

The RHA IN FOCUS

Newsletter 2021

OCTOBER



WORK CONTINUES ON THE DECONSTRUCTION OF THE FORMER BREWINGTON OAKS HIGH RISES

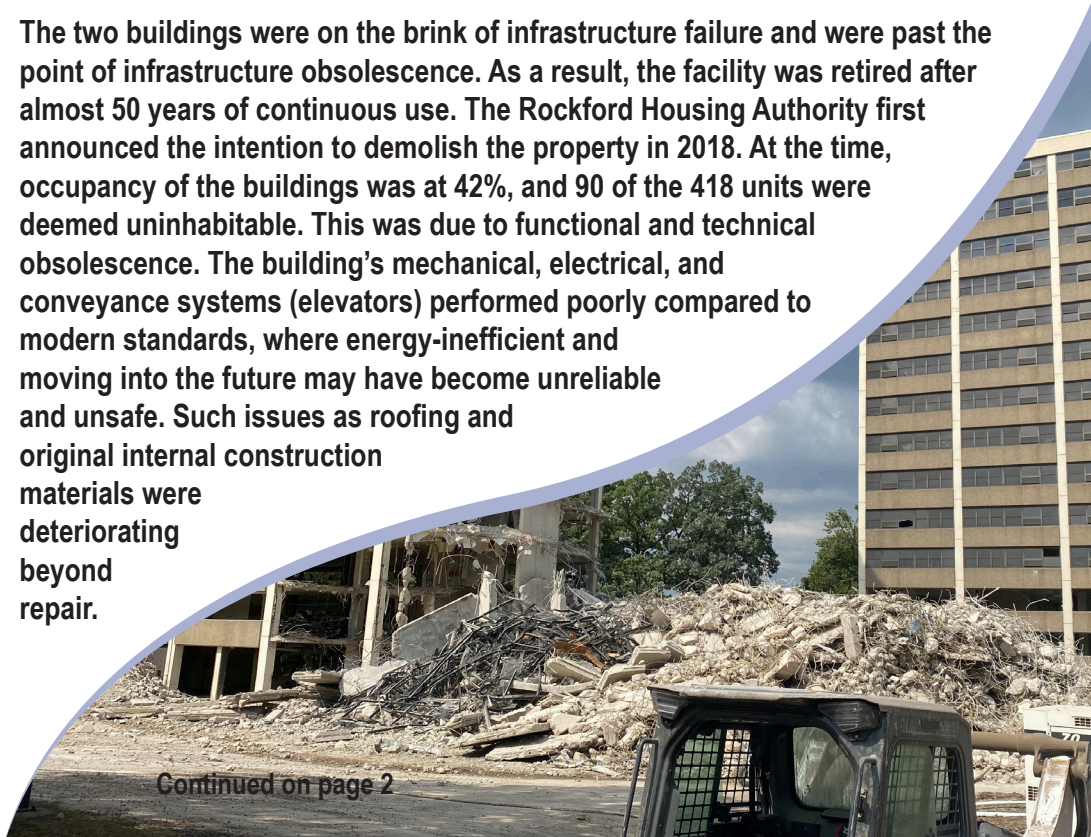
Work continues on schedule, as the deconstruction on the aging towers of the former Brewington Oaks Apartments. Safe and prudent demolition of the building has been the top priority of the Rockford Housing Authority. As of the end of September, the 1960s-era Tower-A was already below the skyline.

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The two buildings were on the brink of infrastructure failure and were past the point of infrastructure obsolescence. As a result, the facility was retired after almost 50 years of continuous use. The Rockford Housing Authority first announced the intention to demolish the property in 2018. At the time, occupancy of the buildings was at 42%, and 90 of the 418 units were deemed uninhabitable. This was due to functional and technical obsolescence. The building's mechanical, electrical, and conveyance systems (elevators) performed poorly compared to modern standards, where energy-inefficient and moving into the future may have become unreliable and unsafe. Such issues as roofing and original internal construction materials were deteriorating beyond repair.

