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PRESS RELEASE

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KENNER'S COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT WINS A PAIR OF STATE AWARDS

Kenner, LA. – Kenner's Community Development Department and employee Joan Baptiste received awards related to a pair of important programs at the recent Annual Legislative Conference and Business Meeting in Baton Rouge.

Baptiste was given the "Meritorious Continuing Performance by an Employee" for her work with the First Time Homebuyers Assistance Program

"Since Joan's employment with the city in 2014, she has greatly improved the management of the program and its expenditure of funds" said Kenner Community Development Director Arleeta Terrell. The department oversees the FTHB program.

Baptiste joined the department in June of 2014 and within six months her hard work led to the successful closing of 10 applications, eventually resulting in 10 new homeowners in the city, Terrell said.

The city's Community Development Department was awarded the "Meritorious Accomplishment in Housing Award for its IFES program," Terrell said.

The Individual and Family Essential Services program is an effort between Community Development and the Kenner Public Housing Authority to end the cycle of homelessness.

Terrell said the IFES program started in March 2014 in just one year housing has been located for 10 homeless families and individuals. In addition, jobs were found for 8 of these families and one client received help to receive disability payments and other benefits.

One Kenner resident who has benefitted from the program, Clarence Jones, received an award for "Meritorious Accomplishment by an Individual who has Successfully Completed a Family Self-Sufficiency Program."

Jones, 70, lost his home and some of his belongings in a fire in August 2013. Fighting various illnesses, he spent weeks in the hospital and about fourth months in Kenner's Emergency Shelter and then was placed in permanent housing through the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

Terrell said he visits the department nearly every day for help with Food Stamps and other issues and reports that is healthier and now much happier in his new apartment, saying he now "feels like a king," Terrell said.

Watching the progress Mr. Jones has made underlines the importance of the program, "and the success of the work that Community Development performs," Terrell said.

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