

Completing Neighborhoods

The [COMPANY RETRACTED], a federally funded agency that operates independently of municipal government, provides low- and moderate-income public housing for the city of St. Louis. With over 3,000 public housing units that are owned by the [COMPANY RETRACTED] and rented to qualified applicants, and more than 6,300 Section 8 units that provide rental assistance for privately owned units, the housing authority serves a total of over 9,000 clients and partners.

According to Executive Director [NAME RETRACTED], the agency is very flexible in attaining different types of funding, particularly that provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

"Our strongest attribute is our innovation, where we have been able to develop a large number of new units by using the funding that HUD has made available," [NAME RETRACTED] says. "We have been able to change our model to comply with the latest funding mechanisms available in order to improve our housing stock."

However, the [COMPANY RETRACTED] is more than just a housing provider. The agency's goal is to not only efficiently and cost-effectively build and maintain desirable and affordable housing for residents of the [CITY RETRACTED] area, but also to improve the overall quality of life for its residents, employees and the community by providing employment opportunities, education, training and professional service. This mission is exemplified in three particular projects the agency is currently undertaking: [NAME RETRACTED], [NAME RETRACTED] and the installation of solar panels on its headquarters and several of its developments.

[NAME RETRACTED]: The Missing Piece

[NAME RETRACTED], a senior living community, is set to replace over 110 units in the [NAME RETRACTED] towers in the downtown area near the banks of the [NAME RETRACTED] River.

"The senior living building at [NAME RETRACTED] actually completes the neighborhood, which has been transformed through the use of the HOPE VI grant and this development," says [NAME RETRACTED], the Executive Director of [COMPANY RETRACTED]. "It is the last piece of the puzzle for the overall community there."

The agency has contracted with a developer to complete most of the construction for the project, with the housing authority acting as oversight.

"When this building is finished, it will completely transform the area from a traditional high-rise public housing neighborhood into one that blends back into the community," [NAME RETRACTED] says. "It has more of a typical neighborhood feel that you would not usually associate with public housing."

[NAME RETRACTED] says that the agency has been pleased with the progress at [NAME RETRACTED], as the project has gone relatively smoothly with very few setbacks. It is on track to be completed by early 2011.

"There are always challenges with getting the appropriate amount of funding and moving the project from financial closing to construction completion, but there has really been only minor issues with this project," she says.

Sustainability at [NAME RETRACTED]

At [NAME RETRACTED], the [COMPANY RETRACTED] is conducting an ambitious green renovation. The community is within close proximity to public transportation and was built using recycled materials, and also will contain many Energy Star appliances that require less energy and water use.

"This has been a very green project from the beginning, from the site selection, how the site is laid out and the proximity to public transit," [NAME RETRACTED] says. "This has continued with the selection of the materials, with a large percentage being reclaimed lumber and other recycled materials. There are also products like environmentally-friendly paint and sealants that have been selected from a green perspective."

The building is more sustainable at its core, [NAME RETRACTED] says, because the housing authority has figured out a way to renovate the current building instead of starting from scratch.

"The biggest green component is that the development involves the adapted re-use of an existing building," [NAME RETRACTED] says. "Instead of tearing down a structure, it is being renovated and re-used, which really helps cut down on the new materials used."

The project is underway and construction is scheduled to start shortly after January 1, 2011.

Harnessing Solar Power, City-Wide

The [COMPANY RETRACTED] is also working on a project that involves installing solar panels on eight of its developments, as well as its central office building. The initiative is funded by nine different grants and has included a number of components.

"In conjunction with this project, we had enough money in the grant to provide rainwater harvesting in six of the locations, so we are installing systems that will take care of some of the irrigation issues at our developments," [NAME RETRACTED] says. "It will also do a lot to reduce the amount of storm water that rushes into our sewer system at any one time. We're an old city, so our existing sewer system has its challenges."

The [COMPANY RETRACTED] 's mission is to build and maintain desirable, affordable housing for residents of the [CITY RETRACTED] area through forthright leadership, innovative partnerships, progressive technology and the expansion of new resources. Its website is located at [WEBSITE RETRACTED].

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COMPANY: [COMPANY RETRACTED]

NAME: [NAME RETRACTED]

TITLE: Executive Director

LOCATION: [CITY RETRACTED]