

NAHMA Pays Tribute to Developers and Managers of High-Quality Affordable Housing

Alexandria, Va., May 31, 2016 — The National Affordable Housing Management Association (NAHMA) announces the winners of its annual Affordable Housing Vanguard Awards. These awards recognize newly developed or significantly rehabbed affordable multifamily housing communities that showcase high-quality design and resourceful financing.

The excellence exhibited throughout these multifamily developments belies the notion that affordable housing cannot be assets to their communities. Vanguard Award winners deliver powerful proof that affordable housing done well can transform neighborhoods as well as the lives of individual residents.

The 2016 Vanguard Awards will be presented at NAHMA's annual summer forum, June 15 in San Francisco. For details on the forum visit <https://www.nahma.org/meetings>. This year's winners are:

Vanguard Award for New Construction:

Small Property (less than 100 units):

Wabash Estates Co-op, Baltimore, Md.; Management Company: CSI Support & Development Services, Inc.; Owner: Arlington II Non-Profit Housing Corporation, Warren, Mich.

Large Property (more than 100 units):

Bristol Commons/Lenox Green, Taunton, Mass.; Management Company: Trinity Management, LLC; Owner: Trinity Taunton Nine LP, Boston, Mass.

Vanguard Award for Major Rehabilitation of an Existing Rental Housing Community:

Blue Butterfly Village, San Pedro, Calif.; Management Company: Volunteers of America (VOA) National Housing Corporation; Owner: Navy Village VOA Affordable Housing, LP, Alexandria, Va.

Vanguard Award for Major Rehabilitation of a Nonhousing Structure:

777 Main, Hartford, Conn.; Management Company: WinnResidential; Owner: Becker & Becker Associates, Fairfield, Conn.

Vanguard Award for Major Rehabilitation of a Historic Structure into Affordable Housing:

A-Mill Artist Lofts, Minneapolis, Minn.; Management Company: Dominion; Owner: Dominion, Plymouth, Minn.

The Vanguard Awards:

- Demonstrate that exceptional new affordable housing is available across the country;
- Demonstrate that the affordable multifamily industry is and must be creative and innovative if such exceptional properties are to be built given the financial and other challenges to development;
- Highlight results of the private-public partnerships required to develop today's affordable housing; and
- Share ideas for unique design and financing mechanisms with industry practitioners to further stimulate creative development in the affordable multifamily industry.

The judges of this year's Vanguard Awards were distinguished NAHMA members from across the country: Ron Burson, SHCM, NAHP-e, president, Gorsuch Management, Lancaster, Ohio; George Caruso, SHCM, NAHP-e, Cooper Companies, Fort Washington, Md.; Nancy Evans, SHCM, NAHP-e, general manager, CSI Support & Development, Warren, Mich.; Melanie Kibble, FHC, SHCM, NAHP-e, vice president, special assets, Mercy Housing Management Group, Denver, Colo.; and Jim McGrath, SHCM, NAHP-e, chairman of the board, PRD Management Inc., Pennsauken,

N.J.

This year's Vanguard Awards program is sponsored by the NAHMA-endorsed Multifamily Affordable Housing Insurance Program (MAHIP), provided by Wells Fargo Insurance Services.

"Wells Fargo is a proud sponsor of the Vanguard Awards," said Megan Davidson, ARM, CRIS, vice president of Wells Fargo Insurance Services USA Inc. "We appreciate and support what you do to make communities better and safer places to live and thrive. Wells Fargo believes and supports affordable housing from a lending and investment standpoint, as one of the largest providers of insurance to affordable housing providers, and as volunteers and supporters of organizations such as Habitat for Humanity. Our goal is to support your success by financially protecting what you value most, and fulfilling all your commercial insurance needs."

About the winners:

Wabash Estates Co-op was developed in response to the tremendous need for safe, quality, affordable senior housing in the Grove Park/Arlington neighborhood of Baltimore, Md. The project, consisting of 57 units, was funded with a Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 202 Capital Advance, a HUD predevelopment grant and a three-year Project Rental Assistance Contract.

The demand was so high for senior housing in the area that more than 400 people applied for units and the entire project was leased up within five hours of opening in 2014. Wabash Estates has been 100 percent occupied ever since and has a very large waiting list. The neighborhood proved an ideal location with readily available transportation and full-service shopping including a grocery and pharmacy within walking distance.

