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FEATURED

Trenton Housing Authority gets \$925K grant for lead abatement

By Sulaiman Abdur-Rahman sulaiman@Trentonian.com @Sabdurr on Twitter 13 hrs ago

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Trenton Housing Authority's Donnelly Homes on Southard Street in Trenton.

TRENTONIAN FILE PHOTO

TRENTON — The Trenton Housing Authority is receiving nearly \$1 million in federal funding to identify and reduce lead-based paint hazards.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on Tuesday announced that THA has been awarded \$925,000 to promote lead-safe housing in Trenton's public housing stock.

"We are glad that HUD is recognizing that the need is great in Trenton and that we are able to get optimum dollars," Mayor Reed Gusciora said Tuesday, thanking Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman for her efforts in lobbying HUD for support.

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Although lead-based paint was banned for residential use in 1978, HUD estimates that about 24 million older homes across America “still have significant lead-based paint hazards today,” HUD said Tuesday in a news release. “While most public housing has already undergone abatement, there are still some properties where lead-based paint remains and hazards have redeveloped.”

Those hazards are prevalent in Trenton

“Most of the houses in this city were built before 1978,” Elyse Pivnick, the Isles Inc. director of environmental health, said at an April 2016 City Council meeting. She estimated that 90 percent of the homes in Trenton have a risk of having lead paint and said substandard conditions, such as water damage, holes in the wall, or old windows, can generate lead paint dust.

Sharing statistics, the Isles director said 15 percent of Trenton children entering kindergarten in 2012 had blood lead levels at or greater than 5 mg/dL, the reference level used by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says lead is a problem because of how it impacts human health.

“Lead is a toxic metal that was used for many years in paint and leaded gasoline,” the EPA said in a 2018 bulletin concerning potential lead contamination within the soil of 216 Klagg Ave. “It is also used in many industrial operations, and historically these operations did not stop the lead from escaping into the environment. Lead poisoning can cause a number of harmful health effects, particularly in children under the age of six.”

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Sulaiman Abdur-Rahman previously worked as a staff writer at The Philadelphia Inquirer and has lived in Sydney, Australia, ultimately writing a memoir about that experience. He is a Temple University graduate and award-winning journalist. **×**

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