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Obama taps S.F. Bridge Housing CEO for HUD post

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President Obama dipped into the Bay Area talent pool again on Tuesday, announcing the appointment of Bridge Housing Corp. Chief Executive Officer Carol Galante to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Galante, head of the San Francisco affordable home building company since 1996, will serve as deputy assistant secretary of the multifamily housing programs. She will be responsible for the development of affordable apartment complexes and preservation of thousands of HUD-insured properties nationwide, both subsidized and unsubsidized.

"She is one of the nation's most innovative affordable housing leaders and will be a tremendous asset during our nation's housing crisis, especially as HUD moves forward an aggressive policy agenda," HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan said in a statement.

Galante will also focus on initiatives approved under Obama's economic stimulus package that promote improved energy efficiency in existing and new projects. In addition, she plans to encourage more environmentally sound development patterns and explore new ways of addressing aging public housing.

"There are two things that I see this administration is excited about doing - one is definitely greening the existing apartment complexes," she said. The second is taking "older properties and finding creative ways of rejuvenating them, rehabbing them or reconstructing them."



BRIDGE Housing

Bridge Housing represents the local gold standard for creating affordable and sustainable communities, said Tim Colen, executive director of the San Francisco Housing Action Coalition.

It was the lead developer of North Beach Place, completed in 2004, a 341-apartment complex for low-income families and seniors near Fisherman's Wharf, which

replaced a dilapidated 50-year-old public housing project by tapping into a variety of private and public funding sources. It included a ground floor Trader Joe's, child care center and additional commercial space, all adjacent to a cable car track.

"We think that's a great model to be replicated nationwide," Colen said.

In January, Bridge broke ground on Fabian Way Senior, a 56-unit project in Palo Alto intended for elderly residents with incomes below \$34,000 for a household of two. The company, founded in 1983, has built more than 13,000 units of housing.

Bridge Executive Vice President Lydia Tan will serve as interim president while Chairman Rick Holliday conducts the search for a new CEO.

Last week, the Obama administration tapped Bay Area environmental activist Van Jones as adviser for green jobs, enterprise and innovation at the White House Council on Environmental Quality. Earlier this year, the president appointed Nobel laureate physicist and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory Director Steve Chu as secretary of the Department of Energy.