



Artist rendition of Harmon Pines. Thanks to the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act, this 103-unit apartment development will provide housing for low-income seniors in Nevada.

## **We Made a Deal: BLM's First Affordable Housing Development**

JoLynn Worley, BLM, Nevada

The Bureau of Land Management in Nevada just added a new use to BLM's multiple-use mandate — land sales for affordable housing purposes.

High housing prices in Las Vegas are making it difficult for low-income seniors and families to find places to live. This situation has led the Clark County Growth Management Task Force to identify affordable housing as one of its top priorities. Now, through the use of recent state guidelines and the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act, BLM is helping the area address its housing needs. SNPLMA authorizes BLM to sell public land at discounted rates to state or local government entities, including housing authorities, for affordable housing projects.

The first affordable housing development authorized through the SNPLMA broke ground in February 2007, when BLM sold a 5-acre parcel to Clark County. The county transferred the land to Nevada HAND, a nonprofit developer. HAND is constructing a 103-unit development on the site. When complete, Harmon Senior Apartments will provide housing for some of the area's low-income seniors.

BLM, in coordination with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, discounted the \$3 million fair market value of the parcel to \$198,000. The land cost equated to less than \$2,000 per door. SNPLMA and state guidelines provide for up to 95 percent discounts to develop housing for very low, low, and moderate income persons. Discounts are based on building costs, land sale prices, and incomes for a specific area and may vary. BLM has reserved more than 1,300 acres for affordable housing in the Las Vegas Valley. The agency is in the process of selling a second, 10-acre parcel for multi-family housing.

BLM coordinated with HUD and Nevada state and local governments to develop guidelines for SNPLMA's affordable-housing provisions. The resulting policies and procedures, known as "Nevada Guidance," apply throughout the state.



Nevada officials participate in March 8, 2007 groundbreaking ceremony for Harmon Pines. From left, Brian Maddox, Sr. Vice Pres., Director of Community Spending, Bank of Nevada; Mark Licea, Federal Programs Supervisor, Nevada Housing Division; Kenneth LoBene, Director, Las Vegas HUD Office; Michael Mullins, President, Nevada HAND; Susan Brager, Clark County Commissioner; Roy Reid, Chairman, Clark County Commissioner; and Ron Wenker, BLM Nevada State Director