



News & Views

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MFA WELCOMES LT. GOV. JOHN SANCHEZ TO ITS BOARD OF DIRECTORS



- Lt. Governor John Sanchez

MFA is pleased to welcome Lt. Governor John Sanchez to its board of directors. The lieutenant governor – along with the state treasurer and state’s attorney general – is a voting member of the board. As a small business owner for more than 28 years, Sanchez said in a recent interview that he is in a position to make a unique contribution to MFA.

“I function as a conduit between the legislature and the executive branch, while knowing what it means to keep a business going,” Sanchez said. “As a former contractor, I understand firsthand the challenges facing our state’s economy. We need to return to the days of a robust but responsible economy that will allow people to have access to the American dream.”

Sanchez was born and raised in Albuquerque. He traces his public service roots to his great-great-grandfather, who was a territorial legislator from San Miguel County in 1860. John was elected councilman for the Village of Los Ranchos in 1997 and served in the New Mexico House of Representatives from 2000 to 2002. In 2005, John was recognized as one of the Top 40 most influential Hispanics in the country.

» Continued on page 3

LA HACIENDA APARTMENTS

Renovation Funded Through Stimulus Program



- Edwin and Regina Griego

For 48 years, Regina and Edwin Griego have called a stately stone and brick house in a historic Belen neighborhood “home.” The regal-looking houses that surround the Griegos were built by some of Belen’s founding families and reflect the care and love given to them by several generations of homeowners. From their wide yard, ringed by overflowing flowerbeds, the Griego family watched their children play, laughed with their neighbors and witnessed the little town of Belen grow and change. Unfortunately, not all of the changes that happened on their street were good ones.

Directly across the street from the Griego home are the La Hacienda Apartments. Regina remembers when the complex was one of Belen’s most desirable addresses, complete with a courtyard swimming pool that overflowed with neighborhood

» Continued on page 5

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MFA Welcomes Lt. Gov. John Sanchez..	1
La Hacienda Apartments	1
MFA: Housing New Mexico	2
NM Energy\$mart	4
HOPWA	6
2010 MFA Production Highlights	7
Realtor Partner Mary Werner	7

MFA: HOUSING NEW MEXICO



- Officials break ground for the Falcon Ridge Apartments in Hatch, 2008. The economic downturn slowed the project, which was completed in December 2010.



- Terry Brunner, center, state director for USDA Rural Development, cuts the ribbon that signifies the opening of the Falcon Ridge Apartments in Hatch. Left of Brunner is MFA Deputy Director of Programs Joseph Montoya; right of Brunner is New Mexico State Representative Andy Nunez.

FALCON RIDGE APARTMENTS officially opened on December 14 in Hatch. The apartments were built to replace a 72-unit affordable apartment building, Los Caballos Apartments, that was destroyed in a 2006 flood that also heavily damaged public buildings and single-family homes. Many of the former Los Caballos residents – some of whom were relocated to a Federal Emergency Management Agency mobile home park in nearby Rincon – will move into Falcon Ridge. Due to the economic downturn in 2008, the project lost its tax credit investor just as construction was set to begin. MFA filled the financing need by awarding \$7 million in Tax Credit Exchange funds through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

SILVER GARDENS II groundbreaking was held January 25. Located just a block away from MFA's offices in Downtown Albuquerque, the second phase of Silver Gardens will have 55 affordable units that rent for as little as \$289 a month for eligible residents. Twenty-five percent of the units will be reserved for individuals with special needs or who are transitioning out of homelessness. The \$8.8 million project will be completed by the end of the year and is expected to receive a LEED Platinum green building certification. Silver Gardens I, a 66-unit apartment community that opened last year, has 100 percent occupancy and a waiting list of 127.



