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# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Bee Branch Healthy Homes Program Improves Six Housing Units and Assists over 50 Families in 2017**

DUBUQUE, Iowa – In 2017, the Bee Branch Healthy Homes (BBHH) Resiliency Program improved six housing units and assisted over 50 low- to moderate-income families. Construction contracts for the six housing units were signed and completed between September 8 and December 31, and costs of the improvements totaled approximately \$143,600. An additional 21 properties are currently under contract for improvements.

Since launching the program in November 2016, the City has received approximately 360 inquiries and more than 140 applications for assistance. To date, 79 of those applications have been approved and the remainder are in the program's verification process. Once an application is approved, a BBHH inspector visits the location and assesses the home or property for onsite repairs and renovations that will improve environmental health and address safety issues related to flooding.

Eligible construction activities include repairing damage caused from flooding and improvements that eliminate water infiltration and make the structure more resilient. In 2017, construction contracts included interior drain tile and sump pump installation, foundation waterproofing, gutter and downspout improvements, exterior drain tile, soil and sidewalk modification, furnace and water heater replacement, basement window repairs, ventilation improvements, radon mitigation, and more. An interactive map featuring information and photos of the completed BBHH properties is available at [www.cityofdubuque.org/bbhh](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/bbhh).

The BBHH program also provides participants with home advocacy services. Through a comprehensive assessment, home advocates provide education and referrals to increase understanding of the resources and services that are available to support development, employment, education, health, and neighborhood revitalization. Home advocates strive to inform, motivate, empower, and educate residents and homeowners on how to break the links among unhealthy housing, unhealthy families, and unhealthy neighborhoods.

The BBHH home advocates have met with 58 families. As of December 2017, they were still providing services to 38 of those families. The most common referrals have included weatherization, education, home maintenance, financial services, food assistance, and health insurance.

Three local general contractors and several other subcontractors have done work for the BBHH program. Moving forward, the City expects to bid one or more packages of four to 10 units each month. To sign up to receive email and/or text alerts when a BBHH project is available for bid, contractors may call (563) 690-6168 or visit [www.cityofdubuque.org/notifyme](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/notifyme) and subscribe to Housing and Community Development bid postings.

The BBHH Resiliency Program includes \$8.4 million in the form of five-year forgivable loans. The program is available to owner-occupied homes, single-unit rentals, and small, multi-family residential units located in the BBHH eligibility area and meet the income requirements established by HUD guidelines. For more information, visit [www.cityofdubuque.org/bbhh](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/bbhh).

The BBHH Resiliency Program is being funded through the \$96.9 million U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) National Disaster Resilience Competition (NDRC) Grant awarded to the State of Iowa's Iowa Watershed Approach (IWA), a collaboration of numerous agencies, universities, non-profits, and municipalities.

### **Iowa Watershed Approach (IWA)**

Through the Iowa Watershed Approach (IWA), Iowans will work together to address factors that contribute to floods and nutrient flows. This adaptive model, supported by HUD dollars through the NDRC, will leverage the principles of Iowa's innovative Nutrient Reduction Strategy to make our communities more resilient to flooding and help improve water quality. The Bee Branch Watershed is one of nine distinct watersheds across Iowa serving as project sites for the IWA.

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