

Second Front

A4 THE DAILY IBERIAN

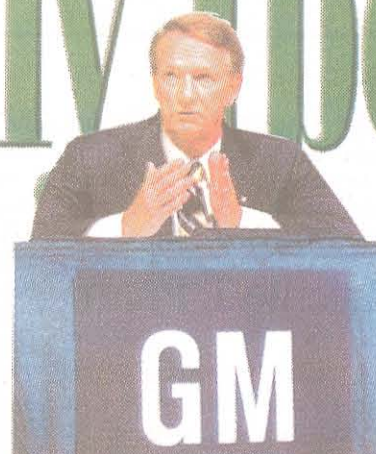
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Southern Mutual Help gets grant, support from Neighborworks brand

BY MARY CATHARINE MARTIN
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The Southern Mutual Help Association is \$300,000 better off in its Teche Ridge Residential Development after a June check presentation from Neighborworks, a non-profit group created by Congress for community-based revitalization efforts.

Denise Galatas, special assistant to the president of

SMHA, said the non-profit group became a charter member of the networking organization Neighborworks in January.

Don Phoenix, director of the southern district for Neighborworks, who presented the check to SMHA, said being a part of the Neighborworks network also provides an organization credibility in obtaining other grants, as there is a rigorous

application process.

In using the Neighborworks brand, Phoenix said "They're able to say they met all of our standards and requirements."

The Teche Ridge Residential Development is a mixed income, "smart growth" development of 600 residential units in Iberia Parish that sits just outside New Iberia's limits on Emile Verret road. The development's master plan is complete and construc-

tion is expected to begin soon.

Galatas said smart growth reduces residents' reliance on motor vehicles, as staple stores must be within a five-minute walk of residences.

"It's traditional neighborhood design to push residential development back to how it was in the old days," she said, adding it utilizes common green spaces and promotes a sense of community.

Phoenix said Neighbor-

works supports smart growth planning.

"Their project is just fantastic, and being a mixed income project gives opportunity for a very diverse community," he said.

Neighborworks officially accepts grant requests for funding two times a year.

"This is just the beginning," Phoenix said of the project's funding. "As the property develops, they're eligible for

more."

Phoenix said Neighborworks gets an annual appropriation from Congress and uses the money to provide technical assistance and grants to its organizations. The appropriations are around \$119 million.

The grant size varies, though he said the larger amounts of money usually go towards specific projects like the Teche Ridge development.