

THE PORTERVILLE RECORDER

Tribal housing complex in Porterville celebrated

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Porterville's newest neighborhood — Nupchi Xo' Oy — is now a reality.

A grand opening for the 40-unit affordable rental housing location at 648 W. Mulberry just east of Highway 65 was held on Friday. The housing project includes 15 single-family homes and 25 townhouses for Tule River Tribe members. The complex has basically been completed rented out.

The complex is the result of a first-of-its-kind partnership between the Tule River Indian Housing Authority and Visalia-based Self-Help Enterprises.

Thirty-four of the houses are three-bedroom homes and the other six are 4-bedroom homes. There's also a 1,956-square foot community building with a laundry and computer lab for adults and children to do their school work.

The project also includes job training, health and wellness services, financial training, homebuyer education and afterschool youth activities to be provided by Self Help Enterprises. In addition the complex includes a covered playground.

“The Tule River Indian Housing authority is happy to announce the Grand Opening of the 40-unit Nupchi Xo’oy Tax Credit development,” said Christina Dabney-Keel, Chairperson of TRIHA board. “This project is the result of a collaborative partnership between TRIHA and Self-Help Enterprises to help alleviate the acute shortage of affordable housing in our communities and allows 39 families to reside in safe, sanitary, and affordable housing.

“While this is an important milestone for addressing the existing shortage of available housing the Tule River Indian Housing Authority recognizes there is still much to be done as we work together to reduce overcrowding, unsafe housing conditions, and maintain the financial viability of our families.”

The project serves low-income families at or below 60 percent of the average median income with monthly net rents ranging from \$471-\$1,092, which are determined based on unit size and resident incomes. TRIHA and Self Help Enterprises is providing affordable housing for tribal members, descendants, members of other tribes, and other working families in Porterville. Funding for the project is provided by Native American Bank, U.S. Bank, U.S. Bancorp Community Development Corporation as the tax credit investor, TRIHA and Self-Help Enterprises.

“We are happy to bring this development to our area,” added Joel Azure, Executive Director

of the Tule River Indian Housing Authority. “We look forward to facilitating future housing developments that will provide affordable rental and homeownership opportunities for our members and the community.”

The Bureau of Indian Affairs has stated the Tule River Tribe will need 500 new housing units over the next 20 years. The relocation of Eagle Mountain Casino is also expected to help the tribe with finding space for affordable housing on the reservation.

“Self-Help Enterprises is always eager to provide great housing opportunities to working families,” said Tom Collishaw, President and CEO of SHE. “We are proud to partner with the TRIHA to build capacity for developing more housing in the future.”

The project is being financed through a grant in which TRIHA and SHE received in July, 2019 that's providing \$1.1 million annually over 10 years. Through the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee the organizations received the grant.

“The grand opening of the 40-unit Nupchi Xo’oy Tax Credit development will provide some much-needed relief towards addressing the housing shortage,” said State Senator Melissa Hurtado, D-Sanger, whose district includes Porterville. “The collaboration between the Tule River Indian Housing Authority and Self-Help Enterprises will provide great services that will help tribal members access affordable housing as well as residential services that can help strengthen the community.”

In addition earlier this year TRIHA received a \$5 million grant to develop affordable housing from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The grant is being awarded to help alleviate a housing shortage for the Tule River Tribe. The grant will be used to construct 19 housing units of which 10 will be single-family homes and nine will be townhouses.

HUD announced a total more more than \$90 million in grants to 24 Tribes across the country to support new housing construction, housing rehabilitation, and critical infrastructure

The funds were awarded through HUD’s Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG) Competitive program to help construct new housing units for low-income families living in Tribal communities. It's projected this funding will support the construction of approximately 350 new housing units.

This year’s IHBG competition generated a great deal of interest as there were 141 applicants submitted by Tribes.

In addition the American Rescue Plan is also providing more than \$1 million to the Tule River Tribe for affordable housing.