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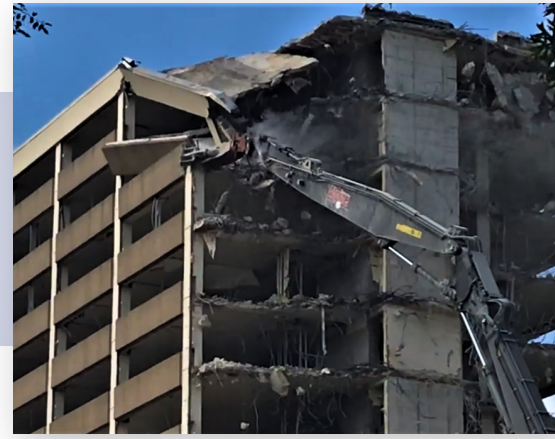


The annual maintenance, repair, and replacement costs were accelerating and increasingly unaffordable. Bringing the aging structure up to today's building codes to ensure the best for the RHA residents was always top-of-mind for the RHA Facilities Managers. "Community input is essential to make sure whatever is there in the future (is) something our neighbors and the community can be proud of," stated Laura Synder, RHA, CEO. "We know the location of the former Rockford College was a crown jewel of the community, and we also envision that this setting along the Rock River is an important element to the near downtown and the newly rebuilt Morgan Street Bridge. Improving the safety, value, and health of our neighborhoods is an enduring vision of Board of Commissions of RHA," concludes Ms. Snyder.

RHA Commissioners awarded a \$1,544,400 demolition contract to N-TRAK Group of Loves Park to raze the twin 14-story towers at 505 and 515 Seminary Street. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development gave RHA permission to demolish the two buildings in 2018. Still, RHA asked developers to submit requests for qualifications to redevelop the site possibly. The site contains 5.35 acres. In total, the two buildings had included 233,281 square feet.

To Learn More about Brewington Oaks please visit the RHA InFocus May 2021 Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 5, page 3.
<https://www.rockfordha.org/newsletters/>



DIRECTOR'S SPOTLIGHT

Linda Theus has been with Rockford Housing Authority for more than 3 years serving as a Janitress within our Maintenance Department. During her time here, Linda has shown that she is extremely dedicated to meeting both the RHA standard for housing quality as well as the quality of life for RHA residents.

Linda works tirelessly to clean units in order to provide a respectable home for RHA's newest residents. She is enthusiastic, energetic, and cheerful in helping to get those resident's new home ready for move in. These efforts are evident by her endless dedication and willingness to go above and beyond, often volunteering to work overtime as needed, which benefits our staff, residents, and the community as a whole.

"Linda has cleaned 90% of the Scattered sites houses, and we have never had any complaints. RHA has benefited by having not only a great employee but a wonderful person. She is an integral part of the RHA family " states Lisa Olson, Property Manager of Scattered Sites/Bridge Rockford.

Her continuous dedication to the well-being of our residents and her devotion to the RHA family, demonstrates RHA's Vision, Mission, and Core Values in a superlative manner. Her attention to detail sets the RHA standard apart from other public housing options.

We are proud to have Linda as a team member and we look forward to her future with RHA. Congratulations and well-done, Linda.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY

Make a Difference Day was created in 1992 by USA WEEKEND magazine and joined by Points of Light. The day is celebrated on the fourth Saturday in October. Together the two companies sponsored the most important national day of community service for more than 20 years. While the companies no longer support Make a Difference Day, the day still impacts communities around the country. For example:

- Laurence Segal's Cans For Cancer (Bottles 4 A Cure) collects bottles and cans each year in the name of Make A Difference Day. The proceeds are donated to cancer research.
- The Center for Nonprofit Management at MSU Texas in Wichita Falls, Texas, promotes an event in the spirit of the day, too. Check out their calendar of events for dates and times.
- Central School of Grand Cane, Louisiana, will participate by spending the day sanding and painting picnic tables. The National Honor Society members are volunteering their time for this project.

