

# Telamon—Virginia

October 2009

*Empowering Individuals, Improving Communities*

Volume 12, Edition 3

## Message from the State Director Sharon Saldarriaga

Once again, we enter the Fall season with renewed energy and purpose. Many of our farmworker customers have entered training to start on the career pathways that will lead them to self-sufficiency. For some, it means learning English; for others, it is learning new occupational skills. Many of our housing clients are taking the first steps to becoming first-time home buyers while others are receiving weatherization services to make their homes more efficient.

With the increased focus on green jobs and increased energy efficiency, Telamon in Virginia is applying green principles throughout its operations. Staff working with our National Farmworker Jobs Program  
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## The Start of a New Beginning for Three Pittsylvania County Families

By Lynita Falls  
Housing Counselor, Gretna

As Telamon - Gretna nears the end of its' two year Affordable Housing Program funded by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, we take a moment to reflect on the products that we have produced in helping more families achieve the American Dream. On a dark and rainy day in June, Telamon Corporation and Rural Housing joined together to celebrate the achievement of homeownership once again. In the hearts of our three families, the sun was shining brightly. Three families - the Dixon family, the Lipscomb family, and the White family were eager to close on their mortgage loans and move into three of the homes that were constructed through Telamon's



Beverly Heights project in Pittsylvania County, west of Chatham.

Speakers at the program include William Pritchett, Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors - Banister District; District Director for Congressman Perriello's Office; Byron Water, Housing Program Director for Rural Development- Virginia; Robin Roark, Homeownership Project Manager, Telamon Corporation- Gretna; Mary Beth White, Homeowner; Bruce Oliver, Potential Homeowner; Lynita Falls, Housing Counselor, Telamon Corporation- Gretna.

Mr. Pritchett welcomed the attendees to Pittsylvania County. He praised the services that are offered through Telamon along with the families that are achieving their dreams. Although Congressman Tom Perriello had a conflict in scheduling and could not make the celebration, his District Director, Ridge Schuyler spoke on his behalf. Schuyler reflected on his days

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## A Telamon Success

By Dianne Areanas, Retional Manager and Jessica Garcia, Program Assistant, Exmore

In June 2008, James Carrington came to Telamon Corporation expressing a deep interest in becoming a welder. He had taken some classes in high school but wanted to be certified. James had been working in agriculture since 2006 and was ready for a career change. Telamon staff helped James enroll in a welding class at Eastern Shore Community College where he worked hard for a year and graduated with a Welding Certificate. Telamon assisted James with tuition, tools and financial assistance to enable him to concentrate on his classes. James also continued to work while attending school.

When James graduated in the spring of 2009, we helped James develop a resume and prepare for the application and interview process. James was now ready for the legwork. After putting in several applications, he secured employment with Northrop Grumman at their Newport News shipyard where he is working as a full-time Welder. Telamon is assisting James with his relocation to Newport News where he will be living closer to his job. We are very proud of what James has accomplished!



James Carrington

## Gretna Is Going Green(er)!

By Mayra Nickerson, Deputy State Director

As a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) for the City of Danville, Telamon-Gretna has been helping to create affordable housing since 1996. To date they have rehabilitated twenty-five homes in the City of Danville. In 2000, in partnership with the City of Danville and the Danville Redevelopment and Housing Authority, Gretna also built three new infill houses in the inner city. As with all the other houses they build or rehab, in or out of the city, these were set aside for low to moderate income individuals.

It is clear that rehab and infill construction in the city also helps to revitalize the older neighborhoods. What is not so evident, however, is that the process of rehabilitation is inherently green. The rehab and reuse of existing properties or infill construction in a city, helps conserve resources and existing infrastructure. It is anti-sprawl.

However, the use of green building techniques have until recently been confined to their new construction projects. For example, two of the six homes in the Beverly Heights Project in Pittsylvania County included green building elements such

as conditioned crawl spaces, sealing gaps or openings around electrical switch plates, electric lines and pipes, and installing smaller septic tank drain lines. There is no reason though why green building and related energy efficiency cannot be incorporated into the rehab work as well.

So, after examining cost and cost effectiveness (both to Telamon and to the future homeowner), Gretna "greened" the rehab specifications for a 1960's house currently being rehabbed in Danville. The greening includes elements such as the use of zero VOC paints and adhesives, installing low-e windows, refurbishing wood floors, installing energy efficient light bulbs, and incorporating native species into the landscape. All of these improvements will help maintain a healthy indoor environment as well as keep the future owner's home maintenance costs down.

Telamon-Gretna plans to green rehab at least one more home in the City of Danville in the next year. Gretna's Homeownership Project Manager, Robin Roark, and Housing Counselor, Lynita Falls, will be attending an EarthCraft Single Family Home Construction workshop with

Deputy State Director, Mayra Nickerson, in November. Their world is looking greener by the minute. Go Gretna!