The project was developed on excess land owned by the Chizuk Amuno Congregation's Arlington Cemetery, so careful attention was paid to maintain the park-like setting and compliment the cemetery's adjacent forested grounds. There are numerous outdoor spaces and exterior seating areas that are used for privacy or recreational opportunities.

Internally, Wabash Estates was designed to facilitate the social services needs of residents as they age in place. There is a large service coordinator office, community kitchen and community room with an outdoor patio. The structure is full of energy-efficient features.

Since Wabash Estates is a cooperative, more than a year before it opened seniors on the interested persons list met monthly to learn about the co-op governing process and make decisions such as color schemes, common area décor and the name. This helped create a sense of ownership before the first resident moved in.

The community maintains 10 committees—including leasing, maintenance and finance—solely comprised of volunteers, has an elected council that is responsible for the daily management decisions and invites residents to run for CSI's national board of directors. Additionally, there is a sundry shop, community network computer center and library. There is also a service coordinator to assist residents in accessing needed community-based services.

Bristol Commons/Lenox Green: When it was built in 1951 in Taunton, Mass., Bristol Commons was known as Fairfax Gardens. It was made up of 150 units of barrack-style public housing on 44 acres of land that included meadows and wetlands. Over the years, it had deteriorated so badly the infrastructure needed a complete replacement. Mold grew in many of the units due to flooding, pests proliferated and crime became rampant. The goal was to create a safe and attractive mixed-income community and reduce the density, yet maintain at least 150 units. To help accomplish the housing requirement, the city of Taunton contributed vacant land less than a mile away, which became Lenox Green. The newly christened Bristol Commons is made up of 88 energy-efficient townhomes, each with one to four bedrooms, while Lenox Green boasts 72 one- to three-bedroom apartments for a combined 160 units.

The joint development includes a playground, water spray pad, basketball courts, tot lots, community garden, greenhouse, community rooms, classrooms, computer center, food pantry and social services and management

offices. Security cameras and lights were also installed to deter crime. There are plenty of pedestrian paths that lead to downtown and the nearby bus terminal.

The two sites support a mix of incomes from 30 percent to 60 percent of area median income (AMI) and many residents receive subsidies from the Taunton Housing Authority. The dual development was funded through a combination of HOPE VI and Community Block Development Grants as well as 9 percent and 4 percent tax credits, and the developer obtained a mortgage.

Besides overcoming its former reputation and the overall depressed economy of the city, the new development had to create a Habitat Management Plan for the endangered Eastern Spadefoot Toad, which lived nearby. As a result, a strict protocol has to be followed if a toad is spotted on the property.

The community partners with the local police to run a basketball league, offers an after-school program in cooperation with the YMCA and works with the Consulate of Portugal to accommodate the large Portuguese population in Taunton.

Blue Butterfly Village in San Pedro, Calif., was created to house and support 73 low-income, homeless veterans, focusing on survivors of military sexual trauma along with their families. The units on this 9-acre site are primarily two-story, two-bedroom townhouse units, making them appropriate for families as opposed to most veteran housing that is geared toward individuals.

The village was built on land that was made up of donated parcels including land from the Department of the Navy through the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990. Financing for the project was a combination of equity derived from the sale of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) and loans from multiple sources. Operating expenses are supported by rental income, project-based vouchers and the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program.

Innovative features of the village range from its rehabilitation of military housing into family homes and a completely retrofitted utility system. The property also meets the criteria for the Enterprise Green Communities for sustainability and features drought-tolerant, native or adaptive species landscaping that also serves to control erosion.

Rehabilitation of numerous systems, from roofing to HVAC to appliances and water systems, were designed to reduce energy use by 30 percent compared to their previous use. Additionally, all units are fully furnished.

The village is near urban amenities such as grocery stores, major retailers, a large public park, community college, work center and transportation hubs.

Since traditional property management systems do not provide the types of supports and sensitivity necessary to cultivate successful, stable tenancies for families that have been destabilized through sexual or domestic violence trauma, the project uses a team of community administrators with expertise in serving this population. The Community Administrative Team is comprised of a traditional lead property manager aided by assistant community administrators experienced in supporting these families in achieving housing stability.

Since it is a family-oriented community, the village also offers after-school transportation and supervision for children of single-parent households in cooperation with the local Boys & Girls Club, the Toberman Neighborhood Center and the Children's Home Society. There is also a nearby Head Start and Early Head Start program.

The challenge for the developers of **777 Main** in Hartford, Conn., was to convert a property with a long history into a mixed-use, mixed-income community.

