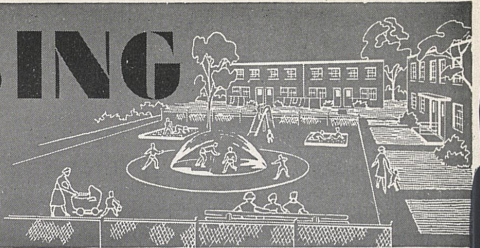


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# PUBLIC HOUSING

## Weekly News

FROM AMERICAN COMMUNITIES ABOLISHING  
SLUMS AND BUILDING LOW-RENT HOUSING



Vol. 1, No. 33

Federal Works Agency, U. S. Housing Authority—Nathan Straus, Administrator

March 26, 1940

### More Short-Term Notes Issued by 25 Cities

More than \$71,000,000 of private capital will be made available for the construction of public housing projects on March 26 and April 2 when 25 local authorities open bids on their 6-month-maturity notes. This is the third time local authorities have offered short-term notes to the public. In November and January notes were sold at interest rates averaging less than  $\frac{1}{10}$  and  $\frac{4}{100}$  of 1 percent, respectively. The new issue will bring the total amount of private capital thus invested to nearly \$160,000,000.

The 25 cities represent 13 States: Six Southern, six Northern, and one Midwestern. The largest amount of notes to be issued by any single authority is \$40,000,000 for New York City. The smallest is \$250,000 for McComb, Miss.

Ten authorities (Augusta, Ga.; Columbia, S. C.; Hartford, Conn.; Holyoke, Mass.; Meridian, Miss.; New Haven, Conn.; New York City, N. Y.; Norwalk, Conn.; Savannah, Ga.; and Tampa, Fla.) will advertise bids March 19, and open bids March 26. The remaining 15 authorities (Charlotte, N. C.; Delaware County, Ind.; Harrisburg, Pa.; Kingsport, Tenn.; Knoxville, Tenn.; Laurel, Miss.; McComb, Miss.; McKeesport, Pa.; Muncie, Ind.; Nashville, Tenn.; Omaha, Nebr.; Raleigh, N. C.; Reading, Pa.; Wilmington, N. C.; and Zanesville, Ohio) will open bids April 2.

### Kansas Lumber Dealers Hear Rural Housing Lecture

"The Rural Housing Program of the USHA" was the subject of a lecture by Rudolph J. Nedved, Coordinator of Rural Housing of the USHA, at a 2-day school for Kansas lumber dealers, conducted at the Kansas State College, Manhattan, Kans., March 20-21.

The unique idea of conducting a short course of lectures for a group of businessmen, on subjects related to their business, was conceived by Professor Paul Weigel, head of the Department of Architecture at the Kansas State College. Professor Weigel's interest in public housing and slum clearance led him to include the session on the USHA's rural housing program. Among the other subjects discussed during the course are "The Farm House Problem," "Other Farm Structures and Rural Building Problems," and "Developments in the Use of Plywood for Farm and Home Construction."

### Tampa To Open Project on April 1; 534 New Homes Built on Slum Site

#### "North Boulevard Homes" Rents Will Average \$8.55—Incomes Under \$600

"North Boulevard Homes," 534-unit slum clearance project in Tampa, Fla., is scheduled to open April 1. Developed for Negro tenancy, the project occupies what was formerly part of the "West Tampa" district, one of four Tampa slums, with a combined population of about 18,000 persons.

Average monthly shelter rents in the new project are \$8.55. This is well under the average rent (\$9.00) Negro families are paying for substandard accommodations in slum neighborhoods throughout the city. It is estimated that the average income of tenants accepted for the project will be under \$600.

The dwellings consist of one- and two-story row houses and two-story flats. Each unit has electric lights. Heating stoves, ranges, and refrigerators use gas. Adding the cost of all utilities—gas, electricity, and water—rents will average only \$13.25 per month. Apartments range in size from 3 to 5½ rooms, and rentals plus utilities range from \$10.80 to \$14.80 per month.

