

Tuscaloosa Housing Authority Brings New Life to Community

Using HUD Stimulus Funding

When the Tuscaloosa Housing Authority was awarded \$20 million in HUD funding under HUD's HOPE VI Program to revitalize the McKenzie Court public housing community, it was good news for the west Tuscaloosa community. The project would create 144 units of new housing in an area where the housing stock was aging and rapidly deteriorating. However, even as work began on the McKenzie Court project other community needs within sight stood out. At first City and community leaders had no idea of where to find funding for some of the needed improvements in the community, but when the Tuscaloosa Housing Authority was awarded over \$2.8 million dollars in competitive stimulus funding as well as over \$4 million in formula stimulus funding, local leaders all agreed that expanding McKenzie Court, as well as addressing some of the needs in the surrounding community, would be amongst the best potential uses of the funds.



New construction funded with ARRA funds is making a difference in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. These are three of 144 units under construction in the McKenzie Court Community.

Tuscaloosa Housing Authority received over \$20 million in HUD HOPE VI funding for the revitalization of the McKenzie Court Community. The approved funding included plans for not only construction housing units, but also the creation of a community library. With the addition of HUD formula stimulus funding the Authority was able to expand the scope of the project, including the installation of new hydro-heating systems throughout, installation of water conserving toilets and faucets, as well as installation of additional ceiling insulation. These improvements will add value to the property and lower the monthly and annual utility bills for residents on fixed incomes.



The library under construction as part of the McKenzie Court revitalization effort will be a tremendous new resource not only for residents of the property, but for members of the surrounding community as well.

Nearly \$900,000 of stimulus funding was committed to renovations at McKenzie Court Annex, a 30 unit elderly property across the street from McKenzie Court. At the McKenzie Court Annex scheduled improvements included; installation of new front porches, improvements to the roofing system, installation of energy efficient windows, landscaping improvements and the creation of a small “pocket park.”

But the impact of the stimulus funding did not stop at the McKenzie Court community. Over \$1 million of the stimulus funding was invested in Branscomb Apartments, an elderly housing community operated and owned by Tuscaloosa Housing Authority. Because of stimulus funding the 33 units in this elderly housing community experienced a comprehensive renovation that included; the installation of new energy efficient heat pumps, the addition of 200 square feet of living space, new electrical wiring, new plumbing and piping, new air conditioning systems, and new front porches and rear patios. The safety of the community was enhanced by the installation of a residential fire protection sprinkler system.

In addition to the much needed physical improvements to Branscomb Apartments, the Tuscaloosa Housing Authority was also able to renovate and expand an existing Community Center at the property. The renovations included the installation of a commercial kitchen, the expansion of a limited educational center, and the creation of a community library. As a result of these improvements the community is now able to offer an Elderly Feeding Program, an On Site Fitness Program, and an On Site laundry facility. The enhanced community center is also available to the general community, and offers opportunities for programming not previously available.

The referenced stimulus projects in Tuscaloosa generated more than \$2 million in each locally purchased materials and labor; \$53,903 in local sales taxes as well as more than \$20,000 in permits and fees. The projects also generated 92 local construction jobs. In addition, the McKenzie Court HOPE VI funding generated an additional \$695,688 in sales taxes, along with labor and material costs that each exceeded \$7.5 million.

To learn more please go to: <http://www.hud.gov/local/index.cfm?state=al&topic=offices>