

JOHN COOK
MAYOR



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COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

PRESS RELEASE

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“Blue Ribbon” Panel to Assist Housing Authority

January 18, 2008- **El Paso, Texas**- Mayor Cook announced today that he has selected a professional and well-rounded panel to help address the various housing authority issues in El Paso.

The purpose of the housing authority in any city is to provide safe and sanitary dwelling accommodations to persons of low income at rental rates they can afford.

The Mayor's role according to statute is limited to the following:

1. Appointment of five persons to serve as the board of commissioners
2. The removal of commissioners after a hearing and finding of inefficiency, neglect of duty or misconduct in office.

During a recent visit by HUD officials to review HACEP activities, the board was identified as an area that needed changes. Mayor Cook has selected Sam Legate as Chairman, Stuart Schwartz, Mandy Chew, Rosemary Castillo and Steve Blanco to be a part of what he calls a “Blue Ribbon” panel to assist and provide the Mayor with recommendations in the following areas:

- Qualifications and skill sets for the board members
- Training opportunities
- Size of the board
- Issues regarding governance including the review of its bylaws

The committee has been tasked with a quick turn around time and need to share recommendations by the end of February. The Mayor is very thankful that these dedicated community members are willing to take on this difficult task and believes that the recommendations will provide an opportunity for the Housing

Authority to make some changes that will bring about improvement in governance and the operation of HACEP. The Mayor's office has informed HUD about the newly formed panel. They are very supportive of the Mayor's efforts and will be working closely with the committee members to ensure its success.