Indian village, pirate stronghold, U. S. Army fort, industrial center, Tampa has had a long and unique history. In the 1520's when Henry VIII was wooing Anne Boleyn,

Spanish explorers De Navaez and De Soto were exploring the southern seacoast of the United States. They discovered an Indian village, called Tampa, at the head of a fine harbor. Tampa Bay later became a favorite resort for pirates. One of them, Captain Jose Casparilla, is still remembered in Tampa's annual carnival. In 1823, Tampa became Fort Brooke, an important supply base in the second Seminole war.

In 1880, Tampa's population was only 720; but in the next 10 years the cigar industry was begun, and a railway reached the city. In 1890, the population was 5,532. By 1920, it had jumped to 51,608, and, at present, it is well over 110,000.

Tampa's development in only 60 years from a village of 720 persons to an important industrial center of 110,000, has left little time for planning. Today, according to The Housing Authority of the City of Tampa, Fla., good housing at any price is at a premium (the vacancy rate is just over 3 percent); large slum areas exist; more dwellings were demolished between 1930 and 1938 than were built; and practically nothing has been done for low-income families.

The Tampa housing authority has three projects under way at the present time, with USHA loans totaling \$3,916,000.



North Boulevard Homes, nearing completion in Tampa, Fla., will rehouse 534 of that city's

Negro families, and will replace some of the worst slum shacks in Tampa.

## President Approves First Rural Loans

The movement to extend the benefits of public housing to the rural areas of the country passed from the planning phase to that of concrete action, when, on March 12, President Roosevelt signed loan contracts calling for the construction of 1,300 farm homes in six States. County housing authorities in Arkansas, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina will receive loans totaling \$2,522,000, to cover 90 percent of project costs.

The average over-all cost of the new farm homes is estimated at \$2,158. They will be leased to farm families at an average cash rent of less than \$50 a year. These exceptionally low rentals result partially from savings in maintenance charges, since tenants will take care of their own houses, look after repairs, painting, and general upkeep.

In most cases the houses will consist of living room, dining space, kitchen, and three to five bedrooms. Simply designed and substantially built, the homes will be erected on small plots of land, title to which has been secured by the county housing authority.

Fencing will be provided, where required; old wells will be repaired or new sealed wells constructed. New sanitary privies will be built.

Dwellings will not be grouped together in colonies. Each family will have its own individual house, built on at least 1 acre of land.

Names of counties included in this first group of rural housing loan contracts, together with number of dwelling units provided, follow: Leno County, Ark., 300; Thomas County, Ga., 200; Alexander County, Ill., 150; Vigo County, Ind., 150; Lee County, Miss., 300; Darlington County, S. C., 200.

## New USHA Leaflet Compares British and U. S. Housing

"Public Housing Here and in Great Britain," USHA leaflet recently released for distribution, calls attention to the fact that, "By rehousing more slum families than ever before, and thereby eradicating the source of much disease and ill health, the British have helped strengthen the basic element in national defense: Manpower."

The statement is borne out by figures on the physical fitness of men conscripted for military service in Great Britain in 1917 and in 1939.

Both the United States and Great Britain use the annual contribution type of subsidy. In England, the localities are required to raise 50 percent of the national contribution. In the United States, although the statutory requirement is \$1 locally for every \$5 advanced by the Federal Government, the average local contribution is also about 50 percent of the National.

In England and Wales as a whole, 1 out of every 10 families lives in a home provided through public enterprise. For the United States to provide as much public housing per capita as did Britain between 1926 and 1939, we should have to produce about 180,000 dwellings per year.

Copies of the leaflet may be obtained free of charge by applying to the United States Housing Authority, Washington, D. C.

## Attractive Report Issued by Memphis

Here is the story of what happened to a certain piece of land after the heirs of John Rice, Indian trader, sold it to Andrew Jackson, James Winchester, and John Overton for the purpose of laying out the city of Memphis. It is a typical American story.

"One of the early purchasers of home sites in the new town was James Titus whose house, until the Government razed it to make way for the Lauderdale Courts housing project, stood for over a hundred years on the corner of Market and Third Streets. But when the wreckers got to it, it was not the same house . . . that James Titus had visioned.

"The same ornamental iron trimming clung to it without, but even a ghost could not have warmed himself within, and some 17 families were trying to avail themselves of such old-fashioned sanitary facilities as were never meant for more than but a single family.

