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Christie Administration Marks Groundbreaking of Affordable Housing Project Assisted with Federal Sandy Recovery Funds

Oakwood Avenue Development in Orange Provides Seven Affordable Rental Opportunities for Working Families

ORANGE, N.J. – The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) today announced the groundbreaking of Oakwood Avenue Development, a seven-unit affordable housing building in Orange that was primarily financed with federal Sandy Recovery funds.

DCA awarded the Orange Housing Development Corporation \$1.35 million in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Disaster Recovery funds through the Neighborhood Enhancement Program. The program provides zero-interest loans to non-profit and for-profit developers to help finance the rehabilitation of abandoned, foreclosed and vacant housing and the redevelopment of underutilized lots in the nine counties most impacted by Sandy as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in an effort to address the shortage of affordable housing caused by the storm.

“We are pleased to be able to use Sandy recovery funds to support worthwhile housing projects throughout the state that help replenish the supply of affordable housing units that were destroyed or damaged by Sandy,” said DCA Assistant Commissioner Ana Montero at today’s groundbreaking. “Once completed, Oakwood Avenue Development will help Sandy victims, as well as working families in need of safe, decent housing that is affordable.”

Orange Housing Executive Director Dr. Walter D. McNeil Jr. said, “We plan, design and develop to serve the residents of our community and beyond, and we want others to know what an amazing place Orange is to live.”

During the first three months of lease-up for Oakwood Avenue Development, priority will be given to Sandy-impacted individuals who registered for Federal Emergency Management Agency assistance or who rented an apartment or owned a primary residence that was no longer habitable because of Sandy damage.

The Oakwood Avenue Development project features a three-story modern design, low-rise multi-family apartment building totaling over 11,000 square feet. The new building will include one, 1-bedroom apartment; three, 2-bedroom apartments; and three, 3-bedroom apartments. The rental units will be affordable to families earning at or less than 80% of the median income for the area as determined by HUD. The architect designed the building to be energy efficient, featuring a solar panel roof and using energy saving devices throughout the building.

Other funding sources for the development of Oakwood Avenue Development include \$560,000

from the Essex County Neighborhood Stabilization Program and more than \$100,000 in equity from the Orange Housing Development Corporation.

The Neighborhood Enhancement Program is designed to address the shortage of affordable housing caused by Superstorm Sandy across the state, while at the same time returning abandoned and blighted housing to viability. It does this by supporting local efforts to redevelop or rebuild strong neighborhoods within the nine counties most impacted by Sandy. Through the program, DCA has awarded 33 zero-interest loans totaling \$25.6 million that will help finance 170 units of affordable housing, which will substantially increase the affordable rental stock in the nine most Sandy-impacted counties.

For more information on Sandy recovery programs administered by DCA, including the Neighborhood Enhancement Program, visit <http://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/sandyrecovery/index.html> on the DCA website.