NPU, ECHO partner on $500,000 rehabilitation of 32 housing units

In February, Norwich Public Utilities (NPU) announced an investment of $500,000 through a Connecticut Housing Finance Authority’s tax credit program to rehabilitate 32 affordable family rental units in Norwich that are owned and operated by Eastern Connecticut Housing Opportunities (ECHO).

“Today, more than ever, NPU is committed to making Norwich a better place to live, work and do business. And today’s investment of $500,000 to improve the quality of 32 units of affordable family housing in our city is the latest example of that commitment,” said John Bilda, General Manager of NPU.

The funding from NPU was made available through the State of Connecticut’s Housing Tax Credit Contribution Program, which allows organizations to make contributions to eligible non-profit agencies in lieu of paying a portion of their Gross Revenue Tax bill. NPU’s Gross Revenue Tax liability, which is applied to the purchase of natural gas and electricity, was approximately $2.3 million in FY 2017.

NPU’s investment will support critical repairs and renovations at two affordable family housing developments:

- 17 units located at 91 South Second Avenue in Taftville
- 15 units within the Mechanic Street Apartments, consisting of 9 buildings at 23-79 Mechanic Street and 104 Mt. Pleasant Street

“NPU has been a steadfast partner of ECHO since 2004, contributing more than $4.5 million to improve 199 units of affordable family housing in Norwich,” said Peter Battles, Executive Director of ECHO. “Because of the generosity and commitment of NPU, hundreds of low-income families are living in cleaner, nicer homes in Norwich.” ECHO has owned and operated both developments benefiting from today’s announcement for a number of years. But despite ongoing maintenance efforts, both developments now require additional rehabilitation due to the age of the buildings.

The rehabilitation work includes the full renovation of 15 unit interiors divided between the two developments and consisting of new kitchen cabinets, counter tops, sinks and faucets; new bath vanities and toilets; replacement of flooring and extensive painting; new kitchen appliances; and new exhaust fans and smoke / CO detectors.

In addition, the Mechanic Street Apartments will undergo major exterior repairs, including the replacement of deteriorated aluminum siding with vinyl, replacement of porch decking / entry stair railings, and replacement of selected doors.

Both properties are occupied and will remain so during the rehabilitation, which is already underway and should be completed by the end of the year. Renovation of unit interiors will take place in vacant units as tenant turnover takes occurs, avoiding any temporary relocations.

According to ECHO, there is a critical need in Norwich and the region for quality rental accommodations for low-income families.

About ECHO

Eastern Connecticut Housing Opportunities (ECHO) was established in 1989 with the mission of providing affordable housing for families in Eastern Connecticut whose income is too low to support the purchase or rental of a home at market rates in the communities in which they work and wish to live.

For more information about these rebates or any of our residential efficiency programs, contact Katie at 860.823.4514 or katiemoors@npumail.com.
A minute with the Mayor: Let's end blight together

With the winter weather finally behind us, Norwich residents will likely undertake a little spring cleaning in the weeks ahead. And as these domestic projects get underway, many people will need to dispose of bulky waste – items that are too big for regular garbage disposal but too small to take to the City’s Transfer Station on Rogers Road.

An easy – and free – solution to this problem is to contact Willimantic Waste to schedule a pickup by calling 860.423.4527. This important service is provided to homeowners and renters alike. It is critical that items are not placed on your curb until you have scheduled a pickup. Following your regular pick-up, all garbage cans must be removed from the sidewalks and returned to the owners’ property, preferably to the rear of the property.

As part of their contract with the City, every resident of Norwich is allowed two bulky waste pickups a year by Willimantic Waste, provided you follow their guidelines:

- The amount of material to be placed on the curb cannot be any bigger than what could fit into the bed of a pickup truck.
- A maximum of two pieces of household furniture – including mattresses – can be picked up.
- Two appliances can be picked up; any appliance containing Freon (refrigerator, freezer, dehumidifiers) will be subject to a $10 environmental fee, which will be billed separately. Refrigerator doors must be removed before pickup.
- A maximum of four car / small truck tires can be picked up, provided they are not on metal rims; no large truck tires will be picked up.
- Any pieces of metal cannot exceed four feet wide or 50 pounds; no propane tanks will be picked up.
- Electronic waste – TVs, stereos, computers, etc., will not be accepted.
- Construction debris – including showers, sinks, tubs, toilets, sheetrock, shingles, etc., will not be picked up and should be taken to the Transfer Station.
- Larger quantities of materials should be taken to the City’s Transfer Station on Rogers Road.

In the weeks ahead, the City of Norwich will be stepping up the enforcement of our blight ordinances. Residents who attempt to dispose of bulky waste in an irresponsible and illegal manner will be subject to possible arrest and fines of $50.00 to $100.00 per day.

Blight fines will be levied after 30 days and any waste left on the sidewalk will be considered illegal dumping unless a pickup has been scheduled. Residents will be notified in person or through the mail if illegal dumping is observed.

For more information, please contact Norwich Public Works at 860.823.3798 or visit http://www.norwichct.org/616/Solid-Waste-Program

I strongly encourage everyone in our community to take pride in Norwich and keep our city safe and clean.

Call Before You Dig

Do you know what may be in the ground where you are planning to install a deck, a tree or shrub, or even a new mailbox post?

Did you know there could be natural gas pipelines, water lines or electrical wires buried under the surface of your yard? Don’t take chances.

Before you start any outdoor project that requires digging, Call Before You Dig.

Contact Call Before You Dig (CBYD) at 8-1-1 to ensure that the area you plan to dig is clear from any underground utility. By making one phone call, your local utility company, phone company and cable company will be notified by CBYD and will mark out the locations of any wires or pipelines buried in the area where you plan to work.

For more information about the Call Before You Dig program, visit visit http://www.norwichct.org/616/Solid-Waste-Program

Norwich Public Utilities (NPU) and the Norwich Arts Center (NAC) partnered on a significant heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) upgrade at the organization’s building at 60-64 Broadway in Downtown Norwich. The project, which was completed earlier this month, earned the nonprofit a rebate of $9,250 through NPU’s Cool Choice program.

In 2017, the NAC expressed an interest in upgrading their ventilation and cooling system to help the organization to accommodate more programs and events during the summer months of the year.

After research and discussion with NPU, it was determined that the project would be eligible for a rebate through the utilities’ Cool Choice program, which promotes energy savings, lower cooling costs, and a positive impact on the environment. Rebates are available to NPU’s commercial, industrial, institutional / agricultural and residential electric customers to help defray the cost of buying high-efficiency HVAC systems.

NPU provides $9,250 rebate to NAC

Good-bye Winter!