

Leading the way



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Paducah Housing Authority's latest development, the H.C. Mathis Senior Housing project, is scheduled to open this fall. The development comprises 28 one- and two-bedroom units in 14 duplexes and is designed for low-income seniors.

Duplexes create jobs, ease demand for low-income housing for seniors

BY DANIELLE RAY

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It's not your run-of-the-mill housing project.

The H.C. Mathis Senior Housing project on H.C. Mathis Drive in Paducah looks more like a private residential development than public housing.

Holly King, western Kentucky representative of Sherman Cart-

er Barnhart, the housing development's architecture firm, said that's the idea.

"From an architectural standpoint, we had the desire to create a public housing development that looks like an upscale housing complex and do it in a cost effective way," King said.

Paducah Housing Authority will also make the development

its first smoke-free public housing complex when it opens this fall.

The housing authority's board approved the action in a 4-1 vote at its Thursday evening meeting. Smoking will be prohibited inside the duplexes but allowed outside. The new policy will go

Please see **HOUSING** | 10A

HOUSING: Board to discuss making all authority properties smoke-free

CONTINUED FROM 1A

into effect on Thursday. Cal Ross, housing authority director, said the board will discuss making the entire campus — no smoking anywhere on the H.C. Mathis Drive complex property — and all other housing authority properties smoke-free at its next meeting Sept. 15.

The H.C. Mathis Senior Housing project is for low-income seniors and comprises 14 duplexes: eight two-bedroom units and 20 one-bedroom units. Each unit, along with sidewalks and driveways, are handicap-accessible and meet all federal Fair Housing requirements.

One-bedroom units are slightly less than 1,000 square feet. Two-bedroom units are slightly more than 1,000 square feet. All units are also Energy Star certified, and one of the buildings is LEED for Homes certified — the first public housing development in the area with that classification — which means construction, the units themselves and appliances inside the units are energy efficient, King said.

"It's something that's coming and everyone will want to start doing it, but Paducah Housing Authority is leading the way," King said of the LEED for Homes certification.

The development cost \$4 million to build and was funded through a \$2.5 million stimulus grant from the government and a Re-



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CRG Residential workers lay pavers for a driveway at the H.C. Mathis Senior Housing project in mid-August. The 28 low-income senior housing units, all duplexes, are slated to open this fall.

placement Housing Fund-
ing grant.

Crystal Rothrock, housing authority acting deputy director, said about 75 people applied for the units. Tenants were chosen by random drawing. King expects tenants to begin occupying units in September or October.

The additional 28 apartments in the H.C. Mathis Senior Housing project will bring the total number of public housing units in the city to 863, after demolition of 22 apartments at Anderson Court and the donation of 16 units and six acres on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive to the city.

The city gave the property on which the H.C. Mathis Senior Housing project sits to the housing authority in exchange for the 16 units and six acres on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive.

Ross said that even with 863 units, the need for low-income senior housing in the city remains high.

"I think it reflects the population in the area," Ross said. "The population is aging and we're trying to accommodate that."

Not only will the development provide affordable housing for seniors, it has already created or saved more than 100 jobs during

the planning, development and construction phases, Ross said. Many of those jobs are through CRG Residential, the Carmel, Ind.-based contracting firm in charge of construction. Jon Childers, project superintendent, reminded residents that although fences surrounding the property will soon come down, the development will remain a closed work site, because of safety issues, until construction is complete.

To be added to a waiting list for an H.C. Mathis Senior Housing unit, call Janice Bradford at 270-450-4204.