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**PETERSON TELLS CITY CLUB: “CHA CAN’T WAIT”**

**Outlines Three Years of Progress at the Chicago Housing Authority  
Calls On Business Community to Help End Isolation of Residents  
November 14, 2002**

On the heels of announcing the beginning of work on a \$47 million mixed-finance redevelopment agreement at Hilliard Homes on Wednesday, Chicago Housing Authority Chief Executive Officer Terry Peterson said today that public housing residents “can’t wait” for redevelopment.

“Proof of our progress is everywhere and I’m very proud of what we have done, but there is still much more to do, and this chance to rebuild public housing will not come again” Peterson said, at a sold-out City Club luncheon.

Peterson evoked Dr. Martin Luther King’s passionate account of the 1963 Birmingham civil rights action, “Why We Can’t Wait,” and vowed to aggressively push ahead with the 10-year Plan for Transformation.

Peterson pointed out that the Hilliard agreement caps off three years in which the CHA has completed 11 redevelopment agreements, compared to just four in the decade before the Mayor took control of CHA in June of 1999.

He also highlighted other accomplishments, including:

- Completing almost 6000 new units toward the goal of 25,000.
- Successfully relocating approximately 2000 CHA families.
- Helping over 3000 CHA residents find work.
- Linking thousands of residents to social services through the Service Connectors Program.

Closing a \$47 million dollar budget deficit, cutting administrative staff by 80%, hiring professional property managers, and adopting three balanced budgets in a row without tapping reserves.

Achieving investment-grade bond ratings and becoming the first public housing agency in the country to issue bonds backed exclusively by federal funds.

Peterson called on Chicago’s business community to get involved by investing in redeveloped public housing communities, hiring CHA residents, and helping end the isolation of CHA neighborhoods.

“I want to enlist your support and participation. I want to energize you to get involved by bringing new stores and good jobs to our new CHA neighborhoods,” he said.

He added, “the vast majority of our residents are hard-working, law-abiding people who want the same things in life as you and I: a decent job, a nice place to raise their family and a good quality of life.

In his remarks, Peterson talked about several CHA residents who have begun building better lives, including:

- Cynthia Baldwin, a former scattered site resident, is a supervisor at Rush-Presbyterian and is pursuing a Masters in Business Administration.
- LaToya Wolfe, who lives in Robert Taylor, is studying fiction writing at Columbia College.
- Ganelli McDonald grew up at Madden Homes and is attending Olive-Harvey College. She will be the first in her family to graduate college.
- Roxanne Wyatt is a former substance abuser who received help through the Service Connector and now does outreach work at Lathrop Homes.
- Jose Cruz, a community activist and scattered site resident, currently attends the University of Illinois.

Peterson said that, in the coming year, the CHA will complete up to 14,000 units, including all senior and scattered site properties, and return more residents to CHA than are moving out. The agency also expects to begin work at seven of its nine planned major mixed-income developments.

“These are considerable achievements, but ultimately we measure success not in square footage or bricks and mortar, but in terms of human success,” Peterson said.

He added, “I’ll know we have succeeded when the public housing apartment looks just like the market-rate home next door and the children of those two households are playing together on the sidewalk.”

Peterson concluded, “I’ll know we have succeeded when CHA neighborhoods look and feel just like yours and mine and when children in public housing wake up each day in a safe, decent home and walk into a world without barriers and borders to their dreams and goals. Until that day comes, we still have work to do.”