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Homeless Solutions starts 'green' building in Washington Twp.

By MICHAEL DAIGLE • STAFF WRITER • May 7, 2010

WASHINGTON TWP. — With one high-efficiency, multi-unit housing project under its belt, Homeless Solutions Inc. broke ground Thursday on a second project that will raise the green energy quotient higher.

The project is a 10-unit, three-building affordable housing development that is designed to reach LEED Platinum certification, the first such New Jersey multi-unit affordable housing development to reach that status.

In Morristown, Homeless Solutions built a 12-unit complex on Abbett Avenue that was an Energy Star certified development featuring numerous "green" features.

The new project on Drakestown Road in Washington Township calls for high efficiency heat pumps and tankless water heaters, high efficiency fiberglass windows, Energy Star light fixtures, roofing and appliances, bamboo or linoleum flooring, formaldehyde-free counter tops, cabinets and vanities and low-flow water fixtures, among other features.

Sabine Van Aulock, director of the Morris County division of community development, one of the project's funders, said planning a green apartment building takes "vision, conviction and innovation."

Dan McGuire, director of the headquarters development division of Homeless Solutions, said Washington Township included the project in its third-round housing obligation approved by the state's Council on Affordable Housing, and contributed \$500,000 from its affordable housing trust fund. The remaining funds came from the state's balanced housing fund. The housing should be completed within a year, McGuire said.

Washington Township Mayor Ken Short welcomed the project Thursday.

"Washington Township does not export its

responsibility," Short said. "We do not export people with needs."

He said the new project fits into the neighborhood of single-family homes. He said it is well planned and will look good.

"I can't wait to get it going," Short said.

The new development is about a quarter-mile off Route 46 near the Hackettstown border. Nearby are shopping centers, downtown Hackettstown, Centenary College, public transportation and potential jobs.

Short said it was those elements that led the township to support this project.

Homeless Solutions Executive Director Elizabeth Hall said the opportunity to live in good quality affordable housing helps the residents in numerous ways.

She said a woman and her son moved into the Abbett Avenue complex. The boy was having trouble in school, especially trouble with reading and math. But after moving into their new home, Hall said, the boy's behavior and his grades improved. His mother found steady work and the sense of calmness that came over their lives changed everything.

"It was a case of the right school, the right neighborhood and the right home, and the mother is part of the Morristown community," she said. "That's how it's done. One family at a time."

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Officials break ground on a Homeless Solutions project in Washington Township that they say features green technologies and design. The new project on Drakestown Road in Washington Township calls for high efficiency heat pumps and tankless water heaters, high efficiency fiberglass windows, Energy Star light fixtures, roofing and appliances, bamboo or linoleum flooring, formaldehyde-free counter tops, cabinets and vanities and low-flow water fixtures, among other features. (STAFF PHOTO: DAMN BENKO)

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