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VCCF GRANT HELPS BUILD HOMES FOR FARMWORKER FAMILIES

Fund for Farmworker Housing awards \$102,000 for Ventura project

CAMARILLO, Calif. (April 27, 2010) – A \$102,000 grant from the Ventura County Community Foundation will help house farmworker families in new, affordable homes in the city of Ventura.

The Fund for Farmworker Housing at the Community Foundation awarded the money to the Housing Authority of the City of San Buenaventura to hire an architect/civil engineer and to provide other start-up costs for 20 to 24 rental homes for extremely and very low-income farmworker families.

“This \$102,000 allows the Housing Authority to do the predevelopment work that will make sure the project comes to fruition and meets the needs of the people we serve,” said Ed Moses, CEO of the Ventura agency.

The Housing Authority has been selected as the developer of the project at Saticoy Avenue and Blackburn Road by city officials and the University of California Regents – who own the land as part of the Hansen Trust. The trust also operates the Hansen Agricultural Learning Center at Faulkner Farm in Santa Paula.

The homes could be available for leasing by June 2012, depending on how quickly the project clears city building requirements and when financing can be found.

Approved by Ventura officials in December, the plan calls for a community with a mix of townhomes and fourplexes within walking distance of an elementary school, parks, public transportation, a low-cost medical clinic and a public library.

The Housing Authority intends to earn green-building certification for the development, if funds allow.

“The Community Foundation’s Farmworker Housing Fund is the only countywide effort dedicated to increasing the supply of decent, affordable and safe housing for Ventura County farmworkers,” said Hugh Ralston, VCCF president and CEO.

“We are delighted the Fund is making its first grant in Ventura and are looking forward to this project coming to fruition,” he continued. “A critical challenge for many projects is securing support for the important predevelopment costs of a project; covering these costs is an important contribution from the Fund.”

The high cost of providing housing for agricultural workers was cited as one of the major challenges facing Ventura County’s \$1 billion agricultural industry in the 2008 report: *Ventura County’s Agricultural Future: Challenges and Opportunities*, Ralston noted.

The Fund for Farmworker Housing was established in 2003 at VCCF to expand the options for the region’s agricultural workers. The source of monies for this grant was the 80 in ‘08 Campaign, with a goal to raise funds to meet a challenge grant from the Ag Futures Alliance, and was seeded in part by proceeds from a Kris Kristofferson benefit concert for local farmworkers. Matching contributions came from local agricultural companies and individuals throughout the County.

For more information on the Fund and its prior grants for projects in Ventura County, please visit the Foundation’s Web site at www.vccf.org.

VCCF is a family of charitable funds with combined assets of \$98.1 million. Its mission is to promote and enable philanthropy to improve our community for good for ever, which it does through grantmaking, scholarships and leadership training programs through the Center for Nonprofit Leadership. VCCF has been certified in compliance with national standards by the Council on Foundations, the highest form of peer review in

the United States. For more information, please visit vccf.org or contact VCCF at (805) 988-0196.