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have received training in green jobs, our housing programs are greening up their specifications (see article on page 2), and our offices are increasing recycling efforts. Our hope is that in addition to helping prepare our customers for better jobs in green industries and helping people conserve on their utility bills, we can all do our part to recycle materials and preserve our environment.

Finally, in light of the coming holiday season, let's remember to give thanks to those farmworkers who continue to struggle daily, performing difficult labor that puts food on our table. Those workers, along with many others who remain disenfranchised, provide immeasurable and generally unnoticed contributions to our lives.

### Fundraising Event



Marcela Charris (Center) and Nelson Diaz (far right)

On Friday, September 25th, the Richmond office had a Latin Night Gala at Papa Ningo's to raise funds to ensure

that services for farmworkers continue. We enjoyed Salsa lessons from Telamon's own, Nelson Diaz, and had Zumba lessons with Marcela Charris, who teaches Zumba throughout the Richmond area. There were some new faces learning about Telamon and our mission and some old friends we hadn't seen in some time!



Gala Attendees: Carlos & Cecily Rodriguez

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of being a renter and later purchased a condo.

"Everyone needs a safe haven with security and owning a home provided that for me," said Schulyer. He indicated that in today's economy, when some people have seen home ownership slip away, it is good to celebrate those who are looking for the American Dream of home ownership and who are achieving that dream. Schulyer talked about how Congress has passed the Stimulus Bill offering tax incentives up-to \$8,000 to first time homebuyers who purchase housing before December 1, 2009, and the Making Homes Affordable Bill that works to help homeowners remain in their homes.

Byron Waters from Rural Development spoke on the partnership between Telamon and Rural Development and how the two agencies work together to help make homeownership affordable. Waters also complimented the quality of the construction of the houses that were built by Telamon. "Owning a home is the foundation of America's individual freedom," stated Waters. Robin Roark of Telamon thanked the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development for funding

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### Staff Notes

Welcome to Wendy McRae, Secretary for the South Hill Office.

Congratulations to Maria Roe on successfully opening our new office in Montross, VA. The physical address is 15885 Kings Highway. It is conveniently located between the Post Office and Town Hall. There is plenty of parking behind the new office.

## The Start of a New Beginning for Three Pittsylvania County Families (Cont'd.)

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this affordable homeowner-ship project. She also commented on how homeownership creates a sense of pride and a homeowner is able to do what he/she wants to do with the house without a landlord's permission. "Today, we are achieving a milestone; five of the six homes in this project are sold", said Roark. Unfortunately, the Dixon and Lipscomb families were not able to attend the event. However, families representing the three phases of the program were in attendance. Cindy Martin, who purchased the first house in the Beverly Heights project, spoke about the past year's experiences. She and her son love living in Beverly Heights. "We will be celebrating our one year anniversary on July 3, 2009. It is wonderful - the classes that Telamon offered have taught me ways to stick to a budget. If you want to be a homeowner, stick to your plan. I'm not going to mess that up. We are homeowners is a feeling of accomplishment to come true," said Oliver. "When you see something you have always wanted start Oliver. The Oliver's will be purchasing one of the homes Telamon will be

and we are loving it," stated Martin.

Mary Beth White spoke about the past six months and how she got to this point. She commented about how difficult it was to make the first phone call to inquire about purchasing a house and how glad she was that she made that call. Fighting back tears, White knows that she will have a place to call home and she will no longer have to pay monthly rent to a landlord. "This will be a place for my children and me," said White. "I can do with the house what I want to do and not ask permission from the landlord." Lynita Falls and David Worley presented a ceremony key to the property located at 925 Weal Road to White, who would be closing on her home the following week.

Bruce Oliver, along with his wife, Felicia and daughter, Autumn, are in the application process. The Olivers have thought about homeownership a lot; however, it had only been something they could imagine and never thought they could achieve. "It is a blessing when you see a dream, . We will soon have a home that we can invite family and friends to come over," explained

constructing on W. I. Powell Road in Dry Fork.

In closing, Falls looked back at the thought of homeownership and how it reflects on her clients. Homeownership in general makes me think of a childhood story, *The Little Engine that Could*. Homeownership comes to those who believe in themselves and prepare for homeownership," stated Falls, who is a Homeownership Counselor at the Gretna Telamon office. "I have many clients that come across my desk that want to purchase housing; however, without the will power - I think I can, I think I can - many do not achieve their goal," said Falls. As a symbolic memento from this day, Falls presented Ms. White with an "engine" shaped magnet. Following the ceremony, the houses were opened and available to be toured.