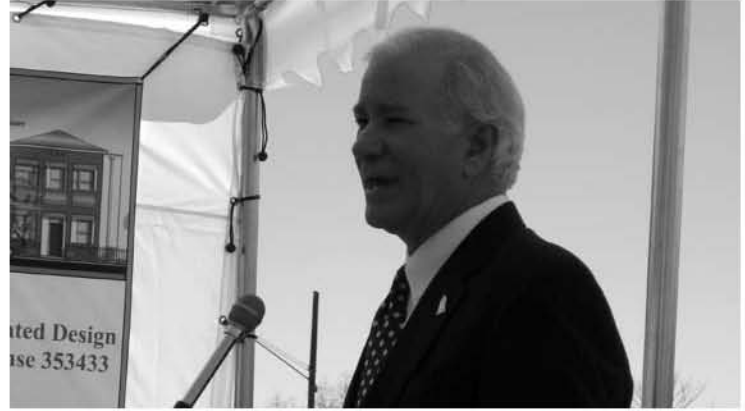
- Officials speak at the groundbreaking for Silver Gardens II on January 25 in Albuquerque. From left to right are Mark Allison, formerly of the Supportive Housing Coalition of New Mexico, Albuquerque Mayor Richard Berry, Albuquerque City Councilor Isaac Benton, MFA Executive Director Jay Czar, and Homer Robinson and Theresa Bell, both of Romero Rose, developer for Silver Gardens.



- Construction begins on Silver Gardens II, an affordable apartment community in Downtown Albuquerque.



- Construction machinery stands ready to begin work at Plaza Feliz, a 65-unit apartment complex being built in Albuquerque's Trumbull Village.



- MFA Executive Director Jay Czar addresses the groundbreaking crowd at Plaza Feliz in Albuquerque.

PLAZA FELIZ, a new apartment complex in the Trumbull Village neighborhood of Albuquerque, was the site of a groundbreaking ceremony on February 16. The apartments will replace substandard housing units that were purchased and demolished by the city of Albuquerque. Plaza Feliz will have 65 two- and three-bedroom units and a 4,000 sq. ft. day care center, which will be managed by the non-profit All Faiths Receiving Home. The apartment community has the support of the Trumbull Village Neighborhood Association. The group has worked successfully over the last several years to make the area a safer place to live. ^

MFA WELCOMES LT. GOV. JOHN SANCHEZ TO ITS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (Continued)

Sanchez has had diverse business interests in New Mexico and has maintained a New Mexico real estate license for more than 20 years. He and his wife Debra built a business that was twice named Small Business of the Year. The firm has sales totaling almost \$100 million and a work force of 25. The Sanchezes are parents of two grown daughters.

MFA acting board chairman, Michael Sivage, says he looks forward to working with Sanchez. "Being a native New Mexican and small business owner, John understands the challenges we face as well as anyone on the board," Sivage said. "John's expertise in construction and his political background will undoubtedly serve us well as we look for new and innovative solutions for improving housing and the quality of life for New Mexicans."

Sanchez called MFA a "key player and resource" for people who never thought they would be able to own a home. And even though economic times have been tough, he said, MFA is a crucial part of the state's overall recovery.

"MFA's staff is world-class and well-respected across the state and the country," Sanchez said. "They are very creative in the way they've operated and responsible in the way they've operated. They

are a well-versed, talented and – most importantly – dedicated team that will play a big role in the economic recovery across all areas of the state."

"The Lt. Governor's experience serving on MFA's Legislative Oversight Committee, as well as his professional expertise as a highly respected member of the homebuilding industry, will make him an invaluable member of the MFA Board," said Jay Czar, executive director of MFA. "Our conversations have been very positive and indicate that he is eager to work with us on the challenges of affordable housing. We are looking forward to great collaboration and partnership." ^

NM ENERGY\$MART KEEPING NEW MEXICANS WARM



- Roberta Wilson said the weatherization measures MFA installed in her home changed her life. Before it was weatherized, the temperature in Roberta's home averaged 42 degrees in the winter months.



- MFA's weatherization partner, Central New Mexico Housing Corporation, cut holes in the walls of Roberta Wilson's home and installed insulation. The 60-year-old home was built without insulation in the attic, walls, or vv.



- Roberta Wilson looks at her utility bill. Since MFA weatherized her home, she has saved more than \$100 a month in energy costs.

Living in a house without insulation in the attic, walls, or crawlspace last winter took a toll on Roberta Wilson. It wasn't just the hat, coats, boots and scarves she had to wear day and night or the fact that her living space had shrunk to the small area she could afford to heat with a space heater. It wasn't even that she had to ask guests to bring extra clothes when they came to visit. As the weeks wore on, Roberta also became emotionally overwhelmed by the cold.

