

Sept. 10, 2008
Contact: Andy Gallagher (304) 415-4187

Polling of 55 county health departments under way about mobile home parks

FLATWOODS -- The state Department of Health is polling the 55 county departments of health in West Virginia to determine whether they want to continue to regulate mobile home parks.

The county health departments now inspect the parks across the state. The Department of Health is trying to determine whether the rules should be rewritten, to what extent, and how that should be done.

The West Virginia Housing Institute Inc., through its co-president, Kevin Wilfong of Fairmont, is assisting the department in its efforts. The rules have not been changed substantially since their adoption in 1971. Wilfong is a mobile home park owner, too.

The manufactured housing industry has made major strides in that time and many of the current regulations are outdated, archaic or do not apply.

The panel of state, local and private industry officials held its second meeting Sept. 10 in Flatwoods. Also representing the industry at Wednesday's meeting was Regina Kelly, manager of Jobrier Village, LLC, of Davisville. In addition to health department officials, Thomas Seletyn, compliance officer for the Division of Labor, which regulates the factory-built housing industry, attended.

The next meeting is Oct. 8 at Flatwoods, when the rules of the polling are to be announced by Chairman Fred Barley, of the Department of Health in Charleston.

"We are very pleased with the extremely open and cooperative effort evidenced by the Department of Health, the various county health departments that are participating, and other officials," Wilfong said.

Wilfong and Kelly believe the industry should support minimal health department supervision over parks because of potential problems in having the Legislature repealing all controls.

"I'm afraid such a suggestion would make us look bad before the Legislature and public and likely would not pass anyway and we might end up facing stricter rules than we have now," Wilfong said. Kelly agreed.

The panel, which is chaired by n, has begun to rewrite the definitions in the current rules.

Wilfong is asking every park member to submit to comments about changes they believe should be instituted in the current regulations. He said he would take any recommendations to the panels' next meeting.

Recommendations should be submitted to Andy Gallagher, executive director of WVHI, PO Box 2182, Charleston, WV 25328; or by email to andy_wvhi@verizon.net; or by fax at (304) 346-8986 or simply by calling Gallagher or his assistant, Trish Johnson, at (304) 346-8985.