



2407 1st Avenue
Seattle, WA 98121
www.lihi.org

For Immediate Release: May 2, 2010

Contact: Sharon Lee, Executive Director
Low Income Housing Institute
sharonl@lihi.org; 206.443.9935, ext. 111

**LIHI CELEBRATES 100TH ANNIVERSARY of HISTORIC FRYE HOTEL
Community Celebration on May 10, 2011**

Seattle WA, May 2, 2011 – The Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) will commemorate the historic Frye Hotel’s 100th Anniversary with a Community Celebration on Tuesday, May 10, 2011, from 9:00-10:30 am in the hotel’s grand lobby at 223 Yesler Way in Seattle’s Pioneer Square. The program will begin at 9:00 am. All media are invited. Executive Director Sharon Lee will be available for interviews at 8:45 AM or immediately following the program.

The program will feature Seattle City Council President Richard Conlin, Seattle Deputy Mayor Darryl Smith and recognition of key funding partners, Frye residents, and volunteers. Among the residents receiving special recognition will be Judy Lange, who is the Frye’s longest standing resident of 26 years.

Built by Seattle pioneer George F. Frye and his wife Louisa (Denny) Frye, the Louisa C. Frye Hotel was named after George’s wife. The Frye was designed by prominent architects Bebb and Mendel. When it was built in 1911, the Frye Hotel was the largest hotel north of San Francisco. The Frye Hotel was built for \$1 million as a luxury hotel with interior finishes of marble and mahogany. It predates the Smith Tower (which was not built until 1914). President Teddy Roosevelt was a guest at the Frye Hotel’s Grand Opening and nearly 3,000 people attended the event on April 6, 1911. The Frye was the site of many conventions and gatherings in Seattle’s history. For example, it was chosen as the headquarters for the National

Association of Master Horseshoers and Blacksmiths in 1911. Today the Frye Hotel has federal historic landmark status and is part of the Pioneer Square Historic District.

George Frye and his family also ran the first meat market in Seattle and raised the city's first distinguished stage, the Frye Opera House, and the Frye family also established the Frye Art Museum. A Seattle PI article dated April 6, 1922 read: "The public is invited to call and inspect a hotel (Frye) of which the City of Seattle may justly be proud...a twelve-story Class A building...rooms without a bath from \$1.00 and up and with, \$1.50 and up."

During WWII from 1942 to 1944 the Frye served as military housing for the Army and from 1944 to 1945 for the Navy. After the war, it was a VA Resource Center and housed military dependents.

In the early 1970's Abie Label purchased and renovated the hotel into subsidized Section 8 housing. As the subsidy program was ending, the hotel came under threat of conversion to market-rate housing.

In 1997, LIHI purchased and renovated the hotel to preserve 234 units of housing for low-income families and individuals, seniors, and people with disabilities. If LIHI had not raised the funds to purchase the Frye Hotel, the owners were ready to sell it to a for-profit developer who had made a back-up offer to purchase the building. The residents were at risk of being displaced and signed a petition to then Seattle Mayor Norm Rice to save their homes.

LIHI purchased the building for \$5.4 million and spent \$7 million on renovations, including seismic upgrades. Section 8 rent subsidies from HUD and the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) enable LIHI to keep the units affordable. The residents pay 30% of their income for rent. There are 117 one-bedroom units and 117 studio units, street level commercial space and a 90-car parking garage.

The Frye continues to serve low income households in need. Many families have incomes less than 30% of the area median income or \$20,550 for a two-person household. Each year, LIHI opens up the community room at the Frye Hotel for a severe weather emergency shelter, housing up to 32 homeless women each night.

"With the support of our many partners, LIHI is pleased that we have preserved this historic landmark to provide affordable housing in downtown Seattle," stated LIHI's Executive Director Sharon Lee. "We are excited to commemorate this 100th year milestone."

The financing partners include: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, City of Seattle, Washington State Housing Trust Fund, Enterprise, KeyBank, US Bank, Seattle Housing Authority, Federal Home Loan Bank of Seattle, and Washington State Housing Finance Commission. LIHI received local and national recognition for preserving one of the largest Section 8 buildings in the Pacific Northwest. Awards include Home and Garden TV Dream Builder Award and Award of Merit from Washington Trust for Historic Preservation. Tonkin/Hoyne/Lokan served as architects and WG Clark as the contractor for the renovations completed in 1999.

A community reception and guided tours will immediately follow the program. Attendees can enjoy a photo display chronicling the Frye's grand history.

Thank you to Seattle Steam for sponsoring this anniversary event.