"Thus in Memphis, the oldest homes descend upon the poor, and the best neighborhoods become the blighted neighborhoods in the end. Market Street is probably the most clearly remembered of all the fine old residential neighborhoods of early Memphis. Market Street became what was probably Memphis' best known 'slum.'"

The police, the welfare workers, and the health officials knew all about Market Street. They knew "that half the crime committed there, half the juvenile delinquency, half the sickness was caused by the fact that 1,021 persons were crowded into 270 houses. That only five of all those houses had furnace heat. Only 12 percent of them had electric lights. The rest used wood for cooking, oil for lights. There were only 112 bathtubs, and 189 inside toilets.

"Today that neighborhood has been reclaimed. Today there is no real crime, no juvenile delinquency, and much less sickness. Those who live there now probably did not have a chance to live in a light, airy, decently equipped dwelling place before. Though they are as steady workers as the fellow on the rung of the ladder above them, they have not had, because of the difference in their salary checks, that equal chance to a decent home which now is offered them in the Lauderdale Courts community."

The recently issued Annual Report of the Memphis Housing Authority, from which the above story is taken, is a handsomely

## Current Housing Literature

BETTER HOUSING MOVES FORWARD, by the Rev. Edgar Schmiedeler, O. S. B., *The Catholic Family Monthly*, March 1940, pp. 9-12. (The National Conference on Family Life, Washington, D. C.)

A statement of the need for public housing in this country, and a summary of the USHA-aided program in operation.

HOUSING AND RECREATION COOPERATION EFFECTIVE IN PITTSBURGH, by Louis C. Schroeder, *Recreation*, March 1940, pp. 685-688. (National Recreation Association, New York City.)

A review of the steps taken by the Pittsburgh housing authority and local agencies in planning for recreation. "Housers have an obligation to plan and operate the projects in such a way that the recreation program may be conducted efficiently," Mr. Schroeder points out.

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO PITTSBURGH CONSTRUCTION COSTS—AND WHY? *Building and Real Estate Journal*, February 1940, pp. 4-6. (Building and Real Estate Publishing Co., Pittsburgh, Pa.)

An analysis of the reasons for lowered construction costs in Pittsburgh housing projects. Bids on the second project were 17 percent under those on the first. Joseph P. Tufts, Executive Director of the Pittsburgh Housing Association, calls this "the logical result of cumulative experience."

NO PLACE LIKE HOME, Margaret Hiller. *Public Affairs*, size 16, part 3. (The Womens Press, New York City.)

Outlines a practical program for YWCA Girl Reserves to aid in popularizing the public housing program locally. Contains an interesting outline for proposed radio "Sidewalk Interview." Lists source material.

CONDEMNATION FOR PUBLIC HOUSING, Philip Nichols. *Legal Notes on Local Government*, January 1940, pp. 122-124. (American Bar Association, New York City.)

A brief review of the recent use of eminent domain powers to acquire land for public housing. Elaborates on the question of "public use." Lists and discusses significant court decisions.

STOPPING RENT INCREASES FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES, *Housing News Letter*, February 3, 1940, pp. 2-5. (City-Wide Tenants Council, New York City.)

Reviews a bill to prevent landlords from increasing rents of low-income families, and, in certain instances, to compel a reduction of rent.

designed, attractively printed booklet, entitled "More Than Housing." It contains excellent photographs and maps.

Under the heading "What the City Gets Out of It," the report states: "MHA officials are firm in the conviction that if all 17 of our slum areas were wiped out the saving in 20 years to the taxpayer would amortize the principal with interest on the cost of rebuilding."



This window display exhibit is being shown in the office of the Thomasville (Ga.) Chamber of Commerce. Representing a model layout of the farm homes contemplated under a rural housing project in Thomas

County, the exhibit was prepared by E. C. Mann, County Agricultural Agent. The dilapidated house at right (typical of shacks which the project will replace), is mounted on a revolving table to attract passersby.

4/2/40

## Housing Progress In the South

This article is a condensation of an address delivered before the Southern Regional Conference of the United States Conference of Mayors held at Birmingham, Ala., March 8, 1940.

By C. F. Palmer,

Chairman, Atlanta housing authority;  
Vice-President, National Association  
of Housing Officials

Housing progress in southern cities is a vital factor in their survival.

