



# DC Cooperative Housing Coalition News


Representing the interests of the cooperative community in the District of Columbia since 1984


January - April | 2013


Celebrating 29 years of service to the cooperative housing community

## Welcome 3 New Coalition Members!


The Coalition is pleased to welcome our three newest members:

  
**Claridge House Cooperative Association, Inc.**  
(950 25<sup>th</sup> Street, NW) with 352 units

  
**Plaza West Cooperative Association** (1669 Columbia Road, NW) with 53 units

  
**2540 Massachusetts Ave, NW Inc.** with 32 units

## Welcome 5 New Web Sponsors!

  
**PNC Mortgage (DC)**  
A question we have received from Coalition members is what companies offer individual and blanket mortgages? The Coalition is pleased to announce that Brad Troendle of the DC office of PNC Mortgage located at 800 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, offers these services and has become a new Coalition web sponsor and supporter of the District's cooperative housing community! You can view the listing for contact information on our web site: <http://www.coopsc.org/lenders.htm>


Welcome Brad and PNC Mortgage.

  
**PNC Mortgage (MD)**  
The Coalition is pleased to announce that an additional PNC office has become a Coalition supporter: JeanMarie Pace, a Residential Mortgage and Cooperative Specialist at the Maryland office, 110 Thomas Johnson Drive,, Suite #100, Frederick. JeanMarie is a new Coalition web sponsor and supporter of the District's cooperative housing community! You can view the listing for contact information on our web site: <http://www.coopsc.org/lenders.htm>

Welcome JeanMarie and PNC Mortgage.

  
**BRIM Management**  
Another frequently asked question is what companies manage housing cooperatives? We are pleased to announce that Brim management located at 4400 MacArthur Blvd, NW has also become a web sponsor. For contact information, go to our web site: <http://www.coopsc.org/management.htm>

Welcome Bernie Robinson and Brim Management Company.

  
**Skyline Innovations**  
Skyline, a District-based company, delivers guaranteed savings to multifamily buildings by providing a fixed discount to customer's utility rate for water heating. Their program finances, installs, maintains, and monitors commercial-scale solar water heating systems at no up-front cost to the customer with centralized hot

water systems. View their listing and a link to their web site at <http://www.coopsc.org/renewableenergy.htm>.

Welcome Skyline Innovations.

  
**Potomac Elevator**  
If your cooperative needs the services of an elevator company, please consider Potomac Elevator Company, a District-based company that already serves some of our members. Potomac Elevator Company provides a full range of services including maintenance, upgrades, repairs, new equipment installation, and modernization. View their listing and a link to their web site at <http://www.coopsc.org/elevatormaintenance.htm>.

Welcome Potomac Elevators.

And thank you all for supporting the District's cooperative housing community!

**Remember:** If you contact a Coalition web sponsor, please let them know that you learned about them from the Coalition web site!

## SAVE THE DATE: June 22 ...

For a seminar on Solar Energy, Geothermal, and other low-cost ways of achieving utility savings through financing, incentives, and technologies! Hear about real DC experiences of saving thousands of dollars in co-op utility bills, including one by a Coalition member. Look for details in postal and e-mail messages to our members.

## Homestead Exemption Now Worth \$69,100

The DC Office of Tax and Revenue has increased the Homestead Deduction benefit from \$67,500 to \$69,100. This benefit is applied as a reduction to a property's assessed value for the purpose of computing the annual tax liability.

The Homestead Deduction benefit is granted to those DC residents who own and occupy their property as a principal residence. For those DC property owners who qualify, the new increased benefit will reduce the annual property tax bill by \$587.35 per unit. The form is also used for determining the trash credit (worth a \$98 reduction in the property tax bill) and available to units that are not primary residences as long as they are not investment properties and are used only for personal use or, as posted on the DC OTR web site: *The property must be occupied by the owner and used for non-transient residential purposes.* Read our past coverage on this topic:

<http://www.coopscdc.org/newsletters/Jan-Apr%202011.pdf>

If a properly completed and approved application is filed from October 1 to March 31, the property will receive the Homestead benefit for the entire tax year (and for all tax years in the future). If a properly completed and approved application is filed from April 1 to September 30, the property will receive one-half of the benefit reflected on the second-half tax bill (and full deductions for all tax years in the future). In addition to the once-a-year required filing, some Coalition members file Homestead applications as sale transfers occur to ensure they obtain the maximum benefit. For more information concerning the Homestead Deduction, go to the DC Office of Tax and Revenue web site:

<http://otr.cfo.dc.gov/otr/cwp/view,A,1330,Q,594163.asp>

## CAI Expo

As an Allied Member, we were pleased to have an information table at this year's Community Associations Institute expo, and to distribute copies of our new **Co-ops 101** booklet! Thanks to the many Coalition members who dropped by to say hello and to obtain their own copy of **Co-ops 101**. Special thanks to the several Coalition board members who took turns providing assistance at our display table.



