

Hutchinson's Newest Transitional Housing Development Wins 2009 Ad Astra Award

--Tierra Verde Honored for Utilizing Innovative, Green Building Technologies--



KHRC's Gary Allsup and Laurie Bedlington of HUD present Shara Gonzales the Ad Astra Award for Special Achievement in Affordable Housing Development.

Overland Park – Tierra Verde, Hutchinson's newest transitional housing development, is the winner of the 2009 Ad Astra Award for **Special Achievement in Affordable Housing Development** serving rural communities. The award, announced on August 20th at the fourth annual Kansas Housing Conference in Overland Park, recognizes excellence in the development of affordable owner or rental housing. Developments may include new construction, renovation or adaptive reuse, and should reflect the highest standards in quality, energy efficiency and sustainability.

Shara Gonzales, Executive Director of New Beginnings, is owner and property manager for Tierra Verde, a development which features both geo-thermal for heating and cooling, and solar for hot water.

"By building affordable "green" housing we're developing eco-friendly, sustainable housing, plus creating ways in which people can live sustainable lives," said Gonzales. "All of our communities will benefit from this process," added Gonzales.

Tierra Verde is actually two developments in one which offer affordable housing in combination with transitional housing units that assist families experiencing homelessness. At 118 E. Avenue A in Hutchinson, there are 28 affordable two bedroom apartments that rent for \$360 a month. At 410 W. 2nd, there are 20 transitional housing units that rent for between \$120 and \$160 a month.

A first of its kind project in Kansas, Tierra Verde features several energy efficient technologies that reduce carbon emissions and substantially lower a tenant's utility bills. These green technologies include low-flow plumbing, renewable lumber resources, low VOC paints, blown insulation, Energy Star appliances, high efficiency heat pumps coupled with geothermal for heat and cooling and solar panels for hot water.

Funding sources for Tierra Verde included:

Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program
Community Housing Development Organization HOME Program
Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing Program
Hutchinson Innovative Housing Program

"New Beginnings is proud to accept this year's Ad Astra award," said Gonzales. "But we share in this honor with Manske & Associates, Midwest Housing Equity Group, Putnam Architecture, and Wiens Construction. These partners helped take our dreams and ideas, conceptualize them, finance them, and then build them."

Other 2009 Ad Astra award winners honored at the Kansas Housing Conference include:

Special Achievement in Affordable Housing Development - URBAN

Gardens at Creekside - Olathe

Contact: Brett Johnson, Partner, Overland Property Group, 913-693-7970

Excellence in Partnership

The Lawrence Community Housing Trust Program

Contact: Rebecca Buford, Executive Director, Tenants to Homeowners, 785-760-2058

Outstanding Housing Advocate

Kansas State Representative Steven Brunk (District 85 - Bel Aire, KS)

Contact: Rep. Brunk, 316-744-1547

Affordable Housing Trail Blazer

Ross Freeman, President, The Pioneer Group, Inc.

Contact: The Pioneer Group, 785-232-1122

Innovation in Housing and Community Development

Prairie Pointe Townhomes - Greensburg

Contact: Jay Manske of Manske and Associates, 316-630-8344

The Ad Astra Awards are given out each year at the statewide Kansas Housing Conference. The awards honor individuals and organizations who demonstrate excellence in developing affordable housing, shaping housing policy and creating innovative housing solutions to meet the daily needs of low and moderate-income Kansans. The awards celebrate housing leaders who consistently make a positive impact on their communities, as well as showcase the best practices of housing developers, housing authorities, community service organizations and others.

For more information about Tierra Verde, contact Shara Gonzales at 620-966-0274. To learn more about the Kansas Housing Conference or the 2009 Ad Astra Awards, contact Catherine Couch of Kansas Housing Resources Corporation at 785-296-0081, ccouch@kshousingcorp.org.

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2009 Kansas Housing Conference