We all know that business is where people are and people no longer live downtown. Result? Rapid decentralization. Business follows purchasing power. The aging structures near the centers rot and the resulting blight forces more people away.

It is a world-wide phenomenon that population in the center of cities declines while that on the periphery increases. We think it new and peculiar to our American cities, but in the 30-year period from 1891 to 1921 middle London lost 13 percent while the fringe gained 110 percent. Similar movements were experienced in other European cities.

The same is true in America. Centralized population, which means centralized purchasing power, hit its peak nearly 30 years ago. From 1910 to 1935 in New York, Manhattan lost 29 percent while the Bronx gained 257 percent and Queens 389 percent in population. Chicago's central district in a given time dropped 20 percent against a 47 percent gain outside.

Over half the urban homes in the South are substandard, which means we have 1,500,000 dwelling threats.

It costs more to keep slums than to clear slums. We have proven that by the areas in Atlanta where Uncle Sam's first two projects stand. Before clearance the city annually paid out nine and one-half times more than it collected in taxes from these districts for such services as free hospitalization, extra police, fire calls, and care of child delinquents.

Subsidized housing is necessary because private capital cannot provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing at rents the slum dweller can afford to pay, and if the slums remain, communities and people rot.

In America, we have expanded the central areas vertically. These peaks have left constantly spreading slum valleys. We must now expand horizontally. Parks and low-rent housing are ideally suited to the need. The open areas are substitutions for country. The housing projects form in fact miniature villages with all the economies of such living.

Real estate values rise when slums are eliminated. Three parcels near Techwood, Atlanta's first project, have recently sold at advances of 150 percent to 300 percent.

To sum up, let us examine the problem in terms of the entire South compared with a capitalistic country which has done subsidized housing for generations. I refer to what happened in England from 1919 to 1938.

With subsidized housing doing 40 percent of the job, the remaining 60 percent was by private industry, making the most profitable home building era in British history. While she increased her housing 47 percent, we expanded ours only 27 percent because we lacked subsidized housing as a pace setter.

One of the most interesting things about these comparisons is that the population of our 13 southeastern States, approximately 37,000,000, is within 10 percent of the combined population of England and Wales, approximately 40,000,000, from whence came the above experience. They built 1,475,885 subsidized units in the last 20 years and we need 1,500,000.

Here's how Atlanta has accepted the challenge. She went after subsidized housing in a big way and has \$6,000,000 of slum clearance already done and \$18,000,000 under construction.

This \$24,000,000 program is producing 4,817 low-rent living units in eight projects

all in the heart of our central district. To put it another way, Atlanta's housing authority is now building more dwelling units than all the structures which went with the wind when General Sherman got a little careless with fire in November 1864.

Of the 10 States having no enabling housing legislation at present, not one is in the Southeast, and one-third of all the housing authorities in the country are already here.

In fact, of the 167 projects in the United

(Continued on page 4)

## Four Local Weeklies Issued

Local housing authorities are displaying initiative and ingenuity in the several new publications modeled generally after PUBLIC HOUSING. Columbia, S. C., was the first city to issue a weekly magazine of its own; two other local authorities and one State housing council have followed. Besides local news items, local photographs, and local statistics, most issues feature editorials and articles of national housing interest. The weekly news sheet is proving an economical and highly satisfactory medium for keeping local citizens currently informed of public housing developments. These first four local weeklies are additional testimony to the value of a decentralized housing program.

**NORTH CAROLINA HOUSING REVIEW**  
ORGAN OF THE NORTH CAROLINA COUNCIL OF HOUSING AUTHORITIES  
Vol. 1, No. 1 WELMINGTON, N. C., FEBRUARY 1940 H. B. Emery, Editor

**THEO. S. JOHNSON IS ELECTED**  
OF N. C. C.

**State Organizing On Permanent Raleigh**

**PUBLIC HOUSING AND SLUM CLEARANCE NEWS**  
PUBLISHED BY THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA  
Volume 1, No. 4

**CONSTRUCTION HOUSING OFFICIALS GIVE ANSWERS TO MANY QUESTIONS**

**HOUSING OFFICIALS GIVE ANSWERS TO MANY QUESTIONS**

**MACON HOUSING NEWS**  
Volume 1, Number 2 Published by the Housing Authority of the City of Macon, Ga. March 1940

**HOUSING HERALD**  
Volume 1, Number 4 Published by the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, S. C. March 1, 1940

