



Southwest Solutions

Answers for a healthy community

CONTACTS:

Steve Palackdharry
Communications Manager
Southwest Solutions
313.297.1374

Jacqueline Wiggins
SVP, Director of Public Affairs
Charter One Bank
248.226.7750

**—FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—
SOUTHWEST HOUSING SOLUTIONS
NAMED HOUSING HERO**

**Charter One Foundation provides \$25,000 grant recognizing
Southwest Housing Solutions as a leader in affordable housing**

DETROIT, January 26, 2009 — Charter One has named Southwest Housing Solutions as its 2008 Housing Hero. Each year, the Housing Heroes Award spotlights one nonprofit housing developer that demonstrates innovative solutions and leadership in creating affordable housing.

Southwest Housing Solutions is recognized as Charter One's Housing Hero for its Springwells Partners IV development that includes 50 affordable rental units in two renovated buildings on Woodmere and Michigan avenues. The project stands out for its work in retaining the historic charm of the buildings while creating larger and more modern and efficient units.

As part of the award, Southwest Housing Solutions will receive a \$25,000 grant from the Charter One Foundation. The Housing Heroes Award is an extension of the Charter One Housing Bank, a low-interest loan program designed to increase the supply of affordable housing units in the state.

"We are thrilled to name Southwest Housing Solutions as Charter One's Housing Hero," said Sandy Pierce, President, Charter One, Michigan. "Charter One recognizes and celebrates the impact Southwest Housing Solutions is making in the community of southwest Detroit and in the lives of its residents."

Since 1979, Southwest Housing Solutions has provided affordable and supportive housing opportunities to the southwest Detroit community. It is recognized as a leader in the planning, development and management of affordable housing and commercial property. Southwest Housing Solutions manages more than 400 apartment units in 24 multi-story historic buildings, serving as a catalyst for commercial and cultural development through mixed-use projects. Southwest Housing Solutions' Housing Opportunity Center promotes homeownership and financial literacy through professional, bilingual and free counseling services and programs.

\$5,000 of the \$25,000 grant from the Charter One Foundation is designated for a resident-related program in the neighborhood. Southwest Housing Solutions will use these funds for the continued operation of its comprehensive Resident Services program that includes access to educational opportunities, employment training and support services for residents.

“We are deeply honored to receive this distinguished award,” said Timothy Thorland, executive director of Southwest Housing Solutions. “We appreciate Charter One’s commitment to help address the critical shortage of affordable housing. The Housing Heroes Award will advance our mission of community development and enhance the services we provide to residents in our apartment buildings.”

Housing Heroes is an annual awards program to recognize a successful project that champions affordable housing in Michigan. Any nonprofit developer that has completed an affordable housing project in the past year is eligible to apply. The next deadline will be June 2009.

The Charter One Housing Bank, a \$250 million loan commitment, was designed to address the need for more affordable housing by providing non-profit developers with the low-cost funding they need to create a new supply of affordable housing units for rental or homeownership and increase neighborhood stability through new homeownership opportunities.

Southwest Solutions (<http://www.swsol.org>) is the holding company of Southwest Counseling Solutions and Southwest Housing Solutions. The family of corporations offers a wide range of services to create a stronger and healthier southwest Detroit community, including mental health and early childhood services, affordable housing, home ownership counseling, employment opportunities and innovative economic development projects.

Charter One is a division of RBS Citizens, N.A., operating in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio. It has 462 branches and more than 730 ATMs. It has 119 branches and 133 ATMs in Michigan. Charter One’s Web site is charterone.com.

RBS Citizens, N.A. is a subsidiary of Citizens Financial Group, Inc., a \$161 billion commercial bank holding company headquartered in Providence, R.I. CFG’s two bank subsidiaries are RBS Citizens, N.A. and Citizens Bank of Pennsylvania. They operate a 13-state branch network under the Citizens Bank brand in Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont, and the Charter One brand in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio. CFG has non-branch retail and commercial offices in about 40 states. It is one of the 10 largest commercial banking companies in the United States ranked by assets and deposits. CFG is owned by RBS (The Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc). CFG’s Web site is citizensbank.com.

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