

New housing complex is 'green' and affordable

By Danny Bernardini

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Taking a field trip from the downtown government center, the Suisun City Council on Thursday held a special meeting and tour of the Cottonwood Creek Apartments, a new affordable housing complex.

Designed and maintained by Bridge Housing, the 94-unit on Railroad Avenue features the latest environmental-friendly materials. The project cost \$27.5 million.

The complex was shown to the city council, planning commission and other city staff to show off the project that was four years in the making. This was Bridge Housing's first project in Solano County, but the company has been around for 25 years.

"If (Bridge) has any other proposals, we would love to listen to them," said councilman Mike Segala.

The site features four three-story apartment buildings, a swimming area, laundry facilities, a community room and basketball court. Each of the one-, two-, three- or four- bedroom apartments are equipped with a phone line, cable hookups and a DSL port.

"The digital divide is narrowing," said Jon Yolles, project manager.

It is also equipped with features to help conserve water and power. Leading the charge in that department are the solar panels that create enough energy to power everything on the site besides power inside the apartments.

Also included is a system to treat all storm and irrigation water on site so it may be recycled. Even the playground is completely made of recycled materials, down to the cork-like ground instead of bark or sand.

Although only 71 units are currently occupied, applications are no longer being accepted because of the high demand. In fact, more than 850 people originally applied for residency, said Christian Wiedel, operational manager for Bridge Housing. A grand opening is scheduled for September, but the complex will likely be full by the end of July.

He said as the housing market continues to suffer, affordable housing is often there to fill the gap for those who have been foreclosed or evicted.

"In certain areas, it has been well received and very popular," Wiedel said. "If there is a big enough economic gap (in a community), we're always going to have a high demand."