

“Markers for success in Vermont include an ability to meet the needs of diverse rural communities, to serve the most vulnerable citizens, to restore historic buildings, and to support the revitalization of our town and village centers. WHT has been a consistent leader in building bridges of community support with local businesses, social service agencies, banks and funding agencies to create more inclusive communities across its service area.”

The nomination noted that Windham Housing Trust has taken on the revitalization of neighborhoods and rural village centers with great success, including historic buildings in small towns and villages such as Whitingham and Algiers. WHT’s work in Brattleboro has saved and revitalized historic neighborhoods adjacent to the downtown core. This powerful community development work has eliminated blight, revitalized neighborhoods, and acted as a catalyst for private investment.

“In 2006 alone, more than \$18 million dollars of WHT housing rehabilitation and construction work took place in Windham County, contributing to overall economic health. The local purchase of materials and supplies related to housing construction has a long lasting ripple effect, generating additional income, jobs and opportunities throughout the local economy,” wrote Seelig.

WHT has been among the pioneers nationally in utilizing shared equity homeownership, with 49 permanently affordable single family homes in their portfolio.

According to the nomination letter, as administrators of low-income housing tax credits, WHT has been a reliable, consistent and creative partner at the forefront of Vermont’s success. WHT’s diverse portfolio has been extraordinarily well-managed. A recent assessment of long-term capital needs has put WHT at the top of the chart among Vermont non-profits in attending to and planning for its stewardship obligations to maintain its affordable housing portfolio.

James Leach National Achievement Award is named after Republican Jim Leach, who represented the 2nd district in Iowa for 30 years. Congressman Leach’s bipartisan leadership and ability to persuade and compromise contributed enormously to progressive legislation, including environmental protection, campaign reform, and debt relief for the world’s poorest countries.

Other NCRC award recipients at the March 14th award ceremony included James Rokakis, Treasurer of Cuyahoga County, Ohio who won the Henry B. Gonzalez Award. The NCRC 2008 Senator William H. Proxmire Award was awarded posthumously to Gale Cincotta, former Chairperson, National People's Action Committee. The NCRC 2008 James Rouse Award went to The Miami Valley Fair Housing Center in Dayton, Ohio. The NCRC 2008 Color of Money Award was a tie between Gretchen Morgenson Reporter, New York Times and Kitty Pilgrim Anchor, CNN Money. And the 2008 National Community Reinvestment Award was presented to William Tisdale, President and CEO, Milwaukee Fair Housing Council.

A member-based nonprofit organization, the Windham Housing Trust creates a full spectrum of renter and owner-occupied housing opportunities that serve the residents of Windham County, Vermont who are least served by the prevailing market. Since its founding in 1987, WHT has created more than 450 safe and affordable homes and apartments; its work has helped to revitalize neighborhoods, preserve historic properties, and enhance economic vitality throughout the region. For more information about the Trust or its programs, please visit www.windhamhousingtrust.org or call 802-254-4604 extension 113.