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Federal, State and Local Housing Officials Celebrate Opening of Senior Rental Housing in Silver Spring: The Bonifant Includes 149 Mixed-Income Apartments

Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett today took part in the ribbon cutting ceremony for The Bonifant at Silver Spring, a mixed-income 11-story apartment building with 149 units for seniors age 62 or older.

"The Bonifant is part of a broader initiative to create more affordable housing for seniors as we continue to make Montgomery County a community for a lifetime," said Leggett. "These apartments are located in the revitalized Silver Spring downtown district adjacent to the new Silver Spring library."

Leggett was joined by Nancy Floreen, County Council President; Robert Goldman, President of Montgomery Housing Partnership; Peter Gartlan, President of Donohoe Development; Kenneth Holt, Secretary of Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development; Marvin Turner, D.C. Director, National Capitol Area Office, U.S. Housing and Urban Development; Paul Weech, President of NeighborWorks America; and David Bowers, Vice President of Enterprise Community Partners.

"This project is a terrific example of local government and the private sector working together in a way that leverages the strengths of both to bring about creative solutions for our residents," said Floreen. "The seniors who call The Bonifant home will benefit not just from the affordable rent but also from all the great amenities right outside their door."

The Bonifant was constructed at a cost of $44 million as a public-private partnership among the Montgomery Housing Partnership (MHP), a private, nonprofit affordable housing developer, The Donohoe Companies, an expert in high-rise development, and Montgomery County. The Donohoe Companies provided entitlement and construction expertise.

"This was a challenging site to redevelop," said Gartlan. "With the County's early vision and a proactive approach from all of the public and private partners, we've overcome obstacles to achieve the community's goals for The Bonifant on time and under budget."

Montgomery County continues to own the land at this location. MHP, a nonprofit that creates quality, affordable homes throughout the County, is the co-developer and long-term owner of the mixed-use property and holds a 77-year lease. Due to the financing methods used, all but 10 of the 149 units are available at reduced rents for persons age 62 and older with incomes less than 60 percent of the area median income.

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"The Bonifant is unique from any other high-rise apartment building in downtown Silver Spring," said Goldman. "Our ultimate goal was to deliver an attractive, affordable rental option, located within the heart of seniors' existing support networks, and within walking distance to shops, grocery stores, and the vibrancy that downtown offers. We are so proud of the result."

Financing for the award-winning project was provided through several public-private sources, including Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs, State of Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Capital One, Wells Fargo, AGM Financial, Enterprise Community Investments, and NeighborWorks America.

"The State of Maryland is proud to support Montgomery County and MHP with financing from the Rental Housing Works initiative and other programs," said Holt. "The Bonifant will provide Silver Spring's seniors with safe, decent, affordable housing opportunities."

"The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is proud to have provided a Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loan under Section 221(d)(4) of the National Housing Act in the amount of $15,085,000 for the construction of The Bonifant," said Turner. "This was accomplished by and through Secretary Julian Castro, the Multifamily Production Division of the HUD Maryland Field Office and the HUD National Capitol Area Office. Part of HUD's mission is to foster diverse, sustainable communities close to public transportation, shopping and other amenities. The Bonifant lets us achieve that goal in a spectacular fashion."

Montgomery County Council, which authorizes and appropriates the Housing Initiative Fund (HIF) each year, enabled HIF loans for The Bonifant construction project.

The Bonifant offers 6,300 square feet of retail space on the first floor of the building and walkable access to Metrorail, Ride On, the future Purple Line station, grocery stores, shops, theater and the library.

VOA Associates designed The Bonifant with active seniors in mind. The residential building is smoke-free and features 10 studios, 119 one-bedrooms, 20 two-bedrooms, a large community room for entertaining, a cyber café with computers, a fitness center featuring senior-specific equipment, secure access entry and on-site management, an outdoor terrace, and incorporated green space.

More than 800 people have expressed interest in renting the units since the project broke ground in June 2014. Most units are now rented. More information is available at www.TheBonifant.com.

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