**Columbia College Students Visit Housing Projects**

**THE COLLEGE GROUP AT GONZALES GARDENS**

Last Wednesday a group of Columbia College students visited a housing project in the heart of the city of Columbia, South Carolina. The group, led by Miss Jean McDaniel of the Columbia College faculty, was accompanied by Miss Jean McDaniel of the Columbia College faculty. The group visited the project and saw the progress of the work. The project is a model of modern housing and is being built by the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina. The project is a model of modern housing and is being built by the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina. The project is a model of modern housing and is being built by the Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina.

**PROSPECTORS DETAINED**

Prospectors seeking for housing in the South are being detained. The Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, is detaining prospectors who are seeking for housing in the South. The Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, is detaining prospectors who are seeking for housing in the South. The Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, is detaining prospectors who are seeking for housing in the South.

HERE ARE  
FOUR  
YOUNGER  
BROTHERS  
of  
PUBLIC HOUSING

## Western Penna. Holds Housing Conference

"The Citizens and Public Housing," and "Public Housing and Public Officials," were the major headings under which discussions were conducted at the recent Western Pennsylvania Conference on Public Housing. Joint hosts were the housing authorities of Allegheny County, Pittsburgh, and McKeesport.

Purpose of the conference was to render immediate useful assistance to counties now in the process of setting up housing authorities.

Held in the Bar Association Rooms, City-County Building, Pittsburgh, March 12, the conference began at 10 o'clock in the morning, and concluded with a dinner in honor of Dr. B. J. Hovde at the Hotel Schenley in the evening.

Dr. Hovde had the chair at the morning session, where three subjects were discussed: "Business and Public Housing," Dr. James H. Greene, Executive Vice President, Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce; "Labor and Public Housing," Harold Ruttenberg, Steel Workers Organizing Committee, and George Walters, Pittsburgh Building Trades Council; and "The Citizen in Action," Joseph Tufts, Secretary, Pittsburgh Housing Association.

In the afternoon, Mayor John J. Mullen of Clairton had the chair, and an address was given by Langdon Post, former Chairman, New York City Housing Authority, "Significance of Public Housing to a Local Administration." Other subjects discussed during the afternoon were: "Legal Steps in Appointing An Authority," "Financing New Authorities," "Surveys Before Loan Contracts," and "Problems of Authority—Local Administration Cooperation." John Taylor Egan and Barrett Quirk, USHA officials, were present to lead discussions and answer questions.

Prominent guests at the conference were: Mayor John Conway, of Johnstown; John J. Kane, Chairman, Allegheny County Commissioners; James McDevitt, Chairman, American Federation of Labor; George E. Evans, Chairman, Pittsburgh housing authority; Edward J. Leonard, Chairman, Allegheny County Housing Authority; William D. Mansfield, McKeesport housing authority; Commissioner Eddie McCloskey of Cambria County; Commissioner John Rankin of Fayette County; Controller Ralph C. Bennett of Beaver County.

## Nation-Wide Action Vital Says Raleigh, N. C., Editor

Speaking before a National Public Housing Conference luncheon in New York City recently, Jonathan Daniels, son of Josephus Daniels, American Ambassador to Mexico, said that the housing problem must be dealt with nationally.

Addressing himself particularly to housing conditions in New York City, Mr. Daniels said: "I don't feel that I can make any better contribution than to make you aware that when people live in shacks in North Carolina, their children are the future citizens of New York. This problem is not one we are going to work out unless people in the Nation as a whole realize that it belongs to you and will come to you eventually."

Mr. Daniels is editor of the Raleigh (N. C.) *News Observer*.

## NYU Extension Course

New York University is providing extension courses on Housing and Housing Management in Newark, N. J. The present 15-week course will last through June. Similar services will be made available to Trenton at a later date.

The extension service is planned in cooperation with NAHO. New Jersey has 25 housing authorities, 12 of which have obtained USHA loans for the construction of projects.

## Housing Progress in the South

(Continued from page 3)

States on which construction contracts have been awarded, 94, or more than half, are in the South, although the South has only one-third of the National population. It is significant that many of these projects are in cities with less than 20,000 people.

