

A unique homebuilding partnership between the City of Hornell and the Greater Southern Tier BOCES has been singled out for special honor in a statewide competition.

The New York State Conference of Mayors and Municipal Officials today announced the City/BOCES program has been awarded first place in the Economic Development Category in the 22nd annual NYCOM/Empire State Report Local Government Achievement Awards competition.

The program features the City working with Building Construction students at the BOCES Wildwood Education Center in Hornell in construction and placement of new housing. The houses are placed on City-owned lots that are vacant – in some cases, because the City has removed previous blighted housing there – and then the house and property are sold to single-family homeowners.

The first BOCES-built house was a 28-by-50-foot modular home with three bedrooms, two full baths, a full basement, central air and heating, and hardwood kitchen cabinets. It was placed at 34 Washington St. in the summer of 2008 and was sold shortly thereafter for more than \$96,000.

A second house was placed earlier this year at 66 Elm St. A third home will be placed on Maple Street.

“It’s an innovative program,” Mayor Shawn D. Hogan said today. “It’s a long-term commitment with BOCES that gives BOCES students the opportunity to hone their skills in a practical manner. And it ensures single-family home ownership because those who buy it must agree to live there for at least five years.”

The program further helps the City, Mayor Hogan added, because not only does it provide Hornell with “first-class housing,” the new units spur improvement of the neighborhoods in which they are located – which in turn provides a tool for economic development.

“One of our biggest concerns is an aging housing stock,” Mayor Hogan said. “Having new housing and improved neighborhoods certainly helps us in recurring industry here.”

The City will receive its award at NYCOM's 100th annual meeting June 30 in Saratoga Springs. In addition, the City/BOCES program will be featured in both the August edition of *Empire State Report* magazine and the July-August edition of NYCOM's *Municipal Bulletin*. Finally, the program will receive a letter of recognition from the National League of Cities, and a description of it will be added to the "Best Practices" section of the NYCOM website.

This is the fourth time the City of Hornell program or project has won a first-place award in the NYCOM/Empire State Report competition.

The City previously won a Main Street Award for its Erie Depot Renovation Project, and Local Government Achievement Awards for its Neighborhood Sidewalk Improvement Program and its Hornell Plaza Development.

For more information, contact Mayor Hogan at (607) 324-7421.