

News Release

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HUD SECRETARY TOURS FUTURE SITE OF SENIOR HOUSING

HUD, Interior deal brings more affordable housing to Las Vegas

LAS VEGAS – U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Alphonso Jackson toured the future site of Harmon Pines Senior Apartments today, a new housing complex for Las Vegas' low-income elderly. This new development, which answers the cry for more affordable housing in the Valley, is the result of the perseverance of HUD and the Department of Interiors' Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to ensure land in the area is used to provide quality, affordable housing.

"No doubt there has been a lot of sweat and tears shed to bring this housing to the Valley, where land is scarce," said Jackson as he stood where the new 103-unit development will be completed by spring 2008. "This is a shining example of what can happen when both federal and local governments, the banking community, and a local non-profit work together and don't give up, despite the odds."

The non-profit partners and federal and county officials came together today to show the site to Jackson. Groundbreaking occurred in March and when fully complete, the new housing will include amenities such as an exercise facility, a computer room, a community kitchen, and a beauty salon. It will also be located near shopping, entertainment and free transportation.

Jackson thanked Senator John Ensign, who as a congressman many years ago engineered the legislation that made Harmon Pines possible. He also thanked Senator Harry Reid for his constant support for the project. Jackson also recognized Ken LoBene, HUD's Las Vegas Field Office Director, who jumped many hurdles with BLM staff to see it through.

The Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act allows BLM to sell federally-owned lands within Nevada for less than fair market value to build affordable housing. HUD and BLM worked together to create guidance for the Act and after numerous public meetings, presentations and draft policies, a final policy, procedures and guidelines were published in April 2004, thus making way for Harmon Pines.

Clark County, the first entity to submit an application, received HUD approval to purchase the land. The county quickly turned over ownership to Nevada HAND, a local non-profit developer that specializes in senior housing. Under the Act, Nevada HAND purchased the land for only \$198,000 – a fraction of the \$4 million appraised value. That price, combined with a \$750,000 HUD HOME grant for the project, created a win-win for low-income seniors, the developer, and the county.

Jackson noted that Harmon Pines is just the first of the local projects to benefit from the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act. HUD has already approved another Clark County application for a large family development, and the city of Las Vegas is also preparing to submit an application.

HUD is the nation's housing agency committed to increasing homeownership, particularly among minorities; creating affordable housing opportunities for low-income Americans; and supporting the homeless, elderly, people with disabilities and people living with AIDS. The Department also promotes economic and community development, and enforces the nation's fair housing laws. More information about HUD and its programs is available on the Internet at www.hud.gov and espanol.hud.gov.

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