



## **MH/OSTA History**

In 1977, the Oregon State Tenants Association (OSTA) began when a small group of people from Salem and Eugene organized to represent the rights of residents of mobile home parks. The group sought to meet the needs of park residents who were being treated unfairly by park management by forging the way for legislative changes.

OSTA toiled to understand the system and where to go within the system to affect change. Along the way it developed a following of residents, politicians, and others concerned for residents' rights and built a membership base of homeowners. To more accurately represent its membership, the organization broadened its name to Manufactured Home Owners of Oregon, Inc. and tied the highly recognized OSTA acronym to it, becoming MHOO/OSTA.

MHOO/OSTA and Manufactured Housing Communities of Oregon (MHCO) were advised, in fact warned, by an Oregon Senator Bill Kennemer that unless both organizations were willing to come to the legislature together with requests and solutions, neither side would be heard. Working for win-win solutions ultimately broke the stalemate and new legislation poured forth.

Enactment of the Oregon Landlord Tenant Statutes, as well as ongoing revisions and improvements of those laws, shifted the focus of MHOO/OSTA. The organization found that changing the law is a good beginning but only a beginning. Helping homeowners understand and benefit from the changes would become the next phase of their work.

Still financially supported only by membership dues, the organization recognized that for the changes to be effective, every homeowner in every park needs access to information and resources. Considering that for every OSTA member household there are approximately 43 households who are not members, it became clear that membership dues alone could not carry the financial burden of serving so many.

In September 2008, the membership voted to dissolve MHOO/OSTA and transfer its assets and membership to a newly formed entity, Manufactured Housing/Oregon State Tenants Association. MH/OSTA, a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, was formed enabling the organization to apply for grant funding that could help it serve many more park homeowners statewide.

A strong membership structure is still vitally important to MH/OSTA. Beyond the financial support it provides, a broad membership network is an extremely effective way to provide ongoing information to park homeowners, collect input from park homeowners, and advocate on behalf of park homeowners. Interaction with membership is what has always and will always keep MH/OSTA on task.

MH/OSTA fully recognizes that as an organization it can do anything but it can not do everything. By focusing strategies through this plan, MH/OSTA is committing to develop programs designed to coordinate with the work of other agencies to deliver improved and continually improving benefits to park homeowners.