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Pioneer Human Services of Seattle Receives A *Friend of Housing* Award

Spokane, Wash.—September 30, 2009—Pioneer Human Services, a regional nonprofit social-enterprise organization based in Seattle, was honored last night for its outstanding service in expanding affordable housing resources for the benefit of Washington’s low-income residents. Before an audience of 350 colleagues, Marla Gese, senior vice president of real estate services, and Martha Martin, director of housing, accepted the *Friend of Housing* Organizational Achievement Award on behalf of their agency.

Washington State Housing Finance Commission presents these awards annual. The awards ceremony took place on Sept. 29 at the Doubletree Hotel Spokane City Center as part of the *Housing Washington 2009* conference.

“What makes this agency exceptional is the continuum of services it provides to support the successful transition of former prisoners back into society,” said Kim Herman, executive director of the Commission. Pioneer does this by focusing on some critical programs: clean and sober housing, mental health and chemical dependency treatment, job counseling, and more. “Along with affordable housing, they are rigorous in providing counseling and support to residents. Pioneer deserves our recognition for their outstanding contributions in a challenging area of great need,” he added.

For more than four decades, Pioneer Human Services has provided housing for ex-offender and at-risk populations since its inception in 1963. Success in the Seattle area prompted expansion in the past several years of its housing and housing-with-services programs to Auburn, Bellingham, Spokane, and Tacoma.

Pioneer Human Services operates over 675 units of affordable housing in 21 properties located in King, Pierce, Spokane and Whatcom counties, and in the cities of Auburn, Bellingham, Seattle, Spokane, and Tacoma. Its styles of housing include

transitional and permanent residences, family housing, clean and sober communities and affordable apartments. Its enterprises include retail cafés, institutional food, sheet metal fabrication, aerospace precision machining, wholesale food distribution and contract packaging and fulfillment.

Fundamentally, Pioneer Human Services provides housing, jobs, and social service support to released offenders. As a national model of social enterprise, its programs are funded almost entirely by the profits from the various businesses it operates and not through public or private grants. The agency combines the passionate pursuit of its social mission with the discipline and innovation of a for-profit business. Revenues are earned through the manufacture, distribution, and sale of products, and through fees for services. Less than one percent of the annual budget is derived from donations and contributions.

Serving 5000 clients a year in its community corrections programs, the agency's recidivism rate is less than five percent of its work release participants.

The Commission, based in Seattle, presented a total of five *Friend of Housing* awards to two individuals and three organizations. Honorees were 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. Additional information about the Friend of Housing awards is available at www.wshfc.org.

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