



Bruce Rauner, Governor • James T. Dimas, Secretary

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Illinois and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) host career and resource fair for Cairo Residents

State agencies team up to help residents facing housing crisis

CAIRO (Jan. 10, 2018) — The “Get Connected” job and resource fair was held today from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Mighty Rivers Worship Center, 1000 Poplar Street, Cairo.

Gov. Bruce Rauner announced the state’s participation in the fair in December and it was put together to assist those who are being displaced from a federal housing project in Cairo. The Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) local agency, Alexander County Housing Authority (ACHA), hosted the fair that was attended by Illinois state agencies and Lt. Gov. Evelyn Sanguinetti.

“This was a wonderful event organized through a collaboration of local, state, federal and private entities to help the residents of Cairo and the region find jobs,” said Lt. Gov. Evelyn Sanguinetti. “As Chairman of the Governor’s Rural Affair Council, I’m focused on ways we can help rural Illinois grow. I personally believe that all people – no matter their color or their class – deserve to live the American dream. And I’m hopeful the resources and knowledge gained from today’s fair in Cairo will help guide our residents on the path to prosperity.”

The job and resource fair was a collaborative, multi-agency event that included close to 30 health and social service agencies, area job centers and local and regional employers that were on site to help residents any way they could. They



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were accompanied by the workforce development team from the state Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and representatives of the Illinois Department of Human Services, Department of Aging, Department of Employment Security, and the Shawnee Development Council.

The federal housing authority's decision to close the HUD facility has affected 185 households including about 400 residents and it is scheduled to be closed by the summer. Since the decision was made, a 10-unit low-income housing option called Little Egypt Estates has opened. Some residents of the HUD-operated Elmwood and McBride housing developments have moved into these new units.

“Today's resource fair is another important opportunity to help connect these residents in need with the wide range of our services. We had IDHS representatives from our divisions of Family and Community Services, Mental Health, Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Homeless Services on site,” said Secretary James Dimas of the Department of Human Services. “At IDHS we're committed to strengthening Illinois by building up lives and communities and we intend to continue to support the people of Cairo through resources and events like this.”

“ACHA had never hosted an event that brings area workers and companies together in one place,” said Towanda Macon, ACHA's Executive Director. “We were very excited that our partners identified multiple employers with open positions to come to Cairo for this employment and resource fair. In the weeks leading up to the job fair, we hosted a series of workshops designed to help residents prepare for the opportunities at the fair. We offered seminars on finding a career field that fits their personality and experience, resume writing, interviewing skills and dressing for success.”

The fair was open to all residents of Southern Illinois, Western Kentucky and Eastern Missouri.

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