

## County authority director named president of association

By Amy Revak HeraldStandard.com | Posted: Thursday, November 17, 2011 2:00 am

The executive director of the Fayette County Redevelopment Authority has stepped up to a new presidential role.

Andrew French was sworn in as president of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials following a conference last month. His term will expire in October 2013.

“Being elected as president of MARC-NAHRO by my colleagues across the region is truly an honor,” French said. “Serving on state, regional and national committees not only gives me valuable educational and networking opportunities, it also provides me the opportunity to bring national attention to the community development and housing needs we have here in Fayette County.”

The region includes Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, New Jersey, Delaware, Washington, D.C., and the Virgin Islands.

French said the current fiscal climate in the country is “very messy,” but he added that doesn’t mean he will give up seeking money to invest in local communities.

He said the funding provided through the Community Development Block Grant and HOME Investment Partnerships Program represents a key federal resource for local projects.

Since its inception, the redevelopment authority has spent more than \$55 million in CDBG funding to undertake 700-plus infrastructure improvement projects throughout Fayette County.

“Despite that success, in 2011 CDBG funds were cut by 17 percent, which equates to a \$320,000 loss to Fayette County,” French said. “That means more people will go without public water, more people will go without adequate sewerage or storm water improvements and more people will live in dilapidated and inadequate housing.”

French has been the head of the county redevelopment authority since 2005. He was first hired in 1999 as assistant director. The South Union Township man is a native of Mercer County and graduate of Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Va.

He began his career in Virginia, working with the Newport News Redevelopment and Housing Authority as well as the city of Hampton.

Since 2005, French has been in leadership roles with both the national and regional organizations, serving as a member of NARHO's Community Revitalization and Development Committee and as secretary and senior vice president of MARC-NAHRO.

He also is a board member of the Pennsylvania Association of Housing and Redevelopment Agencies.

French was elected president of MARC-NAHRO by his colleagues across the Mid-Atlantic region. As president, French will serve on the board of governors and steering committee of the national organization.

According to its website, with 20,000 members across the country, NAHRO serves as the "leading housing and community development advocate for the provision of adequate and affordable housing and strong, viable communities for all Americans."



**Andrew French**