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OREGON—Rural Housing Service

Strategic Partners



Effort Creates Over 100 Jobs and Affordable Housing Complex with Lasting Appeal

Outline Of Need:

Until this fall, affordable rental housing for working families was difficult if not impossible to find in Astoria, a small town situated at the mouth of the Columbia River on Oregon’s northwestern tip. In recent years, slow growth within Astoria and major commercial expansion in outlying areas had increased the need for affordable housing for the local workforce.

How Rural Development Helped:

In 2008, affordable housing developer Shelter Resources, Inc. began working with USDA Rural Development, the City of Astoria and the State of Oregon to plan a 32-unit apartment complex along the riverfront, conveniently located near shopping, medical services and community facilities.

According to Shelter Resources President Len Brannen, cobbling together funding for affordable housing can be a monumental task. “Affordable housing developers recognize these projects are really a mission to stack up the resources required,” Brannen said. “You need multiple partners, their programs must dovetail with each other, and you need a high level of cooperation,” he explained.

Along with funding through state programs, the overall financing package for the \$7.4 million project included a \$1 million USDA Rural Development direct loan, as well as just over \$1.5 million through the Recovery Act Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Assistance Program (TCAP).



Top: Pictured here are the new Astoria Gateway II apartments for low to moderate income families. “I expect that in 30 years this will still be a very attractive housing option,” said Len Brannen, President of Shelter Resources, Inc., which owns the facility. Bottom: Flanked by the project’s many public and private partners, USDA Rural Development State Director Vicki Walker cuts the ribbon for the new facility.

The Results:

Working closely with the community, a site was chosen which formerly housed a lumber mill dating to the 1870s. With funding and collaboration of a number of entities, the former brownfield underwent special environmental mitigations to ensure high quality, safe living conditions. In addition, city standards required the prominently located waterfront facility to meet very high standards in its design and overall quality. To finish the work, more than 100 jobs were created.

The attractive new complex was fully rented before its completion in the fall of 2011. “The need was obvious, and this facility has a lot of appeal,” Brannen said. “The materials, craftsmanship and design all create a product that is comparable or superior to anything in the area.”

The end result is a housing complex with high end-looks and features—including views, an indoor play area, common areas and more—and rents offered on a sliding scale depending on income. A qualified family earning 30 percent of the median household income may rent a 650 sq/ft one-bedroom unit for as low as \$256 per month or a 930 sq/ft unit for \$500.

Fast Facts

Program: Multi Family Housing Program

Investment: \$1,000,000 direct loan, 11 units of rental assistance

Partners: Shelter Resources , Inc., Astoria Gateway 2 Associates Limited Partnership, Oregon Housing and Community Services, HUD HOME Program, Michel & Associates

Leveraged Funds: \$6.4 million

Impact:

- 30 units of affordable rental housing
- More than 100 jobs created