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NEWS

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH – GOVERNOR

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Gov. Blagojevich announces \$7.4 million to provide supportive housing for homeless and disabled residents in Chicago and Matteson

86 new housing units will be built to support independent living

CHICAGO – Governor Rod R. Blagojevich today announced \$7.4 million in loans and tax credits that will help provide supportive housing for homeless and disabled individuals in Chicago and Matteson. The two developments will support independent living by providing affordable rental homes and services for 86 individuals and families.

“Everyone deserves a place to call home, but many times those who need the most help in finding an affordable, decent place to live are overlooked. These funds will help provide a stable and safe environment for dozens of disabled or homeless residents to get back on track and become more independent,” Gov. Blagojevich said.

The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) will allocate the funds on behalf of the State for each of the developments. State funds allocated by IHDA will leverage scarce federal resources for affordable housing in Illinois.

The Wicker Park Renaissance development in Chicago will receive \$6.9 million, which includes a \$575,000 low-interest loan from the Illinois Affordable Housing Trust Fund, as well as \$665,209 in federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and \$250,000 in state Affordable Housing Tax Credits. The credits will generate a total of more than \$6.3 million in equity for the project.

State funding will help preserve an existing affordable housing building through a substantial rehabilitation of the current structure to create 61 single-room occupancy and one-bedroom apartments. The renovated development will include 12 accessible units for residents with physical, mental, or developmental disabilities, alcohol and drug abuse issues, and persons at risk of homelessness. The project’s developer, Renaissance Realty Group, will provide residents with valuable supportive services such as case management, life skills training, and crisis intervention services through its social service company, Renaissance Social Services.

“Under Governor Blagojevich’s leadership, IHDA is constantly working to preserve existing affordable housing as well as create new housing for Illinois residents,” said DeShana L. Forney, Executive Director of IHDA. “Over the next decade, we estimate the Section 8 vouchers for as many as 30,000 affordable housing units will expire and need new capital investment to keep them affordable. Financing the Wicker Park Renaissance development is a part of these preservation efforts to stem the decline of affordable housing.”

“Preserving affordable housing for those with special needs is difficult in most communities,” said Nancy Kapp, President of Renaissance Realty Group. “We greatly appreciate Governor Blagojevich and IHDA’s recognition of the importance of retaining and maintaining affordable, quality housing, which allows the homeless and those with special needs to continue to live in a vibrant, but gentrifying, community such as Wicker Park. The ability to leverage public and private dollars demonstrates the willingness of both sectors to address the ever growing need of affordable housing.”

Meanwhile, the Governor also announced today that the state will contribute a \$500,000 Illinois Affordable Housing Trust Fund loan through IHDA to finance the Matteson Supportive Housing development in southern Cook County. The development will provide 25 physically disabled individuals and their families with fully accessible and affordable housing, and allow them to remain active and independent in their community. Most of the residents to be served have spinal cord injuries, cerebral palsy, or multiple sclerosis. Non-profit developer, the Over the Rainbow Association will provide residents with a social service coordinator who will help them access the organization’s job training services.

“The financial support from Governor Blagojevich and the State will allow the Over the Rainbow Association and our partner developer, Accessible Space, Inc., to build a development that will provide persons with physical disabilities the opportunity to live independently in accessible housing and to support themselves through meaningful employment,” said Eric Huffman, Executive Director of the Over the Rainbow Association. “Housing options that support independent living are already scarce for this population. The Matteson Supportive Housing project will make a huge difference to the residents’ lives and offers significant cost benefits to taxpayers as a less expensive alternative to institutional living.”

The state’s efforts to increase affordable housing options for its residents are guided by the Governor’s annual Comprehensive Housing Plans which provide a road map for how to leverage and expend housing dollars. Creating and preserving affordable housing is one of the three major principles outlined in the Housing Plans. The 2007 Housing Plan: *Affordable Housing Dimensions* identified \$763 million in spending earmarked for affordable housing at nine different state agencies that will help approximately 146,000 Illinois residents. This year’s Plan also highlighted how the Governor’s vision as outlined in the first two Plans is already reshaping affordable housing in Illinois.

The Comprehensive Housing Plans are developed by the Governor’s Housing Task Force, and organized and led by IHDA. The 35 members of the Task Force are advocates, developers, lenders, and state agency representatives, including eight Illinois state agency directors. Copies of Illinois’ Comprehensive Housing Plans are available at www.ihda.org.