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Winona Receives \$10,000 to Rebuild After Flood

City and County Plan to Study Post-Flood Housing Needs of Area

St. Paul, Minn. (April 6, 2008) – This week, the City of Winona, in partnership with Southeastern Minnesota Multi-County HRA, received \$10,000 from the Minnesota Housing Partnership to address the area's housing shortage. The grant will fund a comprehensive housing study and action plan for the City and County of Winona, including recommendations on the appropriate mix of supportive, subsidized, and market rate homes.

Last August, major flooding in Southeastern Minnesota damaged over 100 businesses and 400 homes in Winona County alone. Estimates put the disaster damage at over \$28 million in property damage in Winona County, including a large number of homes.

"The City is very pleased with the support of the Minnesota Housing Partnership's assistance," said Lucy McMartin, program development director with the City of Winona. "Their support is instrumental to carry out the study which will help maintain and create affordable housing for Winona and the area."

Prior to the flood, Winona was already challenged to provide adequate housing for everyone. The majority of the area's housing stock was constructed over 60 years ago requiring updates and rehabilitation. The area also has a high student population, prompting many property owners to convert single family homes to rental. This causes difficulty in creating the appropriate balance of rental and owner-occupied homes. Lastly, Winona's limited amount of usable land makes new development difficult.

The Minnesota Housing Wage, the hourly wage needed to affordably rent an average two bedroom apartment, is now up to \$14.69 from \$14.47 at the end of 2006. Minnesota has experienced a 27 percent increase in its housing wage since 2000. The report also showed that renters in the Twin Cities must earn at least \$16.31 per hour to afford a modest two bedroom apartment, but the average Twin Cities renter only makes \$13.77. Go to the National Low Income Housing Coalition's [Web site](#) for the full report, including county- and metro area-level statistics.

The Minnesota Housing Partnership is a statewide nonprofit organization that advances the preservation and creation of housing affordable to low- and moderate-income people as a

means of strengthening communities and families. MHP provides local governments and nonprofit housing organizations access to loans, grants, and technical expertise to plan and construct housing, in addition to advocating and educating people on sound housing policies. MHP's work in Greater Minnesota is primarily supported by The McKnight Foundation.

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