

*****PILOT PROGRAM PHASE II*****

Update: 10/2/2011

GHI is currently in the second phase of a 3-phase pilot program to test alternatives for weatherizing GHI units and replacing our electric baseboard heaters. In the first phase, which began in late Fall of 2010, measuring devices were put in each of the 28 pilot homes prior to any upgrades. The devices measure temperature and humidity levels in various locations in each unit, as well as determine the kilowatt hours being used by the heating system and key appliances. The information collected during phase 1 provides a baseline of data that can be used to measure savings in energy costs and improvements in member comfort that result from the building envelope upgrades in Phase 2 and the baseboard heating replacement in Phase 3.

At its Aug. 25, 2011 meeting, the GHI board approved changes to Phase 2 that had been recommended by the Buildings Committee. The changes were due to the results of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Phase 2 work that originally included replacement of windows and doors, insulation of crawl spaces and attics, installation of bathroom exhaust fans, new insulated siding on the block and frame pilot units, insulation of the porch slabs of the block and brick units, as well as replacement of waste water pipes in the frame homes.

GHI received only 3 bids for the originally intended work, and the bids were unacceptably high. Conversations with contractors who did, and did not, submit bids indicated that the main reasons for the higher-than-expected bids were a tight time frame for completion of the Phase 2 work and the complications involved in replacing the waste water pipes in the frame homes.

Consequently, the GHI Board has decided to split Phase 2 into two parts. This Fall, GHI is getting bids on doing only the crawl space insulation on the 28 pilot homes. The crawl space work will be completed by insulation contractors rather than a general contractor, by the end of this year. In early 2012, GHI will solicit bids for a general contractor to do the rest of the Phase 2 work -- except for the wastewater pipe replacement in the frame homes (which will likely be done beginning in 2015). Landscaping in the latter part of Phase 2 will be done by GHI staff. Our experience with the Phase 2 bidding demonstrates the value of doing a pilot program. We learn not only which components would be the most cost effective improvements for our units, but how, as a coop, to best administer the upgrades to reduce costs and inconvenience to members.

We encourage you to participate in Buildings Committee meetings, which are held on the 4th Wednesday of each month. For more information, e-mail Jim Cohen at jimcohen@umd.edu.