

DeMart Named New Executive Director Of Housing Council

Joseph DeMart has been appointed to be Executive Director of the St. Lawrence County Housing Council by its Board of Directors, following a nationwide search. DeMart succeeds Chris Rediehs, who resigned in November to become Commissioner of Social Services for St. Lawrence County.

DeMart had a long and successful career in management at Eastman Kodak Company in Rochester, and retired to move to Cranberry Lake where he had previously vacationed. He worked for 13 months for the reorganizing of the Newton Falls Fine Paper Company, but realized that he wanted a public service role for his second career.

Having intensively investigated the Housing Council, DeMart is clear that he is not in any sense embarking on "a rescue operation," since the staff and program of the Housing Council are what he considers "Best in Class!"

He has indicated that his goal in accepting the position is to help the Housing Council diversify its support base and find ways of expanding upon its strengths.

"Among the pool of 53 applicants, there were several who were well qualified," according to Board President Sean Partridge, "but Joe DeMart's strengths were most in line with what the Board sees as the Housing Council's needs as we move forward."

In the last year, the Housing Council has been recognized for the excellence of its operation by NeighborWorks® America, the national network

with which it is affiliated. During 2007-08, Housing Council staff provided homeowner education and counseling to 185 people and assisted 46 families with low and moderate incomes in purchasing their first home. This year it is anticipated that the Council

will help 71 families rehabilitate their homes so they are safer, more comfortable, and more economical. Council staff manage 200 apartments in eight St. Lawrence County locations. Its Community Facilities staff is administering Main Street grants in Potsdam, Heuvelton, and Canton; assisting TAUNY in Canton, the Hermon Volunteer Fire Department, and Pickens Hall in Heuvelton; and helping the Town of Fowler create a Community Development plan; as well as writing the grants that enable the other agency functions.

Since its incorporation in 1981, the Housing Council has successfully written or administered more than \$43 million in grants for the benefit of St. Lawrence County communities and assisted more than 500 families in obtaining their first homes.



JOSEPH DEMART