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Media Contact:
Caroline Bombar-Kaplan, 425-260-3302



State Honors Edwin Petersen of Housing Hope, Everett

Tacoma, Wash.—Sept. 16, 2008—Edwin Petersen 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, Mr. Petersen 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.

“Mr. Petersen is Snohomish County’s leading advocate and authority on homelessness and affordable housing,” according to Fred Safstrom, a colleague of Mr. Petersen’s at Housing Hope of Everett. Since Mr. Petersen founded Housing Hope two decades ago, the nonprofit organization has originated 50 housing development projects supporting a total of 487 units.

Bringing more than 30 years experience in housing development and management, as well as social services and mental health to his position as executive director, Mr. Petersen has been a leader in combining housing options with supported services. Under his stewardship, Housing Hope today provides a range of housing to assist low- and very-low-income households with everything from shelters to transitional, permanent, affordable rental and homeownership opportunities. Its programs include:

- Homeownership, offered through the USDA Rural Development Mutual Self-Help model;
- Social services delivered by Housing Hope staff;
- College of Hope, providing life skills training through a collaborative community structure; and
- Tomorrow’s Hope, a child development center that includes 106 licensed slots that focus on child-care or homeless families.

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In 2002, Mr. Petersen played an instrumental role in the founding of the Housing Consortium of Everett and Snohomish County. The Consortium currently has 22 nonprofit, four government, and 21 associate members. Its programs include housing education, advocacy and resources. To meet its mission, Mr. Petersen produced a 10-year strategic plan, entitled *Housing Within Reach: A Call to Action for Snohomish County Communities*. This plan was developed with broad community involvement that resulted in specific recommendations for action unveiled this year at Housing Hope’s annual affordable housing conference.

“Ed has been a tireless advocate and extraordinary effective producer of service-enriched affordable housing in Snohomish County,” said Mr. Safstrom.

The 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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