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## Valley Oak Homes Groundbreaking

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March 15, 2012 ? Sonoma, CA ? On Thursday March 15, Affordable Housing Associates (AHA) celebrates the groundbreaking of Valley Oak Homes, a green, sustainably built community for 43 low-income families in the town of Sonoma. Scheduled speakers at the ceremony include the City Mayor, housing advocates and a representative from La Luz Center.

The groundbreaking is the culmination of a city strategy to increase the supply for housing for low income workers. The city purchased the site from a private owner in 2008 and selected AHA as the developer in 2009. In 2010, AHA formed a Housing Advisory Committee

consisting of people from the surrounding community to advise on a design that would fit within the neighborhood. In 2011 AHA successfully raised the funding needed for the project despite the decline in financing sources for affordable housing. Funding comes from the previous City of Sonoma Redevelopment Agency, Sonoma County Community Development Commission, Silicon Valley Bank and Enterprise Community Investment.

According to AHA Executive Director Susan Friedland, "Valley Oak Homes will offer safe, comfortable, healthy and environmentally responsible housing coupled with services from La Luz Center to support families working in the city of Sonoma. Homes developed by AHA are more than places to live ? they are places of support, growth and opportunity."

Designed by McCamant & Durrett Architects, and with construction led by Segue Construction Company, Valley Oak Homes will provide a model for sustainable design. Examples include solar photovoltaic and thermal panels to provide energy needed for common area lighting and hot water, permeable paving to allow water to replenish ground water reserves, bioswales to reduce stormwater runoff, and a grey water system that recycles water used in the community building for landscape use. Additional green building measures will include the installation of energy saving appliances, low flow plumbing fixtures, and improved indoor air quality through the use of no-VOC paints and adhesives and natural and recycled flooring materials. The project is expected to achieve a LEED Platinum rating, the highest level possible in this respected green rating system.

#### About Affordable Housing Associates

Incorporated in 1993, Affordable Housing Associates (AHA) is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. AHA's mission is "to strengthen the lives of individuals, families, and communities through affordable housing." AHA takes a hands-on approach to developing all of its projects, allowing it to build and maintain strong relationships with tenants and the communities in which they live. AHA meets with neighborhood residents, city commissions, and government agencies as an important part of every development, actively seeking input from the communities in which our projects are located and incorporating suggestions whenever possible. AHA counters urban sprawl by building and renovating housing in existing neighborhoods where public services are already in place and helps revitalize neighborhoods by removing blight. AHA strives to enhance the economic development of the populations we serve and of the larger community in which we operate by hiring locally and using local suppliers. In the 10 years since the organization was incorporated, AHA has developed 975 housing units in 28 residential communities, with another 300 units in various stages of development.

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