

City Introduces Good Cents Program

Planning & Redevelopment Division

March 25, 2009

Beginning March 1, 2009, City of Rock Island residents participating in the Roof Loan Program have another means of assistance based on the generosity of Rock Island citizens. The Good Cents program will allow Rock Island residents to participate in an optional payment program to round up utility bill payments to the next dollar and provide assistance to homeowners needing new roofs. The difference between the amount due and the next dollar will be deposited into a designated fund to assist the Planning and Redevelopment Division's Roof Loan program's lower income clients receive the new roof their home needs.

The Roof Loan Program is one of the most popular housing rehabilitation programs offered by the City of Rock Island. Typically, there is a waiting list of twelve to eighteen months.

The Roof Loan program is limited to \$6,000 to each qualified homeowner in order to assist as many houses as possible each year until program funding is depleted. As part of the Roof Loan program, the City solicits three bids for each roof project and, in most cases, the cost of the roof comes in under the \$6,000 cap. Sometimes, the roof bid exceeds \$6,000. When this happens, the homeowner must pay the difference between the City's \$6,000 contribution and the total cost of the roof replacement. Unfortunately, some homeowners do not have the financial resources to provide the private funding necessary and the roof replacement does not proceed. This is when the Good Cents program would be used.

"The homeowners would not have qualified for the program if a roof replacement was not needed. To work through the program and then not be able to complete the roof because of a lack of a small amount of money is frustrating for both the homeowner and the City. A roof in poor condition does not improve without replacement and once interior leaks begin, damage to the home can be substantial," stated Carol Triebel, Housing Program Officer.

To participate in the Good Cents program, a utility customer completes an authorization form so their account can be designated to reflect the rounded up amount on their billing statement. Utility bills are sent quarterly, and the maximum amount possible to round up each quarter is 99 cents making a maximum annual donation of \$3.96. Most utility customers will see a smaller annual donation.

The Rauch Family Foundations provided a \$3,000 grant in September, 2008. These "seed funds" were used to start the program while the Good Cents fund generates money. The City hopes to assist up to ten customers each year as the program becomes more established and contributions are received regularly.

"The City offers the Roof Loan program so that we can assist homeowners before interior damage is done to the home. Given the waiting list involved, homeowners are encouraged to sign up for the Roof Loan program before active leaks are present. By contributing a few cents every few months, citizens can help improve their neighbor's quality of life and stabilize neighborhoods throughout the City



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which makes it a win/win situation for everyone,” states Alan Carmen, Planning and Redevelopment Administrator. He added “Carol Triebel saw a gap in our program and came up with a unique way to assist our clients and benefit the City.”

Authorization forms for the Good Cents program and applications for the Roof Loan program are available from the Planning and Redevelopment Division at City Hall or can be requested by phone at 732-2900.