed like the right time to do that. Habitat's mission and our mission at Wallace Architects are closely aligned. Working with Habitat has been a great opportunity for our staff to get out into the field and use their unique skills and experience to make a positive impact on a few of our neighbors' lives. We truly believe in the work that Habitat for Humanity does. It is rewarding to be able to work with them and to help provide some much-needed affordable housing right here in our

own community."

**AboutHabitat for Humanity:**

Habitat for Humanity has been building homes in Boone County since 1989. Since then, they have completed 7-18 homes per year, over 146 homes in total. By providing affordable homeownership, families are given the foundation for a better life.

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