



Tom Bishop of Homestead Affordable Housing receives the Ad Astra Award at the Kansas Housing Conference in Wichita.

## **TOM BISHOP OF HOMESTEAD AFFORDABLE HOUSING NAMED 2011 HOUSING TRAILBLAZER**

--Bishop Honored for 25-Years of Leadership in Affordable Housing--

**Wichita** – Recognizing his 25 years of exemplary leadership in housing and community development, the Kansas Housing Conference presented the 2011 Affordable Housing Trail Blazer Award to Tom Bishop of Holton. Bishop, the founding member and Executive Director of Homestead Affordable Housing, has extensive experience in developing single and multi-family housing using a vast array of funding sources, including Low Income Housing Tax Credits, HOME funds, Federal Home Loan Bank’s Affordable Housing Program, Housing Trust Funds, Taxable Bonds, USDA Rural Development’s Section 502, 515 and 538 housing programs, as well as state and federal Historic Tax Credits.

Accepting the award, Bishop said Homestead Affordable Housing is simply a conduit. “My staff and I, we try to line up the financing pieces in the right way to create safe, quality housing for all families, regardless of income” said Bishop. “What really matters are the people who are able to rent or buy homes that can’t do so any other way.”

In 1986, Bishop came to Kansas from Indiana to become the Executive Director of Mennonite Housing Rehabilitation Services. Tom helped the Wichita non-profit grow from a home repair agency with ten employees and \$300,000 in revenue in 1986, to a comprehensive housing development agency with over 50 employees and average annual revenues of over \$4 million from 1994 to 1998.

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During his tenure, the agency:

- Built, rehabilitated and sold over 165 homes to low income households and trained over 1,800 households in home ownership.
- Developed 565 units of affordable rental housing; a total investment of \$30 million.
- Provided home rehabilitation and home repair services to over 700 families annually
- Enlisted thousands of local and national volunteers in community projects, such as "Paint the Town," "Repair Affair," and "Blitz-Build."

Richard Boyles, Area Manager for USDA Rural Development has partnered with Bishop on numerous developments and says Tom has been a mentor to many people in the housing industry. "Tom has a passion of putting together a project and understands the multiple, complex layers of financing that needs to go into today's affordable housing package," said Boyles. "I think the title of this award is the best way to refer to Tom. He truly is a trailblazer."

Bishop's additional career accomplishments include opening the Midwest Regional Office for the Housing Assistance Council to provide technical assistance, loan products and training to 13 Midwestern states. In his seven years with HAC he served as the Special Assets Manager working with troubled loans in HAC's loan national portfolio. He has also served as:

- Co-Chair of the Governor's Commission on Housing and Homelessness
- Public Interest Director of the Federal Home Loan Bank of Topeka and chair of the bank's Affordable Housing Advisory Council
- State Representative of the 91<sup>st</sup> District in the Kansas Legislature
- Governors Rural Life Task Force
- Trainer for regional and national events presented by the Housing Assistance Council, Rural Community Assistance Corporation, HUD's Office of Native American Programs, American Bankers Association and National American Indian Housing Council
- Chair, Kansas Volunteer Commission

As Homestead Affordable Housing's Executive Director, Tom helped the 501(c)3, non-profit and certified Community Housing Development Organization become a successful single and multi-family developer all across rural Kansas. Since 1998, Homestead has developed 261 units of senior affordable housing in seven rural communities: Augusta, Harper, Haysville, Junction City, Atchison, Holton and Wamego, and provided down payment grants to over 920 rural first time buyers in 188 rural Kansas communities.

Presented annually at the Kansas Housing Conference, the Ad Astra Awards celebrate housing advocates who consistently make a positive impact on their communities and the best practices of affordable housing developers, public housing authorities, community service organizations and others. Other award categories include Special Achievement in Affordable Housing Development, Excellence in Partnership and Innovation in Housing and Community Development.

For more information on Homestead Affordable Housing, visit their website at [www.homesteadks.org](http://www.homesteadks.org). To listen to Tom's acceptance speech, click [here](#). To find out more about the 2011 Ad Astra Awards, visit [www.kshousingconference.org](http://www.kshousingconference.org).

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