

# FACES OF HOME

## 'Godsend To Our Police Department'

A year and a half ago, Hunter Easterling completed law enforcement training and moved from California to Dickinson, ND, to pursue a career as a police officer.

While settling in, Easterling found that finding a home in a growing oil boom town wasn't easy. He lived in an RV park, a hotel and an apartment that

was not quite ideal before Patterson Heights Apartments, a new affordable housing development, became available.

Patterson Heights is one of the first developments in North Dakota to set-aside rental units specifically for law enforcement personnel.

"The place is outstanding; everything is new," said Easterling. "It was such a relief to find a place to live, truly a weight off my shoulders."

In recent years, Dickinson has experienced an influx of energy industry workers and, while new housing units are being added, finding affordable housing is a challenge.

Recruiting and retaining the personnel that provide essential public services is difficult due to increased housing costs and shortages.

Dave Wilkie, administrative captain at the Dickinson Police Department, has noticed significant growth in his home town. "Our department has grown over the last few years and we are adding more and more officers as needed," said Wilkie. "Many out-of-



state workers are hired because they are good candidates looking for a job and their own local police departments are slowing down."

The Dickinson Police Department is constantly in touch with real estate

agents and apartment managers about potential listings, rental openings or even basements for rent to aid their staff in finding places to live.

The city of Dickinson also has FEMA trailers

available for officers just until they can find something more permanent.

"Having affordable housing is really important to our community. There are many people who don't work in the oil fields and they can't afford the high rents," said Wilkie. "We currently have three officers living in Patterson

Heights and the development has truly been a Godsend to our police department."

Patterson Heights is supported by North Dakota Housing Finance Agency's Housing Incentive Fund (HIF) and a Law Enforcement Pilot Program (LEPP). The programs are a means to create affordable rental units for essential services

workers and households of limited means.

Created during North Dakota's 2011 legislative session, HIF provides developers of affordable rental units with low-cost financing. It is

**The Law Enforcement Pilot Program** was created to address the challenge of providing affordable rental housing for law enforcement personnel in energy-impacted areas of North Dakota. The program was funded by the approximately \$3 million that the State received through the Mortgage Servicer Settlement Fund which originated from a landmark settlement reached with the nation's five major mortgage servicers.

capitalized by contributions from state taxpayers. Contributors to the fund received a dollar-for-dollar state income tax credit for their support.

The North Dakota Industrial Commission asked NDHFA to develop LEPP. The program is targeted to creating housing for

law enforcement personnel in communities in energy-impacted areas.

"I like Dickinson," said Easterling. "The city is growing, I like my new development and I really appreciate the housing I'm living in."

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