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HIBBING, MINNESOTA BENEFITS FROM \$10,000 GRANT TO EXPLORE HOUSING REUSE FOR VACANT CHURCH AND SCHOOL

St. Paul, MN (July 11, 2012) – With a resurgence of the mining industry on the Iron Range, the demand for affordable housing is growing as people move to the region for jobs. To meet the housing demand, the Hibbing Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) recently secured a \$10,000 grant to explore the creative reuse of the old St. Leo’s Catholic Church campus in Hibbing, MN for affordable family housing.

The buildings, situated in an older neighborhood near schools, jobs, and the local hospital, would be redeveloped as 24 to 28 units of rental housing, with four of the apartments reserved for homeless families. This summer, the HRA will begin hosting a series of meetings to engage neighbors and other community stakeholders in planning for the project. Topics will include building design, improvements to the grounds, property management, and resident services.

The \$10,000 grant was made through MHP’s Sustainable Community Engagement Fund. This fund assists nonprofit organizations, public agencies, and communities outside of the seven-county Twin Cities metro area and Duluth, in becoming strong, successful affordable housing providers. Through financial and technical support from MHP, the Sustainable Community Engagement Fund promotes community efforts to build housing development capacity and integrate affordable housing with transportation, jobs, schools, and family services.

“We look forward to engaging the creativity of the whole community and the Home Acres neighborhood in improving the vitality of core Hibbing neighborhoods,” said Anita Provinzino, of the Hibbing HRA. “Creating quality, affordable housing near services, jobs and public transportation will meet the growing demand. This housing will also leverage investment in other neighborhood improvements,” added Provinzino.

The Minnesota Housing Partnership, a statewide nonprofit, 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; it also advocates for and educates people on sound housing policies. MHP’s work in Greater Minnesota is primarily supported by **The McKnight Foundation** and **Minnesota Housing**.

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