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**State Honors Olympia-Based Housing Officer, Lisa Vatske**

**Tacoma, Wash.—Sept. 16, 2008**—Lisa Vatske was honored last night for years of service to the mission of expanding affordable housing resources for the benefit of Washington’s low-income residents. Before an audience of 500 colleagues, Ms. Vatske received a *Friend of Housing* award presented annually by the Washington State Housing Finance Commission. The awards ceremony took place on Sept. 16 at the 2008 *Housing Washington* conference at the Greater Tacoma Convention and Trade Center.

“Lisa’s 15-year history at the state has made her aware that the challenge in delivering affordable housing is not just about getting housing developed,” said M.A. Leonard, a long-time professional in the affordable housing industry. “Equally important is making sure these single and multifamily residences are well maintained over their life spans *and* are continuously being occupied by the low-income households these projects are designed to assist.” Ms. Leonard, a former executive of the National Equity Fund and the Washington Community Development Loan Fund, explained that Ms. Vatske has spearheaded the recent efforts to make asset management and organizational sustainability a serious business consideration in the industry.

In her current role as managing director of the Housing Trust Fund in the Housing Division of the state department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, Ms. Vatske is like a master conductor. She orchestrates the investment of public dollars in partnership with multiple other funding sources, including those of the Housing Finance Commission. All public and private funding must be put into place, at the same time, in order to build an affordable housing project within the required two-year timeframe.

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“This is a complicated and challenging process,” said Will Graham, who directs the Housing Division. “Lisa has the vision, trust of the industry, and unwavering sense of responsibility for the public’s investment that makes her truly deserving of the recognition she is receiving as a *Friend of Housing* honoree.”

The Housing Finance Commission received more than 20 nominations for the *Friend of Housing* awards from people working in the public, private and independent sectors of the affordable housing industry. Honorees are selected for their leadership and exceptional contribution to creating or supporting affordable housing, implementing housing-related programs, creating innovative financing mechanisms for housing, supporting homebuyer education or technical training efforts within the housing community and helping to solve housing problems.

Washington State Housing Finance Commission is a publicly accountable, self-supporting agency dedicated to increasing housing access and affordability and to expanding the availability of quality community services for Washington state residents.

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