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Sheila King of Tacoma Honored with *A Friend of Housing* Award

Spokane, Wash. — Sheila King, executive director of Multifamily Affordable Properties, a nonprofit organization based in Tacoma, was honored last night for her outstanding service in expanding affordable housing resources for the benefit of Washington’s low-income residents. Before an audience of 350 colleagues, Ms. King received a *Friend of Housing* Individual Achievement Award presented annually by the Washington State Housing Finance Commission. The awards ceremony took place on Sept. 29 at the DoubleTree Hotel Spokane City Center as part of the 2009 *Housing Washington* conference.

“Sheila works tirelessly to keep the website she pioneered up-to-date, fresh and user-friendly,” said Kim Herman, executive director of the Commission. “She provides an invaluable service not just to affordable housing seekers, but to those agencies that provide housing options for below market rate. We are delighted to honor her with our highest award.”

Under the auspice of Multifamily Affordable Properties (MAP), Ms. King, along with colleagues at AHMA and CARH Affordable Housing organizations, developed AptFinder.org as a tool to reach and serve thousands of people needing affordable housing. The website links seekers to affordable housing resources throughout the entire State of Washington. The low-income, elderly, and disabled have a place and an advocate to assist them in finding information on program eligibility as well as an up-to-date listing of Trust Fund, tax credit, HUD, and USDA housing available in their communities.

At pennies on the dollar compared to other apartment-search providers, owners can list their low-income properties on a website designed for the low-income resident. Currently, over 25,000 apartment units are voluntarily listed on the website by low

income property owners and managers, representing 210 senior properties and 357 multifamily properties.

To ensure a comprehensive approach, Ms. King works very closely with affordable housing organizations whose mission is to develop, own and manage rental properties for those living at 80 percent or below the median income of the county in which the property resides. Her website connects apartment seekers to those nonprofit and public organizations.

MAP distinguishes itself from other apartment-finding companies not only because of this partnership strategy, but also the expertise Ms. King provides assisting her clients to navigate complicated forms, properties, and bureaucratic requirements of finding a decent and affordable place to live. The Pike Place Market Preservation and Development Authority in Seattle is one such partner who finds MAP's website a mutually beneficial service for housing seekers.

"It works both ways," said Coyle Jefferson of the Authority. "When prospective tenants are looking for affordable housing outside our portfolio it is invaluable that we can refer them to aptfinder.org."

This Authority has received numerous persons inquiring about its housing availability as a direct result of the aptfinder.org, and has been successful in housing many of these residents. In addition, Ms. King works tirelessly in implementing and streamlining HUD forms, keeping organizations apprised of any new directions on the HUD horizon and also about the many changes, addendums and updates that come from HUD. She also translates HUD forms into suitable everyday language.

"Sheila has single handedly developed and provided "model documents" for HUD project-based Section 8 landlords," said Mr. Jefferson. "Working with the state and HUD, she helped bring agreement among everyone in the regulatory industry on the wording and appropriateness of these model documents."

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.

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