

## Housing Coordinator

From a legislative point of view, Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 was a very successful year. The City, with the active support of the County delegation and the Fire Chiefs Association, was able to have NH RSA 155B (Hazardous and Dilapidated Buildings) amended in order to give municipalities the right to lien the other properties or insurance proceeds from an owner who does not repair or remove a burned property in a timely manner. Since 2005 the City has spent over \$300,000 in removing burned properties in order to make neighborhoods safe. During this period of time the City could only recoup its expenses by selling the land on which the burned building was located on. In general, the City lost about \$25,000 each time a property was cleaned up. The new law allows the City to recoup its full costs by either placing a lien on other properties owned by the building owner or by placing a lien on the insurance proceeds from the fire.



FY 2008 was a year of ups and downs for our executing the \$350,000 CDBG grant that enabled the City to establish its Berlin Neighborhood Revitalization Project (BNRP) to provide help to those who cannot afford to make these repairs. The start of the year looked promising since the entire City

had to do was to recruit qualified and insured contractors to create a contractor pool that would provide the services required to make the repairs needed by the grant recipients. Two public meetings, numerous newspaper ads and stories yielded not enough varied skilled and insured trades contractors to meet the needs of the grant. In the end, with permission from CDBG and the City Council, Tri-County CAP became the general contractor for the project and repairs to homes finally got underway. It is expected all work to make these homes safe and code compliant will be completed in the FY 2009 period.

In 2008, in close cooperation with the City's Tax Collector Blandine Shallow, only 5 properties were tax deeded due to non-payment of taxes. This is a dramatic reduction from past years as property owners realize that the City will follow through on delinquent tax payers and will not allow offenders to shift the tax burden to the other property owners in the city.



Respectfully Submitted,

**Andre Caron**, Housing Coordinator