

# Coalition News

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## Our Vision for the Upcoming Year in a Word is CONNECT!

*A message from incoming board chair – John Roberts, Esq.*

I am honored to begin serving as the Tennessee Affordable Housing Coalition board chair effective this month. I would like to begin by expressing the coalition's appreciation for the leadership that our past chair, Eric Haralson, has provided in this position over the last two years. Although Eric has stepped down as chair, he will remain active on the Executive Committee in the past-chair role. He has also agreed to lead our Legislative Operating Committee and he is managing our upcoming Day-On-The-Hill event. For those who do not know, Eric has recently retired from his executive position at the Federation of Appalachian Housing Enterprises (FAHE) but plans to remain active in the affordable housing community as a consultant. We are grateful to Eric for his past contributions and we look forward to working with him in his new role for years to come.



Looking forward to the upcoming year, our vision for the coalition in a word is CONNECT. We all should be proud of the progress the coalition has made in recent years and the growth that we have experienced. However, with rapidly escalating housing costs and widening affordability gaps in many markets, the challenges faced by coalition members serving the needs for affordable housing in Tennessee are more challenging than ever. On our own, any one of our coalition members may feel overwhelmed, but together we have support and strength. That is where the CONNECT vision begins.

The upcoming year brings opportunities to increase dramatically the connection of our coalition including:

CONNECT more members active and engaged within the coalition and the regional councils.

CONNECT coalition members through a powerful website to share information and communication.

CONNECT with lawmakers and establish the coalition as a powerful advocate and source of expertise.

In the next year, we will focus our resources and efforts in each of these areas. For example, membership growth is a key objective in everything we do. We recognize the power of the coalition increases geometrically as we add more members and get them engaged with diverse perspectives, backgrounds, skill sets and objectives. We have invested to build a coalition website to serve as a central information repository and point of connection. With the initial website design now in place, we are already working to implement a dramatic redesign to improve usability and effectiveness. For connection to lawmakers, we are conducting this year's Day-On-The-Hill in collaboration with other groups including TN Mortgage Bankers Association (TMBA), the Tennessee Association of Housing and Redevelopment Agencies (TAHRA), Tennessee Developers Council and the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC).

Through connection, the coalition will help all members be more successful. When we CONNECT, we have strength and influence. Assisting each other, we can all be more effective in making a difference. None of us can solve all of the problems or meet all of the needs. However, each of us can do something – and when we CONNECT the impact on improving affordable housing in Tennessee can be dramatic.

Let's CONNECT and make 2017 a great year!