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News Release

Date: Dec. 15, 2008
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SAHA BEGINS NEXT PHASE OF REDEVELOPMENT FOR DOWNTOWN MIXED-INCOME HOUSING COMMUNITY

SAN ANTONIO –The San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) “broke ground” today on its next phase of construction for a 245-unit multi-family rental community at Victoria Commons, located at the gateway to San Antonio’s downtown.

SAHA’s Board of Commissioners, Congressman Charles Gonzalez, City Councilwoman Mary Alice Cisneros, members of the Lavaca Neighborhood Association and others were on hand to celebrate beginning construction on the units.

The Victoria Commons housing community, formerly known as Victoria Courts, was originally constructed in 1940 with 660 units of public housing and was demolished in 1999. This new development is the third phase of the project, with the first phase, Refugio Street Apartment Homes, opened in 2004, and the second phase, Artisan Park Townhomes, opened in 2006.

Forty-nine of the units will be dedicated to public housing, 12 will be affordable and 184 will be market rate.

“Mixed-income communities, such as Victoria Commons, allow people of different economic levels to live side-by-side rather than concentrating low-income families into neighborhood ‘pockets’ and it also allows our residents to see what they can achieve,” said SAHA Board Chairman Ramiro Cavazos.

He added the Victoria Commons location in downtown San Antonio is contributing to the ever-evolving improvement and redevelopment in the area, and the input from the community, including neighborhood associations such as Lavaca, Southtown and King William, has been critical to its development.

“Members of those groups know the needs of those who live and work in that area. They have been involved in helping us make decisions on the project, such as the design, that will be beneficial to those who reside at the property as well as the surrounding community,” Cavazos said.

Mixed-income communities are good for everyone, said Alfred Valenzuela, interim CEO/president for SAHA. “In a mixed-income approach, market-rate rents help fund the affordable housing component and frees taxpayer funds for use in other housing programs,” Valenzuela said.

The addition of multi-family units will bring the total number of rental units at Victoria Commons to 475. The site currently houses 210 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments at Refugio Street Apartment Homes and 22 Artisan Park Townhomes.

Future development for Victoria Commons includes the addition of 98 more townhomes and 26 single-family homes. When all construction has been fully completed, there will be 601 total units on the site.

This third phase will cost approximately \$35 million and is slated for completion in the spring of 2010. Funding, in part, is from an \$18,778,269 HOPE VI revitalization grant SAHA received from HUD in 2003. Additional funding for Victoria Commons is from equity funds and tax credits from sources including SAHA, the State of Texas, the City of San Antonio, and conventional lending.

The developer for Victoria Commons is Dallas-based Carleton Development Companies. Beeler-Guest-Owens, the architects of record, worked together with San Antonio-based Lake-Flato Architects.

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