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Lead-Safe Housing Program Schedule Expanded

A series of seminars designed to assist property owners in Cornhill and West Utica apply for grant funds to address lead issues is being expanded and tailored to meet the needs of Utica's newest homeowners, County Executive Anthony J. Picente, Jr. and the Oneida County Health Department announced today.

The seminars are a collaborative effort by the health department's *Lead Primary Prevention Program*, funded by the New York State Department of Health, and the *City of Utica's Lead Safe Utica 2008* in conjunction with Gro-West, Inc. The series of programs are designed to familiarize owners of both rental and owner-occupied units with the grant process that provides funding for lead abatement to houses situated in targeted areas of the city. More than 2-million dollars for lead abatement has been made available through a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Lead Hazard Control Grant awarded the City of Utica.

Recognizing the unique needs of some of Utica's newest homeowners, County Executive Anthony J. Picente, Jr. directed the program organizers to add a fourth seminar to the series that will provide interpreters for those who might otherwise have difficulty understanding the grant application process due to a language barrier. *"I want to be sure that we make every effort to present the program to all qualified property owners so that we can eradicate the problem of lead in their homes,"* Picente said. He added, *"The last seminar in this series will be translated into several languages including Spanish, Karen, Burmese and Somali (Maay)."* That session will be held on Tuesday, June 30th from 6-8PM at the Keller Building at 616 Mary Street in Utica, Picente said.

Two previously held seminars have been well received, according to Utica Mayor David Roefaro. *"The response so far has been very encouraging with the sessions attracting property owners with as many as 50 units in the city,"* Roefaro said. *"We're hoping to see the same enthusiastic response to our next session scheduled for Tuesday, June 23rd from 6-9 PM at the Parkway Ski Chalet."*

In addition to assistance with the grant application process, those attending the sessions will learn about lead poisoning risks and ways to reduce liability through accurate rental unit record keeping. Space is limited so those planning to attend should register by calling 266-6147 or online at www.ocgov.net.