The state's first bank, Hartford National Bank, opened on the site in what was Bull's Tavern, in 1792 and operated until 1811. In the 1960s, the bank demolished the original building to make way for a new 26-story tower, that at the time, was the second tallest building in the city. It was vacated by its last tenant, Bank of America, in 2011 when the economy took a down turn.

The renovation resulted in 60,000 square feet of commercial space, a 250-car garage and 285 apartments—59 of which are affordable. The penthouse, formerly used by the bank's board members, was converted into a communal space open to all residents complete with fitness center, art gallery, library, screening room, club room and 360-degree terrace. The apartments, which include studio, and one- and two-bedroom floorplans, feature an open

concept layout, floor-to-ceiling windows, chef-quality kitchens with stone countertops and stainless steel Energy Star appliances, walk-in closets and washers and dryers.

The commercial space includes a mix of businesses that have been at the site since the 1980s as well as newcomers, ranging from an optometrist to yoga studio to a camera shop to eateries.

The property is listed on the Connecticut and National Registers of Historic Places. It was financed through a combination of a Capital Region Development Authority loan, the sale of state and federal historic tax credits, a HUD loan and green building incentives.

Since its completion in 2015, more than 80 percent of the apartments have been leased. Additionally, with the energy-efficient upgrades, the building uses half the energy it previously did. Some of the amenities offered to residents include 24/7 concierge, package management, complimentary bikes, resident referral rewards, monthly resident events and discounts to local businesses. The community's website can be accessed through a computer or mobile device and allows residents to make rent payments, input maintenance requests and rate and review their community experience.

The main goal of **A-Mill Artist Lofts** in Minneapolis, Minn., was to repurpose a vacant mill to provide affordable housing to artists. Today, it is fully occupied with more than 400 artist residents.

The first buildings at Pillsbury A-Mill were built in 1880 and the complex continued to expand through the early 1990s. In 2003, milling operations at A-Mill ceased and the facility sat vacant and decaying. It was placed on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's list of 11 most endangered places in 2011.

The mill was purchased in 2013 and a plan to revitalize the complex into 251 affordable artist apartments was born. The project utilized a variety of financing methods including LIHTC, federal and state historic tax credits, tax-exempt bonds, grants and soft loans.

Besides some initial resistance from the neighboring community, the age and location of the building created a number of environmental and structural concerns as well as challenges with the preservation of some of the buildings features. A-Mill was able to overcome the obstacles and even incorporated a functioning hydroelectric system using the existing infrastructure that powered the mill in its heyday.

The development provides a mix of community spaces geared toward artists to work and show their creations, ranging from dance, clay, paint and photography, and includes private art studios, performance hall, gathering spaces and art rails for displays.

The project provides affordable housing for artists making 60 percent or less of the AMI and gives them a quality apartment home with finishes similar to luxury apartments in the area for 60 percent less than market rents. The adaptive reuse of a vacant mill and warehouse into viable residential living spaces has changed the socio-economic viability of the neighborhood. Since the announcement of the Pillsbury A-Mill project, neighborhood establishments have flourished and development has started at nearby abandoned commercial property. Exterior work has improved the cityscape and brought vitality and life back to the neighborhood.

For additional details on the NAHMA Vanguard Award program, see <http://www.nahma.org/awards-contests/vanguard-award/>.

About NAHMA

NAHMA is the leading voice for affordable housing management, advocating on behalf of multifamily property managers and owners whose mission is to provide quality affordable housing. NAHMA supports legislative and regulatory policy that promotes the development and preservation of decent and safe affordable housing, is a vital resource for technical education and information and fosters strategic relations between government and industry. Founded in 1990, NAHMA's membership today includes the industry's most distinguished multifamily owners and management companies. Visit www.nahma.org for more information.

About Wells Fargo Insurance Services

Wells Fargo is one of the nation's largest lenders for affordable or low-income housing. It also one of the industry's leading providers of insurance through our nationwide Multifamily Affordable Housing Insurance Program (MAHIP), exclusively endorsed by the National Affordable Housing Management Association (NAHMA). For details on the national resources, depth-of-industry understanding and market strength of [MAHIP](#), visit the Wells Fargo Insurance Services website.

###

Media Contact

Jennifer Jones, Manager of Communications and Public Relations
National Affordable Housing Management Association
703-683-8630, ext. 100
jjones@nahma.org