Coalition Board members Carl Gerber, (Cathedral Avenue Cooperative) CHC President, Sue Stephens (The Porter Cooperative), and Steve McKeivitt (Beverly Court Cooperative). Not pictured but also assisting at the information table were Fred Dyda (Tilden Gardens Cooperative), Mike O'Dell (Harbour Square Cooperative), and Ray Olson (River Park Mutual Homes).



A view of the Convention Center and the nearly 100 exhibitors and 1,600 attendees

This annual expo provides a valuable opportunity for service providers and construction firms to present themselves to our area's community associations – associations who have the ongoing task of covering the needs of their members.

## Revised Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9

(From April 4, 2013 WTP *Community Associations Update*, reprinted with permission)

### New Form I-9 Released

On March 8, 2013, the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) released a new Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9. The form is used for all newly-hired employees to verify their identity and authorization to work in the U.S. Employers should begin using the revised Form I-9 (dated 03/08/13) immediately for all new hires. The revision date is on the lower left of the new form by visiting [I-9 Central](#) or [www.USCIS.gov](http://www.USCIS.gov).

Some of the changes to the I-9 include: (1) Form I-9 is now two pages (2) Expanded instructions (3) New fields for e-mail address, phone number and foreign passport in Section 1.

## Installation of Electric Car Charging Stations

Roberto M. Montesinos  
Whiteford Taylor & Preston

(From April 4, 2013 WTP *Community Associations Update*, reprinted with permission.)

Over the past year, community boards have faced an increasing number of requests from owners wishing to install electric car charging stations ("ECCS") in their assigned common element or limited common element parking spots. Given the growing popularity of fuel efficient vehicles, community boards can only expect to receive mounting requests of this nature in the future. In this article, we will explore a number of issues that community boards should consider with respect to the installation and maintenance of ECCS.

First, some information about the technology itself and possible risks associated with it: this article focuses solely on single-unit charging stations running on residential current. More sophisticated units, able to charge several vehicles at once or to "fast charge" a single vehicle, are quite sophisticated and typically offered only by utilities or municipalities.

However, even a home ECCS is more sophisticated and faster than charging off a standard house wall socket using an extension cord. The risks involved include a car driving away without properly uncoupling from the charger; overheating of the electrical circuits; and failure of the grounding protection. Moreover, because the technology is new, safety measures and technical standards are evolving rapidly. A system that is acceptable today may fail new, higher standards next year.

So, given these uncertainties, there are six major points of consideration that community boards need to keep in mind in developing a policy that would permit an owner to install an ECCS: (1) Type of equipment, (2) Installation, (3) Maintenance, (4) Indemnification and Release, (5) Insurance and (6) Termination. We will briefly address each of these points below and recommend that community boards adopt a policy addressing all of these concerns.

Initially, the equipment proposed for installation should meet all existing technical standards. Currently, the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) is leading the drive to develop uniform standards in the US. Beyond those, the planned installation may need to meet requirements from the local jurisdiction (state/county/city) and the local power provider.

Owners should submit complete plans and specifications drawn up by a licensed and insured professional. The board should retain the authority to turn down the proposal based on the recommendations of its own

independent professional, whose judgment will be final.

Assuming the proposal is approved, the actual installation must be carried out by a properly insured and bonded professional after the owner has obtained all necessary permits and delivered copies of them to the board. The policy should provide clearly that costs of installation, maintenance and repair of the ESSC are the sole responsibility of the applying owner.

The policy should also outline clearly the maintenance responsibilities with respect to the ECCS. These responsibilities may include a requirement for the periodic inspection of the ECCS and providing evidence, such as a certificate from a qualified inspector, that the ECCS is in good working order and safe. The board also needs to consider how the electrical costs associated with the ECCS will be paid for.

A sub-metering requirement could be imposed or a base monthly rate could be charged based on professional estimates. In either case, the board should reserve the right to increase charges to meet increases in costs of electrical service.

As part of the policy, we also recommend that the board require an applying owner to sign a written agreement indemnifying and holding the community (and its officers, employees and agents) harmless from claims related to the installation and operation of the ECCS. Evidence of an insurance policy covering the ECCS should also be provided.

