

LOCAL

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Housing Authority changes wait list procedures

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MILLVILLE — The Millville Housing Authority has changed its procedures for putting people on the list for public housing, allowing residents to mail in their applications.

Waiting lists for Holly Berry Court, Maurice View Plaza (for disabled adults) and several scattered sites are opened when the num-

ber of applicants who've expressed interest is low, Executive Director Paul Dice said. The authority's five senior housing complexes all have rolling applications.

This year, the authority allowed people to apply through the mail. In October, it received a total of 130 applications for Maurice View, and in November received 101 applications for Holly Berry Court.

"It shows the need for

public housing in the area and the amount of people who want to live in our complexes," authority Chief Operating Officer Ivy Evans said.

MHA officials said the new process is more fair and safer than the old one, which placed residents on the waiting list on a first-come, first-served basis. That system often encouraged residents to wait in line for several hours — some almost overnight —

when lists were opened.

The last time a waiting list was opened was in 2008, when the authority signed up 425 applicants for Holly Berry Court, according to Evans.

Now, residents can get applications on the agency's website — www.millvillehousing.org — or in the Holly Berry Court administrative offices, Evans said. Individuals are placed on the waiting list in order of how the applica-

tions are delivered from the post office, she said.

"Every envelope is time stamped when it gets handled, and then they are placed on the list," Evans said. "This process is more fair. This enables everyone to apply, including those who can't come in person."

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development encourages housing authorities to maintain a hefty waiting list, Evans said. The authority

receives its budget from HUD.

Placement on the list does not guarantee an apartment. Residents at the top of the list are interviewed extensively when an opening is available, Evans said.

Dice said the next list that could open is for people who would receive Section 8 vouchers. The authority does not have a timeline when that list could open, he said.