



CONTACT: Paul Williams
(414) 559-5573



CONTACT: Jennifer Steiner
(414) 649-2814

MEDIA RELEASE

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HOUSING AUTHORITY AND UCC PARTNER FOR SUSTAINABLE, AFFORDABLE SENIOR HOUSING Governor, Mayor Lead Groundbreaking for Olga Village

Governor Jim Doyle and Mayor Tom Barrett joined other dignitaries Tuesday, September 8th at a groundbreaking ceremony for Olga Village, an innovative joint project between the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM) and the United Community Center (UCC). Olga Village will be the first Milwaukee housing project to utilize federal stimulus funds and the first environmentally-sustainable housing development for seniors in Milwaukee.

HACM Secretary-Executive Director Tony Perez, UCC Executive Director Ricardo Diaz, WHEDA Executive Director Antonio Riley, Common Council President Willie Hines, Jr., U.S. Bank Senior Vice President Lynn Craghead and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Field Office Director Del Reynolds were also in attendance.

The new complex will provide 37 affordable apartments on the campus of the UCC at 7th and Washington Streets on the city's south side. Residents of the new building will have access to the services of the UCC, providing an active, bilingual and culturally enriched environment for Hispanic and other seniors. The building is slated for completion in 2010 with an approximate \$8 million construction cost funded by \$2.2 million in Housing Authority stimulus funds as well as low-income housing tax credits from the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA).

"Affordable housing is important to providing a good quality of life for people in Wisconsin but it is also integral to a healthy economy," Governor Doyle said. "These tax credits will help provide seniors with affordable housing options. The Recovery Act is helping us to create jobs and build vital infrastructure to meet the needs of people in Wisconsin and the state is proud to be part of this great effort."

The three-story complex is expected to help meet the growing need for affordable housing among Milwaukee's Hispanic seniors.

"I want to thank Ricardo Diaz, the United Community Center and our friends in State Government for their efforts to improve the lives of our seniors," said Mayor Barrett. "Olga Village is a great project and would not have happened without the partnership we built. I'm proud that the City of Milwaukee and our Housing Authority were able to join the effort and successfully invest in this wonderful neighborhood."

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Residents will enjoy access to community and supportive services through the UCC, including a senior meal program; social, recreational, and educational activities; arts and crafts, music, and cultural arts; transportation; and social services. In addition, the Housing Authority is working with Independence First to ensure that at least 20% of the new units will exceed the Department of Housing and Urban Development's accessibility guidelines. The building will be next to the existing UCC-US Bank Village, which currently provides low-income housing to seniors from the near south side community.

"We are thrilled to be a part of this unique collaboration to ensure a high quality of life for our seniors," said Ricardo Diaz, UCC Executive Director. "The project provides a strong foundation upon which we are exploring additional partnerships, including a new venture with the 16th Street Community Health Clinic to provide services onsite."

The building's design will incorporate several "green" features to make it the city's first sustainable housing for seniors. The building will utilize ground-source heat pumps for heating and cooling, and it will be constructed to minimize energy use, non-renewable resources use, and storm water runoff. Construction will utilize environmentally friendly materials to provide a healthier living environment for residents. The Housing Authority is also exploring options for including solar power in the design.

"Olga Village demonstrates the great value that collaborative relationships bring to the community," said Housing Authority Board Chair and Common Council President Willie Hines, Jr. "We are proud to work with the United Community Center to deliver high-quality affordable housing that also helps to preserve precious natural resources."

Olga Village is named after Olga Valcourt-Schwartz, a former director of bilingual education for Milwaukee Public Schools and a former UCC board member. She has been involved with the UCC for over 30 years.

The United Community Center provides programs to Hispanics and near South side residents of all races and ages in education, cultural arts, recreation, community development and health and human services in an effort to help individuals achieve their potential by focusing on cultural heritage as a means of personal development.

The Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee provides safe, high-quality and affordable housing to a diverse population of low-income residents in nearly 10,000 housing units throughout the City of Milwaukee. HACM further provides a wide range of educational, employment, and social services to enhance residents' self-sufficiency.

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