

Redlands Daily Facts



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Housing Authority Project Manager Ron Ruhl leads Mayor Pat Gilbreath and Housing Authority Commission Chairman Mario Saucedo on a tour through Vista del Sol, a new senior housing facility in north Redlands.

JESSE B. GILL/Redlands Daily Facts

Housewarming

Housing Authority opens new facility, homes for seniors

By **JESSE B. GILL**
Staff Writer

REDLANDS -- Lorene Neal cried tears of joy Wednesday as she spoke of the new home she never thought she'd have.

Neal, 67, took the weekend to move into an apartment at Vista del Sol -- a brand new senior housing development at 1320 Webster St. The Housing Authority of San Bernardino County held a grand opening for the development Wednesday.

"I feel so blessed to be here," Neal said.

She said she hadn't lived in her own place for more than two years before she moved in at Vista del Sol. She stayed with relatives as she tried to find a place to call home.

She said she knew she wanted to live in Redlands, but didn't know how to find a place with her meager income. During a trip to the Housing Authority's Fontana office, Neal found out about Vista del Sol.

"I just felt like God answered my prayers," Neal said through tears. "I'm just so blessed to have a home."

Vista del Sol is tucked into a

residential neighborhood just north of Lugonia Avenue. The construction is fresh and modern and the complex is covered with lush landscaping.

The facility has 71 apartments for seniors age 62 and older. Fifty-eight of the units are one-bedroom apartments, 13 are two-bedroom apartments.

Tenants began moving into the apartments Friday. Ninety-six percent of the units have already been leased.

The senior housing development gives north Redlands a

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resource, said Mario Saucedo, Housing Authority commission chairman. Seventy-five percent of the facility's units qualify as affordable housing for low-income applicants.

"It's amazing to see this housing development become a reality for the residents and surrounding communities," he said.

The opening of Vista del Sol is a step toward revitalizing north Redlands, Saucedo said.

Housing Partners I, Inc. -- a Housing Authority affiliate -- owns Vista del Sol.

The development cost about \$12.9 million to build. The Housing Authority secured funding from several different sources to make Vista del Sol a reality.

Redlands' redevelopment agency contributed \$4 million, the Department of Housing and Urban Development's HOME funds pitched in more than \$1.7 million. More than \$1 million in Neighborhood Initiative Program funds and a loan for more than \$6.1 million from the Housing Authority rounded out the project's funding.

Project Manager Ron Ruhl said the Housing Authority began planning the project in 2004 and broke ground on the project in November 2008.

He said the building slowdown may have been advantageous in helping the Housing Authority complete the project in a time when not many projects are being built.

"That probably played into our advantage," Ruhl said. "We had lower construction costs and more competitive bids."

For more information, call Beacon Property Management at 909-793-4535.

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