



New Harmony Going for Bigger Green Rating

Staff at Mutual Housing California is expecting its most recent development in Davis, Calif., to get a high rating when its Build It Green (BIG) certification from the Oakland-based nonprofit comes through.

Mutual Housing staff is hoping to receive nearly 200 points for energy efficiency at New Harmony Mutual Housing Community, which is more than twice the required 70 points for such projects to be considered green in Davis.

“Because of our local green goals, Davis has higher requirements for sustainability and green aspects than the usual state thresholds for Build It Green,” said Joe Krovoza, City of Davis mayor. “There is every indication that New Harmony will not only meet those goals, but easily surpass them.”

If it passes, New Harmony will be the third BIG rating Mutual Housing California has received. Mutual Housing at the Highlands and Norwood Estates Mutual Housing also received green certifications from BIG.

Mutual Housing California became the first developer to install solar photovoltaic systems for rentals in a multi-family development in Sacramento County when it did so in 2002. Since then, they have increased their knowledge of green construction and realized that using the green methods and adding photovoltaic systems only raised construction costs by 4.07 percent.

“With its numerous green features, New Harmony fits well within the Davis model of sustainability,” said Krovoza. “Communities like New Harmony that create a unique sense of place, but have a minimal carbon footprint, represent the kind of housing we strive to develop in Davis.”

As for energy efficiency, the development exceeds California energy conservation requirements by almost one-third, has south-facing windows with protective awnings and overhangs, and raised-heel roof trusses to provide extra insulation and gearless elevators. Each unit also has energy-efficient appliances to lower utility bills for residents.

Solar panels on most of the roof were designed to offset 79 percent of the electric energy for the community, reducing utility costs to residents as well as the nonprofit. Tankless water heaters that only heat when needed help reduce energy use, and each dwelling has a recycling bin in the kitchen.

Mutual Housing California develops housing that is affordable to a diversity of households. Our housing builds strong and stable communities through resident participation and leadership development. For more information, call (916) 453-8400 or visit our website at mutualhousing.com.

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To help with indoor air quality, all living rooms and bedrooms have ceiling fans. The kitchen and bathrooms also have high-efficiency fans. Low-formaldehyde doors, cabinets, and trim as well as zero or low-VOC paints, stains and adhesives were used throughout the development.

Less than one-third of the landscape is dedicated to turf, a known water hog. Drought-tolerant plants were chosen for the beds as well as an efficient controller and low-drop sprinkler head system. In the apartments, shower heads, faucets and low-flow toilets all save water. The majority of floor and ceiling materials were either from recycled lumber scraps, or rapidly growing trees.

The final rating is expected in early March.

Founded in 1988, Mutual Housing California develops and operates well-designed rental housing for people of modest means. The non-profit communities have nearly 3,000 residents, almost half of whom are children.