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Low-income housing passes the test

BARSTOW — One of three affordable housing communities in Barstow passed its most recent Housing and Urban Development inspection in record fashion, scoring 85 out of a possible 100.

The Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino, which owns over 2,000 units in the county, announced its “public housing site” located throughout the Barstow area passed its annual inspection, scoring 10 more points than last year.

According to Director of Policy and Community Affairs Ana Gamiz, the Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino owns two apartment complexes and 220 houses that provide low-income families affordable housing. HUD requires a thorough inspection of the exteriors, building systems, common areas and the inside of the various housing units to ensure families in affordable housing programs living in safe and decent housing.

Rishad Mitha, Housing Authority Deputy Director, described the inspection as “pretty stringent.”

The residences range from one- to five-bedroom homes. The two apartment complexes, which are managed by a third party, were not included in the inspection last month, Gamiz said. Gamiz said the county’s Housing Authority directly manages the sites and has a staff of four maintenance workers, a regional manager, a property supervisor dedicated to the site and an administrative clerk.

Despite ongoing budget cuts to affordable housing programs that have posed a challenge to upkeep, the Housing Authority has been able to maintain its homes in “great” condition, according to Executive Director Daniel Nackerman. Gamiz said 2014 was the third year the site has improved its score. She attributes the improvements to the staff, whom she says are quick to address any issues that need fixing. Gamiz said the staff aims to satisfy residents, along with the surrounding community, with the appearance and upkeep of the low-income properties.

“We also encourage our residents to participate in helping up with the upkeep of the properties,” Assistant Executive Director Gustav Joslin said. “Without them and their upkeeping and doing their part, it would be very difficult to get such a high score.”

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