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THE SUN

Public housing rehabbed

Stimulus puts 420 to work

By Wesley G. Hughes Staff Writer

The San Bernardino County Housing Authority used \$5.1 million in federal stimulus funds to rehabilitate the exteriors of 210 public housing units in the Inland Empire, while putting more than 400 people to work, county officials announced Monday.

The work began in March 2009 and was completed just prior to Thanksgiving, said Ana Gamiz, director of policy and public affairs for the authority.

Cities that benefited are Chino, where 157 workers were employed; Colton, where 98 were hired; and Redlands, where 165 people were put to work. Altogether, the 420 people put to work were the result of 30 separate work contracts.

Tasks included lead-based paint abatement, rough framing, re-roofing, window replacement, contemporary styling, installation of new evaporative coolers, exterior lath and plaster, painting, electrical work, site concrete and new screen doors.

Most of the dwellings involved are duplexes about 60 years old. The units are owned and operated by the Housing Authority.

Gamiz said the authority made an effort to spend the money where it would do the most good.

In Chino, the rehabilitation work was near the Monte Vista Avenue and Riverside Drive area; in Colton near the public library south of the 10 freeway and in Redlands in the area of Lugonia and Brockton avenues.

Gamiz said she was very pleased with the work results and that the residents are equally happy.

The money created an immediate ripple effect throughout the communities by preserving housing infrastructure, investing in new energy upgrades, and creating new jobs, all stimulating the economy overall, Gamiz said.

With the unemployment rate close to 14 percent in the county, this money helped generate much needed jobs for skilled tradesmen, alleviating

some of the hardship on many families, said Susan Benner, executive director of the Housing Authority.

"Aligned with the president's goal of investing into much needed communities, generating jobs, and rebuilding our economy, we moved quickly to invest these monies into the economy over a year earlier than the deadline provided by the stimulus bill," she said.

The Housing Authority is at 715 E. Briar Drive, San Bernardino. It is governed by a seven-member commission. Each county supervisor appoints one commissioner and two are selected from among the residents and elected by them.

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Stimulus goes to work

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funneled \$5.1 million in stimulus funds to San Bernardino County's Housing Authority to invest in housing complexes and generate jobs. Those funds were used to create:

- 30 contracts
- 420 jobs
- 210 rehabilitated homes

SOURCE: Housing Authority of San Bernardino County