"I was depressed and irritated," Roberta said in a recent interview. "I was freezing, and it made me cold toward other people. Most of the time it was about 42 degrees in my house."

In desperation, Roberta called the Salvation Army, which referred her to MFA's weatherization program, NM Energy\$mart. Over the last 12 years, MFA has administered approximately \$4 million every year in state and federal weatherization funding. MFA partnered with four service providers to weatherize an average of 1,800 homes throughout New Mexico annually.

In 2009, MFA received an additional \$26.8 million in federal stimulus funding to weatherize homes across the state. The extra dollars have allowed MFA and its partners to weatherize an additional 1,000 homes each year for three years and to increase the amount of money that can be spent in each home from \$3,500 to \$6,000.

When staff from MFA and its partner Central New Mexico Housing Corporation (CNMHC) came to Roberta's house in Albuquerque to do an energy audit, they discovered the 700 sq. ft. home had been built with no insulation whatsoever. For the first time, CNMHC took on the task of installing insulation into existing walls.

The crew cut a series of six-inch squares across the walls of Roberta's home and blew insulation into them. They sealed the air leaks in her walls, attic and floor and installed insulation. Then they patched the holes and retextured the walls.

Roberta is saving more than \$100 each month on her heating bill, and she should see a significant savings in the summer months, too. But most importantly, she is now warm and comfortable in the little house she loves.

"How do you measure physical and mental cost effectiveness?" Roberta asked. "What kind of price can you put on your emotional health and feeling good? It's already paid off. I'm so happy. It's changed my life."

MFA's Michael Furze, technical manager for Energy\$mart, said the amount of energy required to heat Roberta's home has been cut by 70 percent. And even though the weatherization process was difficult and time-intensive, it was a good example of the difference the Energy\$mart program makes in the lives of New Mexicans. "We've given Roberta's space back to her," Michael said. ^

LA HACIENDA APARTMENTS

Blighted Property Is Being Renovated



- Workers repair the roof of La Hacienda Apartments in Belen.

children during the summer months. But a few years ago the apartments began a slow decline. The pool was filled in, broken windows were replaced by plywood, trash and weeds began to

accumulate and – worst of all – drug use and violence became commonplace at the once-beautiful complex.

“We were here five times a day – sometimes up to 10 times a day,” Belen Police Chief Dan Robb said of La Hacienda. “There were squatters, drug activity – we almost always made an arrest when we came out.”

Regina said homeowners in the area felt as if they were being held hostage. “People were not coming out of their houses because you could get shot if you walked out at the wrong time,” she said. “Day and night there was screaming and cops. For 48 years it had been such a nice place, full of children. That’s what hurt so much.”

One day, Regina saw a neighbor’s grandchild being used in a drug deal. The young child, who happened to be visiting his grandmother that day, was traumatized. That’s when Regina decided she had had enough. She launched a campaign to encourage the city of Belen to do something about La Hacienda. Several months later, a partnership among the city of Belen, MFA and YES Housing was formed to renovate the property.



- La Hacienda Apartments before renovation began.

Each of the 22 units will receive \$65,000 in repair and energy efficiency upgrades that include new doors, windows, floors, hot water heaters, and cabinets. The apartments will be rented to families that earn 50 percent

or less of the area median income, or about \$30,150 for a family of four.

The \$2.3 million project is funded entirely through MFA’s Neighborhood Stabilization Program, which is part of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008. MFA was granted \$8.7 million of New Mexico’s \$19.6 Neighborhood Stabilization Program allocation to purchase, rehabilitate and rent or resell foreclosed and abandoned homes to low- to moderate-income families throughout the state, excluding the cities of Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Las Cruces and Rio Rancho. La Hacienda is the only multi-family property that has been purchased with MFA NSP funds.

YES Housing is the developer of the La Hacienda rehabilitation project. YES Housing was founded in 1990 to build and revitalize communities with quality, affordable housing and access to social services. YES Housing will own the property and keep it as a low-income community for 20 years.

On January 24, Chris Baca, CEO of YES Housing and Youth Development, Inc., spoke to the crowd that gathered at La Hacienda to kick off the renovation project. Regina and Edwin Griego were at the center of the activities, smiling from ear to ear.

