

State approves \$1.1 million for local housing needs

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Lycoming County has been approved for \$1.1 million in funding for housing and residential improvement projects.

It's all part of an overall \$8 million funding source through the Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund (PHARE).

Local projects targeted for funding are Memorial Homes, \$500,000; Grove Street Commons, \$400,000; and Brodart Neighborhood and Improvement District, \$200,000.

The funding, administered by the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, is part of "leftover" Act 13 gas impact fee money distributed to counties, according to state Sen. E. Eugene Yaw, R-Loyalsock Township.

Yaw noted that when it was approved several years ago, PHARE was expected to be funded through federal stimulus money.

However, when that money source became depleted, alternative funding was needed.

"For the first time in two years, the PHARE fund now has a dedicated source of revenue with monies from Marcellus Shale development," he said. "This funding will create, rehabilitate and preserve affordable quality housing across the Northern Tier."

Other area counties sharing in the funding will be Bradford, \$1.275 million; Susquehanna, \$411,000; and Sullivan, \$80,000.

Grove Street Commons is a planned 32-unit senior housing community coordinated by the Lycoming County, the city of Williamsport and SEDA-Council of Governments.

County officials noted in November that construction could begin on the project next summer.

More than 200 residents reportedly are seeking income-eligible senior housing.

The Brodart project is a neighborhood improvement plan that will assist up to 150 residents. It will involve razing a building on Memorial Avenue to make way for Memorial Homes, a multi-unit apartment complex.

Lycoming County Commissioners are expected to approve the funding at their regular weekly meeting Thursday and provide more specifics on the projects.

"I am very pleased that the impact fee revenue that is being directed into the program will provide thousands of Pennsylvanians the opportunity to live in affordable and safe homes across the state, while also providing rental assistance and expanding more home ownership opportunities," Yaw said.