Furthermore, the average shelter rent of \$11.21 per home, or \$2.69 per room, is so low that families whose gross income is under \$700 per year will be the average residents.

From the regional viewpoint, housing can be the magnet to draw more wealth to this section. In the end it will help the North as much as the South by eliminating the continual threat which comes from the competition of our substandard urban labor. Rehoused, these millions demand higher standards of living, consume more and higher-priced foods, gain greater energy through better health, and become contented citizens.

## Indianapolis Survey Shows Bad Slums

The recently published Report of the Citizens' Housing Committee of Indianapolis, Ind., reveals that in one section of the city 26 blocks long and 11 blocks wide 45 percent of all residential units are substandard (2,961 out of 6,448).

The Report "Housing in Indianapolis" was made public at an open meeting of the committee held February 28, 1940. The principal speaker was H. L. Carr, Secretary-Treasurer of the Delaware County (Ind.) housing authority.

Resolving that the city has "urgent need" of a slum clearance program, the Citizens' Housing Committee will begin to circulate petitions asking that a local housing authority be created in Indianapolis.

## No. Carolina Council Elects Officers at Raleigh Meeting

Meeting in Raleigh recently, the North Carolina Council of Housing Authorities elected officers for the Council's Executive Committee.

Theodore S. Johnson, Commissioner of the Housing Authority of the City of Raleigh, N. C., was elected President. First, Second, and Third Vice Presidents are: Rev. Jack R. Rountree, Chairman of the Kinston Housing Authority; Capus Waynick, Chairman of the High Point Housing Authority; and Edwin L. Jones, Chairman of the Housing Authority of the City of Charlotte, N. C. H. R. Emory, Executive Director of the Housing Authority of the City of Wilmington, N. C., was elected Secretary-Treasurer.

The meeting was especially helpful to the State's newest housing authorities—High Point, New Bern, and Kinston. The first two have earmarkings of \$1,500,000 each, the latter, \$1,000,000.

## Schedule of Bid Opening Dates<sup>1</sup>

Local authority and project number	Number of units	Date of bid opening
Atlanta (Ga.-6-4).....	598	4- 9-40
Baltimore (Md.-2-2)....	434	3-27-40
Baltimore (Md.-2-5)....	397	4-10-40
Birmingham (Ala.-1-3)	614	4-13-40
Birmingham (Ala.-1-3-A)	292	4-13-40
Birmingham (Ala.-1-4).....	432	4-25-40
Camden (N. J.-10-1)....	275	3-25-40
Cincinnati (Ohio-4-1)...	750	4-16-40
Dayton (Ohio-5-1-R)....	604	4-15-40
Denver (Colo.-1-2).....	346	4-20-40
Detroit (Mich.-1-2, Pt. II).....	180	4-18-40
Frederick (Md.-3-2)....	50	4- 3-40
Nashville (Tenn.-5-1)...	350	4-19-40
New Bedford (Mass.-7-1).....	200	4- 4-40
Ponce (P. R.-1-4).....	120	3-27-40
Portsmouth (Ohio-10-1)	268	4-22-40
Washington (D. C.-1-4).....	310	4-23-40

<sup>1</sup> There is usually a 30-day period between bid advertising and bid opening.

## Weekly Construction Report

Item	Week ended March 15, 1940	Week ended March 8, 1940	Percentage change
Number of projects under construction.....	186	184	+1.09
Number of dwellings under construction.....	72,285	71,699	+0.82
Total estimated over-all cost <sup>1</sup> of new housing.....	\$322,452,000	\$320,179,000	+0.71
Average over-all cost <sup>1</sup> of new housing per unit.....	\$4,461	\$4,466	-0.11
Average net construction cost <sup>2</sup> per unit.....	\$2,801	\$2,803	-0.07

<sup>1</sup> Includes: (a) Building the house, including structural costs and plumbing, heating, and electrical installation; (b) dwelling equipment, architects' fees, local administrative expenses, financial charges during construction, and contingency expenses; (c) land for present development. (d) nondwelling facilities.

<sup>2</sup> The cost of building the house, including structural, plumbing, heating, and electrical costs.

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