“When we see a property become diseased and impact people like the Griegos, we know we have to do something,” Baca told the audience. “We had to go to the mat to make it happen, but together we did. Thank God for the stimulus dollars that came through the Neighborhood Stabilization Program that allows us to do these good things.”

Police Chief Robb and Belen Mayor Rudy Jaramillo also attended the kickoff. “This will improve the entire neighborhood,” Robb said. “It’s a snowball affect – one improvement makes everything better.” ^

HOPWA

Providing Housing for the Seriously Ill



- Phillip Elliott stands outside his efficiency room in Northeast Albuquerque. The housing, which was provided through MFA's Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS/HIV program, has kept Phillip from being homeless.

A home consists of more than four walls and a roof. A true home is place that provides safety, comfort and security. But for some, a home is even more. It can mean the difference between living and dying.

Phillip Elliott is one of those people. Diagnosed with HIV 20 years ago, AIDS seven years ago and in and out of homeless shelters for years, Phillip was one common cold away from becoming seriously ill or even dying.

"I was dancing on the head of a pin to stay off the streets," Phillip said. "I had no place to stay, no clothes, no income and hoping to God I didn't get sick. If you get sick when you're on the streets, you're in trouble."

Thankfully, Phillip's caseworker at New Mexico AIDS Services connected him to an MFA-funded program: Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA). The program is now paying for an efficiency room for Phillip and supportive services, including assistance in gaining access to state and Federal benefits and services. The little room, which Phillip says was sent by God, has given the 52-year-old the stability he needs to move himself to a better place.

"Phillip was under a lot of stress because he

didn't know where he would be each night or how long he would be there," said Orlando Garcia, medical case manager at New Mexico AIDS Services. "Now he has a sense of security and stability. He can get into a routine and focus on managing his medical issues and the other things he needs to get done."

MFA receives \$560,000 each year in HOPWA grants from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The City of Albuquerque receives \$300,000 of that funding; the balance is distributed to non-profit agencies throughout the state of New Mexico. HOPWA funds are used to provide rental assistance, short-term rent and utility payments, health assessments, mental health care and nutrition services.

Eleven years ago, after years of drug use, Phillip got clean. He married a successful woman, lived in a beautiful home and was happy. But he had Hepatitis C, and it was advancing rapidly. He underwent the weeks-long treatment for the disease, but the side effects from the medication debilitated him mentally and emotionally. The strain was too much for the marriage, which dissolved in early 2009.

Things went downhill quickly for Phillip after the divorce. Unable to work because of his illness, he soon found himself living in a rundown hotel in Albuquerque. At the wrong place at the wrong time, Phillip got caught up in a fight in the hotel parking lot and landed in jail for 14 months.

When Phillip was released, he had nothing except the clothes on his back. His possessions were long-since gone, and his SSI disability payments had stopped. Phillip said he volunteered at shelters in exchange for food, stayed with people from the church

he attended and tried to get a roof over his head before the weather turned cold.

"I applied everywhere, signed up for everything – seminars, self-help groups, advertisements on buses – anything I thought could help get a roof over my head," Phillip said. "Because being homeless in Albuquerque with a diagnosis in the winter is not an option."

Then, just as the weather was turning cold, New Mexico AIDS Services and the HOPWA program came to the rescue and provided Phillip a place to live. Phillip and Orlando are close to getting his SSI benefits restored, which will allow Phillip to take care of himself.

"Phillip has worked hard," Orlando said. "He feeds off the support we give him and makes the most of it. Finding a stable place to live has improved his mental well-being, which then affects his physical well-being."

In one corner of Phillip's little home is a rack with a handful of shirts carefully hung over a couple of pairs of shoes. The desk, which is next to a small refrigerator and microwave, holds neatly stacked boxes of food and paper plates. Next to his bed is a table with two Bibles and a notepad. And in the center of the room is Phillip, smiling. He talks about his daily exercise routine, his thankfulness for the people who have helped him and his hopes for the future.

