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## Neighborhood Health Services winner of Project Mayday

By Dave Hodges  
Democrat business editor

Neighborhood Health Services will benefit from \$100,000 worth of free marketing help in the coming year, assistance the local nonprofit hopes will increase awareness of its various programs.

Integrated marketing firm BowStern announced Tuesday that NHS had won the firm's Project Mayday, which is intended to aid nonprofits in distress.

NHS could do with a higher profile, said Otis Kirksey, chairman of the board of directors. "You would be surprised how often we encounter patients who are in need of primary care and they are not aware that this clinic exists," he said during the presentation. "We have not been able to do the kind of public relations that we probably should in order to get the word out that we are here, but this grant will enable us to do that."

A total of 55 nonprofits entered the contest, which started in mid-September. The review process consisted of evaluations by an out-of-market panel of judges, plus input from the BowStern team and voting by the public.

Kelly Robertson, a principal in the firm, said more than 15,000 votes were cast online by area residents. "It was one of those things where you see the community really step up," she said. "It showed how much support there is for the nonprofits in the community."

During the coming year, BowStern will develop a comprehensive marketing plan for NHS with support in branding, public relations, advertising campaign development, graphic design, social media, website design and e-marketing.

"We are really excited to get to work for Neighborhood Health Services," Robertson said. "If they need it, we will help make sure that it happens. We are really pleased to work with an organization that has such a far-reaching impact on our local community."

NHS serves an average of 15,000 clients per year. Oretha Jones, executive director, said the clinic started with two volunteer doctors in the basement of a church 35 years ago and has grown to offer a variety of services, the latest being an HIV program, legal services related to medical needs, and another to help patients manage chronic diseases.