

# **THE BUSINESS JOURNAL**

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## Affordable rental community breaks ground in Porterville

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By: Staff

A new affordable rental community is coming to Porterville through partnerships with UPHoldings and Self-Help Enterprises.

The two developers ceremonially broke ground yesterday for Finca Serena, which will be located at 358 S. E St. near Downtown Porterville. The 80-unit project is expected to be completed in spring 2023.

"The Finca Serena development is an important step towards addressing the need for affordable housing, specifically housing for individuals experiencing homelessness in our community," said Porterville Mayor Monte Reyes.

Finca Serena will offer a mix of one, two and three bedroom units for individuals and families. Property amenities include laundry facilities, a playground, computer room and a large community space. It will also be situated near the river and local trails.

He said the project is a result of both developers' collaboration, along with local, regional and state agencies. Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency is the lead service provider and will contribute project-based subsidies along with Kings Tulare Homeless Alliance. Other project partners include architectural firm R.L. Davidson, Inc., general contractor BJ Perch Construction and project engineer Gateway Engineering.

The community is based on the Housing First model, a policy that offers permanent housing as soon as possible to those who are homeless. The project will also offer on-site services and support staff for mixed-income families, and apartments targeted for individuals with disabilities or those at risk of homelessness.

The property aims to work collaboratively with community leaders while offering 24-hour live-in support staff who will provide assistance to job training and mental health services.

"We are proud to partner with UPHoldings on the first supportive housing development of its kind in Porterville," said Tom Collishaw, president and CEO of Self-Help Enterprises. "We are committed to providing quality and affordable housing opportunities to ill-housed and unhoused families in the Valley. In addition to the 24-hour support staff, SHE's Resident Services team will offer robust onsite educational, financial and wellness activities."



An artist's rendering of the Finca Serena 80-unit affordable apartments in Porterville.

Jessica Hoff Berzac, co-founder and principal of UPHoldings, said that Finca Serena was developed and named intentionally to provide a safe and serene environment for vulnerable individuals and families in Tulare County.

Translated roughly from Spanish it means “peaceful ranch.”

“At UPHoldings we believe that housing is a human right and that peace can be achieved only when people have a secure place to call home. We are committed to our residents for the long haul, and we will continue to work collaboratively with our community partners to ensure Finca Serena residents will have both the foundation of housing, as well as the supportive services needed for them to achieve their goals,” she said.