

Rutherford County receives revitalization grant

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RUTHERFORDTON—Major improvements are coming for the homes of 19 low-to-moderate-income-families across Rutherford County, thanks to a Community Development Block Grant that Rutherford County has received.

The grant, from the North Carolina Department of Commerce Neighborhood Revitalization Program, is in the amount of \$631,667 and was announced at Monday evening's meeting of Rutherford County Commissioners.

"This is tremendously wonderful news," County Commission Chairman Bryan King said. "This is what happens when we all work together to serve our communities."

The grant application was prepared by the Rutherford Housing Alliance. The Rutherford Housing Partnership (RHP),

leadership from the towns of Rutherfordton, Spindale, and Forest City and Pisgah Legal Services as well as other interested citizens participate in the alliance.

Isothermal Planning and Development Commission will administer the grant, with the work performed by RHP.

RHP is a local nonprofit that provides home repairs to owner-occupied low-income families.

"This grant required a team approach," County Manager Steve Garrison said.

Garrison pointed out that working with RHP, the county typically receives \$100,000 in grant funding for urgent repairs for low-income families.

"This new grant will make a real difference," he said.

Attorney Nikki Mitchell of Pisgah Legal



NIKKI MITCHELL

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Services leads the Rutherford Housing Alliance, and helped spearhead the grant application.

"I am very excited that the grant application was approved," Mitchell stated. "This is a wonderful example of a group coming together saying 'together we can, and together we did.'"

Twelve of the 19 homes that were selected for the program are new applicants for assistance. The other seven were previously on the RHP waiting list.

The 19 homes will directly impact 34 people. They are located in Rutherfordton, Spindale, Forest City, Bostic, Ellenboro, and Union Mills. Repair costs will range from \$20,000 to \$30,000.

Officials were noti-

fied in late December of the grant approval.

"The Housing Alliance and the families, are excited and feel very blessed," Mitchell added.

Officials have estimated the entire project, including administration and the actual work, will take about 30 months.

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this program were chosen from a group of 40 applications. The homes were assessed with cost estimates. A specific rating system was used to select which homes were ultimately included. The homes not selected for this program may

qualify for future assistance through RHP, officials have said.

According to Pisgah Legal Services, more than 12,700 individuals are living in poverty in Rutherford County. This is nearly one in five.