For more than 20 years, organizations have helped others out all across the country during this weekend. However, they decide to do it. They are making a difference in the lives of others and their communities. Here are some ideas on how you can observe National Make a Difference Day:

- Volunteer in your community or for an organization
- Be a mentor. Help a youth or another professional to gain new skills.
- Donate to a charity with meaning to you.
- Say a kind word of support to someone who is struggling.
- Put your skills to work. Sometimes our hobbies can bring joy to others in ways we least expect it.

However you decide to observe this day, RHA wishes everyone a joyous and fantastic day!





BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Every October we recognize Breast Cancer Awareness Month, an annual campaign to increase awareness. The observance was established in 1985 as a partnership between the American Cancer Society and the pharmaceutical division of Imperial Chemical Industries. Betty Ford helped kick off the then week-long event; she was a breast cancer survivor. Before the end of 1990, the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation began incorporating pink into the cause by handing out the light pink ribbon we see today. The foundation was the first to use the light pink, but they weren't the ones to popularize it; that happened in 1992 when Self Magazine teamed up with Estee Lauder. They created a Breast Cancer Awareness issue, and that year over 1.5 million pink ribbons were handed out, and the cause produced 200,000 petitions that urged the White House to put more funding into cancer research.

The goal of Breast Cancer Awareness Month is always to educate women about breast cancer and breast health. One of the critical goals that wanted to be achieved was to promote mammograms as an essential tool in breast cancer research. Breast self-examining is another good tool, especially to spot early signs of Breast Cancer. While there is no single test that can detect all breast cancers early, many doctors believe that performing breast self-exam and other screening methods can increase the odds of early detection. If you have questions about how to check yourself, please contact your doctor.

Here in Rockford The American Cancer Society has a branch of Making Strides Against Breast Cancer. Making Strides is an annual charity walk to “unite communities in the fight against breast cancer.” Every October, Making Strides has a walk to raise money for breast cancer research. This year on October 9th, Making Strides is having their annual charity walk at Rock Valley College at 8:00 AM. This is a free event and all donations will be used to support The American Cancer Society to continue the fight to prevent, find, and treat breast cancer. You can find out more information and donate here: https://secure.acsevents.org/site/STR?pg=entry&fr_id=100954

HALLOWEEN- ORIGINS, HISTORY, AND TRADITIONS

The night of October 31 is a night of spooky activities, people dressing up, going trick-or-treating, or enjoy costume contests. Halloween's traditional origin was associated with the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, where people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off ghosts. Until, May 13, 609 A.D., Pope Boniface IV dedicated the Pantheon in Rome in honor of all Christian martyrs. Then in the eighth century, Pope Gregory III designated November 1 as a time to honor all saints. The evening that we know now as “Halloween” was known before as “All Hallows Eve.”

In the United States, the celebration of Halloween was limited in colonial New England because of the Protestant beliefs systems. It was mainly celebrated in the southern colonies. As different European immigrants came to America the customs integrated quick. The first traditional celebration of Halloween were called “play parties” where people would celebrate the harvest, share stories of the dead, dance, and sing.

ALL SAINTS' DAY

On November 1, many Roman Catholics and other Christians observe All Saints Day, a day that honors all saints of the church, known and unknown, particularly those who have no special days of their own. Traditionally, the day is celebrated with offerings to the deceased, visiting graves with candles, flowers, and making sure they are clean. All Saints' Day is closely tied with All Souls' Day, held on November 2, dedicated to prayers of the dead who are not yet glorified.

DAY OF THE DEAD

Day of the Dead is a Mexican holiday celebrated in Mexico and elsewhere associated with the celebrations of All Saints Day and is held on November 1st and 2nd. It is celebrated by friends and family gathering to pray and remember friends and family members who have passed. It is commonly portrayed as a celebration with candy skulls, alters with offerings, and drinking the favorite drink of the passed ancestors.

TRADITIONS

Celebrations of Halloween in America include carving pumpkins, costume contests, watching scary movies, and trick-or-treating. The art of carving pumpkins and illuminating their faces is a tell-tale sign of the Halloween season. The practice of decorating jack-o-lanterns originated in Ireland, where they used large turnips and potatoes. When Irish immigrants came to America, the home of the pumpkin, the tradition became an integral part of Halloween.