Finally, the board should also reserve a right to terminate the privilege to maintain the ECCS. There are a couple of reasons for this. Firstly, the board will want to maintain this right in order to force an upgrade in equipment as the technology develops, standards evolve, and newer equipment is proven safer. Secondly, the board needs the termination power as a way to

sanction an owner in the event that the ECCS is not operated in accordance with the community policy.

Additionally, the board will want to have the authority to remove the ECCS in the event that common area repairs or renovations are ever required involving the affected areas. Lastly, the community board will want to reserve the right to remove the ECCS in the event that an owner sells his unit and/or assigns his parking space to another party. In this regard, the board may require an initial deposit from the applying owner in the event that removal is ever required.

Fuel efficient vehicles and similar developing technologies are going to require community boards to ensure that their associations have the appropriate safeguards in place in the near future. Please do not hesitate to contact us if your community requires any guidance in dealing with these issues and in drafting associated policies and agreements.

## FEMA Disaster Assistance

The recovery effort occurring now to repair the devastating damage caused by Hurricane Sandy has revealed a serious gap in the law governing how FEMA provides disaster assistance to cooperatives. The Act authorizing FEMA does not contain specific provisions for cooperatives, and as a result, FEMA must consider them commercial entities or business associations, leaving them ineligible for appropriate grants of assistance.

The Coalition, along with other groups nationwide, is now investigating how to best help remedy this omission, and to request that Congress take corrective action to treat cooperatives fairly.

This is a matter of some importance to those of us in co-ops, and something that we should all stay informed about. The Coalition will keep you posted.



## Board of Directors

### President

Carl Gerber  
The Cathedral Avenue, 145 units

### Vice President

Fred Dyda  
Tilden Gardens, 170 units

### Secretary

Art Leabman  
1870 Wyoming Avenue, 28 units

### Treasurer

Ray Olson  
River Park Mutual Homes, 518 units

### Directors

Dottie Moskowitz  
Tiber Island, 389 units

Ted Martin  
Naylor Gardens, 318 units

Stephen McKeivitt  
Beverly Court, 39 units

Michael O'Dell  
Harbour Square, 447 units

Russ Rader  
The Westmoreland, 60 units

Nancy Skinkle  
The Broadmoor, 194 units

Sue Stephens  
The Porter, 28 units

JoAnn Wells  
Potomac Plaza Apartments, 249 units

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## About DC/CHC, the Coalition

Established in 1984, the DC Cooperative Housing Coalition exists to advance the common interests of cooperative housing associations in the District of Columbia and to promote cooperative housing as a desirable form of home ownership. It is therefore both an advocacy organization that articulates the interests of members before government officials and regulatory agencies and a service organization that provides information and education to members.

Membership is open to all District housing cooperatives, regardless of size. A volunteer board of directors, elected by member co-ops, governs the Coalition. Activities are financed through annual dues, \$1.50 per unit per year (12.5 cents per month)

The Coalition grew out of an ad-hoc group of District cooperatives that formed in response to a judicial ruling that had cast a cloud over many cooperatives by banning proportionate voting. By marshaling the forces of more than 3,000 housing cooperative units, the ad-hoc group persuaded the District's City Council to resolve the matter.

Recognizing the importance to the cooperative housing community of speaking in a single voice and maintaining the ability to respond quickly and knowledgeably to matters affecting cooperative housing, the ad-hoc group decided to form a permanent organization.

The Coalition was established in 1984 and was incorporated as DC/CHC, Inc., a nonprofit, IRS Code Section 501(c)(6) organization in the District of Columbia, May 24, 1993.

2012 was recognized as the International Year of Cooperatives by the United Nations. This was an acknowledgement by the international community that cooperatives drive the economy, respond to social change, are resilient to the global economic crisis and are serious, successful businesses creating jobs in all sectors. For more information:

<http://www.2012.coop/en>

## Reproducing DC|CHC News Articles

Special permission is not required to reproduce articles. However, each reproduced item should contain proper acknowledgement of the DC Cooperative Housing Coalition and note the **DC|CHC News** as the source.

[www.CoopsDC.org](http://www.CoopsDC.org)

*The first place to look for a service provider*

## Member Profile Page

Does your cooperative have its own dedicated page on the Coalition's web site? It's free and it is one of the Coalition membership benefits. See what your co-op is missing at [www.CoopsDC.org/Membership.htm](http://www.CoopsDC.org/Membership.htm) and click on members with the

[LEARN MORE +](#)

icon next to their names.

***Don't let your co-op miss out on this members-only benefit!***