



Brian U. Stratton
Mayor

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF SCHENECTADY
NEW YORK

105 Jay St., City Hall, Room 111
Schenectady, NY 12305-1938
(518) 382 - 5199 ext. 5420
Fax : (518) 382-5272
mayor@nycap.rr.com

FOR RELEASE: Immediate
Tuesday, November 21, 2006

CONTACT: Mayor's Office
382-5000

Stratton Announces Affordable Housing Program

Schenectady HOME Program Uses Federal Grants to Remove Blight, Replace with New, Affordable Housing.

SCHENECTADY – Mayor Brian U. Stratton today announced the creation of a new program to provide increased opportunities for affordable housing for low-income families in the City of Schenectady.

The Schenectady HOME Program will use nearly \$1 million in federal grants beginning next year to fund the demolition of blighted structures to be replaced by new, energy-efficient homes constructed to universal design standards.

“The Schenectady HOME Program has been created as part of our citywide comprehensive plan, which – in addition to increasing code enforcement in all city neighborhoods -- calls for removing blighted housing and other structures, while providing more opportunities for lower-income families to own their own home,” Mayor Stratton said.

Mayor Stratton said the Schenectady HOME Program will be funded through ongoing federal grants awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to the Schenectady-Troy-Colonie HOME Consortium, a regional group that is headed up by the City of Schenectady.

Since 1999, Schenectady has directed nearly \$800,000 in federal HOME funds the city receives annually to the Schenectady Municipal Housing Authority for administration of the Schenectady Home Improvement Program (SHIP), which provides emergency home repairs to low-income homeowners. Starting next year, the city will discontinue the SHIP program and combine its federal HOME funding with other resources to establish the new Schenectady HOME program.

- more -

In addition to using its ongoing share of federal HOME funds to launch the new program, Schenectady will use \$1.1 million in federal funding recaptured from the Town of Colonie and the City of Troy. The Colonie and Troy funds to be recovered include previously allocated funds which went unused by the local governments during the grant period. Mayor Stratton says Schenectady expects to continue to receive about \$800,000 annually from HUD to fund the HOME program beyond 2007, and could further supplement that with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding.

Mayor Stratton said the new program will use up to \$145,000 to fund the demolition of up to eight previously identified properties in targeted neighborhoods. Schenectady will contract with two community housing development organizations to each construct up to four energy-efficient homes for eligible buyers. Community Land Trust and Better Neighborhoods, Inc. will each use \$292,138 in HOME Program funding to construct the single-family, owner-occupied homes to Universal Design standards.

The City of Schenectady will also direct up to \$280,000 in CDBG funding to support the addition of five code enforcement officers in 2007. Mayor Stratton proposed increasing the number of code enforcement officers from six to eleven in his 2007 budget, which was unanimously adopted by the City Council on October 27th.

Mayor Stratton said a portion of the program funds will be used to administer the program on a continuing basis by hiring a full-time director, who will begin in January.

While the city's SHIP program will no longer be offered, Mayor Stratton said the City of Schenectady will continue to provide limited funding to help eligible, low-income homeowners make vital repairs and improvements to their properties.

"The HOME Program has been established according to what the residents of the City of Schenectady believe is among the city's top priorities," Mayor Stratton said. As we go forward, we hope the program's success will enable Schenectady to increase funding to provide for a cleaner community, with more owner-occupied homes."

Definition of Terms:

Universal Design – Creating an environment designed with the flexibility to serve people of all ages and physical capabilities, while maintaining the atmosphere/character of conventional space design.

Energy Efficiency Application – Includes the utilization of a variety of Green technologies, including energy-saving heat systems, appliances, lighting fixtures, water-saving produces, recycling and the re-use of existing infrastructure.

Please see accompanying detail sheet.

###