However, you decide to celebrate Halloween this year; RHA wishes you a fun, safe, and spooky Halloween!

LISTED BELOW ARE NEW JOB ASSIGNMENTS AT RHA FOR SEVERAL OF OUR EMPLOYEES.



ALEX KEEDI serves as the Jobs Plus Program Manager overseeing the Jobs Plus Initiative at Rockford Housing Authority. Throughout his career, he has worked alongside community members and individuals in the Rockford area since 2013, aiming to ease the burdens of life and the barriers to self-sufficiency that low-income individuals face daily.

He received his Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Northern Illinois University and immediately sought to impact his community back home in Rockford.



LYNN FEIRN serves as the position of LIPH Program Manager. Lynn is no newcomer to property management as she has 8 years of property maintenance experience and 21 years of property management experience. She has been with the housing authority for 12 years and has held various management positions throughout RHA, most recently as property manager of Blackhawk Courts.

She holds many property management certifications and has held an Illinois Managing Real Estate Broker license for the past 5 years. Prior to joining RHA, she worked as a Real Estate broker and in private property management.



TROY HADIE began his career with the Rockford Housing Authority in March 1992. Throughout his 29 year career, Troy has played an integral part in creating our maintenance trainee program, raising the bar, and setting the standard by which our maintenance team operates. As the Foreman of RHA's Blackhawk Courts and Fairgrounds Valley properties, Troy works alongside our property management team in maintaining these facilities.

NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION MONTH

October is National Economic Education Month! The Georgia Council founded this observance [on Economic Education](https://www.gcee.org/econ-ed-month) in 2021 to promote the importance of economics in the education systems and help prepare students for roles as workers, entrepreneurs, consumers, savers, and investors. The Georgia Council is holding a series of webinars to celebrate the month. You can find the webinar series here: <https://www.gcee.org/econ-ed-month>

Economics is all around us and teaches us that making choices come with costs. Students with a clear understanding of economic principles will make more educated decisions regarding money, whether that be saving, spending, or borrowing. Preparing the younger generation for success in life involves teaching them critical decision-making skills when they are young; providing teachers with innovative education opportunities is one of the essential steps.

HOW TO OBSERVE NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION MONTH

Throughout October, educators and parents can promote economic education in many ways:

- Have conversations with your children about how you made decisions about buying a house, getting a loan, or having a mortgage
- Teachers can invite community and business leaders to talk with their students about their life decision-making process
- Use #NationalEconomicEducationMonth to join the conversation and share your experiences with economic education.
- Teachers can go to [gcee.org](https://www.gcee.org) to learn about economics competitions or register for a workshop.

Overall, economic education is a valuable tool to know and learn. Please share this with a teacher, parent, student, or individual that may benefit from these resources!





Rockford Housing Authority
223 S Winnebago Street
Rockford, IL 61102

THE ANNUAL CONSTRUCTION TRADES CONVENTION: WOMEN AT WORK

This year was the first year of the Annual Construction Trades Convention: Women at Work. Rockford Housing Authority and Project First Rate are pleased with the number of attendees and local businesses participating in such a fantastic resource. Here is a highlight of some of the topics that were covered in the convention:

- Discussed how the attendees can become financially independent through rewarding careers in the union construction industry, including how to join registered apprenticeship programs.
- The participants heard stories and experiences from women in the trades as well as entrepreneurs from the construction industry
- In addition, the convention attendees learned about the local programs and resources available to help them prepare to apply for apprenticeship programs.
- Attendees gained insight about the national movement of tradeswomen gaining ground in the industry

THE CONSTRUCTION TRADE CONVENTION: Women at Work was an opportunity to learn from women in the trades such as construction, painting, and electricians. This was an opportunity to explore the Apprentice Trainee Positions available. The trades industry is a male-dominated career, but many women still work and love these jobs. Rockford Housing Authority and Project First Rate are excited for our convention next year.

If you were unable to attend the 2021 Construction Trades Convention: Women at Work, it's not too late. Please follow the link here to see a recorded playback of the Convention: <https://www.rockfordha.org/annual-construction-trades-convention-women-at-work/>

