



More than 50 apply for Chambersburg's Elm Street program this year

By **MARCUS RAUHUT** Staff writer

CHAMBERSBURG -- Building off a successful year in 2009, Chambersburg's Elm Street program already has more than 50 applications for projects in 2010.

The Elm Street neighborhood revitalization program provides funds for property owners in the designated Elm Street area owners to fix up their properties.

Last year, 37 projects were completed, but another 57 were left over.

"As the program is becoming well known, more and more property owners are applying," said Jack Jones, Chambersburg's Elm Street manager.

Elm Street provides money for fixing facades, curbs, sidewalks or other rehabilitation projects. The ultimate goals are to improve the neighborhood image and increase home ownership.

The number of projects that can be done this year -- the third year of the program -- depends on available funding and the cost of the projects. Jones expects to receive the money from the state this spring.

While funds were tied up because of last year's state budget impasse, Jones said committee member Guy Shaul, along with 15 to 20 other volunteers, started a handyman program to help economically disadvantaged individuals with repairs.

Volunteers helped rebuild a garage that was cited for code violations, replace a collapsed balcony, and removed trees that had fallen down.

"Now you're talking about the true spirit of the Elm Street program," Jones said.

Jones said one of the biggest successes was October's groundbreaking at Southgate Shopping Center for a senior apartment campus and 40 rent-to-own townhouses on Buchanan Street. Plaza owner Paran Management also pledged nearly half a million dollars on facade and landscaping improvements.

About \$13 million in stimulus money was awarded to the two housing projects.

"That's going to change the whole character of the Elm Street community," Jones said. "That came about because of the successful Elm Street program in the community. The rules and regulations that surround this money say you must demonstrate that you have a neighborhood revitalization program within your community to qualify."

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Marcus Rauhut can be reached at mrauhut@publicopinionnews.com or 262-4752.

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