"I knew if I stayed clean and kept my Bible close to my chest, I knew something good would happen," he said. "I am lucky to be alive. Every day is a blessing." ^

2010 MFA PRODUCTION HIGHLIGHTS

2010 was another challenging year for affordable housing agencies, developers and service providers. However, many of our production numbers were up from 2009, indicating that things are on the upswing. Thank you to MFA's outstanding partners who helped us provide quality affordable housing to thousands of New Mexicans. Here are some highlights:

- Financed **\$180,250,034** to fund **1,451** first-time mortgages
- Provided **1,255** down payment assistance loans for a total of **\$8,214,983**
- Financed the new construction and rehabilitation of approximately **1,419** affordable rental units for **\$124,121,120**
- Provided **\$5,491,090** in loans for the construction of **105** affordable homes
- Processed more than **\$23,040,000** in rental assistance payments for **21,050** Section 8 apartments
- Provided **\$3,047,898** in emergency rental assistance for **2,656** households
- Funded shelter and services for **12,260** individuals experiencing homelessness at a cost of **\$1,554,192**
- Purchased and rehabilitated **35** homes for a total of **\$6,892,718**
- Provided **\$12,093,361** in weatherization services for **4,829** homes
- Rehabilitated **59** homes at a cost of **\$2,579,925** ^

REALTOR PARTNER MARY WERNER SANTA TERESA, NM



– Mary Werner, managing broker at Rogers and Burkman Real Estate, Inc. in Santa Teresa, NM.

Managing broker Mary Werner is cultivating a new generation of first-time homebuyers in Southern New Mexico. Often, the 37-year real estate veteran turns to MFA's closing cost and down payment assistance programs to make it happen.

"If you can get someone to understand what homeownership is all about, they're set for life," said Mary, of Rogers and Burkman Real Estate, Inc. in Santa Teresa. "You

can help them turn their lives around, get their finances in order and become a responsible homeowner."

Mary uses MFA's Helping Hand, Mortgage Booster or Payment Saver programs to help cover eligible clients' down payment and closing costs. The programs require borrowers to contribute \$500 and provides up to \$8,000 in assistance. Borrowers must have a 620 or higher credit score and a steady source of income. Without these programs, Mary said, homeownership would be impossible for many of her clients.

"People think that when you mention using a mortgage bond program that it's going to take forever," she said. "I've spent less time on these MFA loans than on conventional, FHA or VA loans. There's no

more intense work to be done on these loans than on any other."

Many of Mary's clients are new to home buying, having spent their lives in apartments and rental homes. In some cases, they are the first in their families to ever own a home. Mary spends a lot of time talking to her first-time buyers, making sure they understand what it means to own and maintain a home. Then she helps them prepare to apply for a home loan, which can mean doing as much as eight months of financial counseling.

All of the time and effort pays off when the day comes that Mary hands the new homeowners the keys to their first home. Not only are they ecstatic, Mary said, but they often send multiple referrals back to her.

"If you get one family qualified and in a house, you'll get at least five referrals," she said. "If you take the time to educate them and make them responsible enough to be a homeowner, they will tell their friends and relatives."

Mary works closely with developer and builder Dan Brown, of Tuscan Homes, Inc. The two have installed large signs at a Tuscan sub-division in Santa Teresa that tell potential homebuyers about MFA's down payment assistance programs.

"Working with first-time homebuyers is building up my clientele, benefiting the builder and getting people into homeownership," Mary said. "It is a win-win situation for everyone." ^

LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

The Mortgage Finance Authority Act Oversight Committee is made up of legislators from the State House of Representatives and State Senate.

Senator Nancy Rodriguez, Chair (D)
1838 Camino La Canada
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Senator Eric G. Griego (D)
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Senator Mark L. Boltano (R)
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Representative Joni Marie Gutierrez (D)
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Representative Ernest H. Chavez (D)
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Albuquerque, NM 87105

Senator Cisco McSorley (D)
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Representative James Roger Madalena (D)
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MFA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The MFA board is comprised of seven members. Four are appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the New Mexico Senate. Three are ex-officio voting members who serve by virtue of their state office.

Michael Sivage
Sivage Community
Development
(Acting Chair)

Sharron Welsh
The Housing Trust

John Sanchez
Lt. Governor

Daniel C. Burrell
Rosemond Realty

Gary King
Attorney General

Vacant 

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