

# THE FOOTHILLS SUN – GAZETTE

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## Self-Help comes home

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Self-Help Enterprises is coming home... again. The community-constructing non-profit will begin work on another affordable housing project in the unincorporated community of Goshen, northwest of Visalia. At its Oct. 13 meeting, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors approved a zone change for Self-Help's latest development in the town where the organization began more than 50 years ago.

Self-Help Enterprises was born when a small group of visionaries helped three low-income families build their own homes in Goshen in 1964. Over the last 51 years, Self-Help has grown to a

nationally recognized community development organization serving the eight counties in the San Joaquin Valley, including two additional rental apartment community centers in Goshen. In fact, the apartment complexes have given rise to the Goshen Women's Association, which is dedicated to the promotion of women through leadership, networking, support and education. One of their main priorities is to recruit women into their group to participate in their weekly free exercise classes to help them make better health care choices for their families while staying fit and healthy.

Self-Help is now beginning the process to develop a new neighborhood in Goshen on 29 acres at the corner of Riggan Avenue and Road 176. The new development will build 229 low and very low income homes in three phases. The first phase will include 140 multi-family homes and a ponding basin. The second phase will build 47 single family homes and the third phase will add another 42 single family homes and a small park.

"This is a great community and we excited to develop more here," said Betsy McGovern-Garcia, Director of Real Estate Development for Self Help Enterprises. "There is a continued demand for affordable housing in Goshen."

Mike Washam, economic development manager for the County of Tulare, said the project satisfies the Rural Housing Needs Assessment which calls for 30% of Tulare County's population growth to occur in unincorporated communities such as Goshen over the next nine years.

"We will need 2,500 very low and low income housing units and this will provide us with about 10% of that requirement," Washam said.

The Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to change the zoning ordinance of property from agriculture to multi-family, thus opening the door for more families to find affordable housing in one of Tulare County's fastest growing unincorporated communities.

"Goshen is moving along quite well," said Board Chairman Steven Worthley.

The community centers within the rental communities like Goshen I and II serve as hubs that strengthen the link between residents and engagement in social action. Throughout the San Joaquin Valley, the community centers are made available to other organizations and nonprofits who offer a variety of programs and services for residents and their neighbors in the community. This includes recreational, educational, social, health, civic and cultural opportunities for students, families and the community that lead to an improved quality of life in the communities they call home.

“Self-Help does an awesome job and has great partners,” said Supervisor Phil Cox. “I’m happy to this project moving forward. Once a project is done, they don’t just wash their hands and walk away from it. They stay in there and manage, which is so important.”

In the last 50 years, Self-Help Enterprises has helped more than 6,000 families build their own homes, rehabilitated over 6,000 unsafe homes, developed over 1,300 units of affordable rental housing and has provided technical assistance for reliable access to safe drinking water and sanitary sewer infrastructures to more than 160 small communities.

Self-Help Enterprises’ commitment to providing resources and training for individuals builds capacity of highly effective leaders in communities that also promote collaborative solutions for improving communities. These combined efforts have touched the lives of over 50,000 families, providing security and stability for families and building strong, healthy and sustainable communities.