

A soaring debut: Hesperia welcomes The Villas senior community



Wyn Holmes of the Eagle Group pumps his fist after the ribbon was cut for The Villas 55+ senior community complex in Hesperia on Wednesday. The apartments are still under construction but the majority are already sold out. [James Quigg, Daily Press]

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HESPERIA — It was standing room only as the Eagle Real Estate Group unveiled its newest housing development with a ribbon cutting and celebration of The Villas 55+ senior community.

City of Hesperia officials also welcomed the crowd that gathered for the event at the Spanish Mission-style apartments located on Avenal Street, just east of Mariposa Road, Wednesday.

“Eagle is so very proud to bring this beautiful affordable seniors community to the City of Hesperia and we are excited to bring life into this special place,” said Randall Friend, founder of the real estate group.

Friend told the Daily Press two-thirds of the 96-unit, two-story project is already pre-leased, with many seniors showing interest in the remaining units. He also remarked that plans are in the works for another 96-unit facility adjacent to the property.

Hesperia Mayor Paul Russ told the audience the vision for the Villas project began years ago when several Council members visited Eagle's 120-unit senior facility in Colton.

"We felt the housing money allocated to us should be spent on affordable housing for our seniors," Russ said. "Twenty percent of this project is subsidized, and if you're going to subsidize a group of people, let's subsidize those who have been around, they lived their lives, they paid into society, they raised their kids and now they need to scale back a little."

Apple Valley Mayor Scott Nassif applauded 1st District Supervisor Robert Lovingood after he called the housing project a "proactive engagement" for "growth opportunity," and credited the city and Eagle for partnering to "build a better desert."

Lovingood also complimented Eagle and the city for locating the Villas in close proximity to Main Street, with its many eating and shopping opportunities.

Many in the audience applauded when Russ said the Victor Valley Transit Authority rerouted one of its bus routes to accommodate those living at the new apartments.

"The VVTA actually picked up the tab to build the bus stop," Russ told the Daily Press. "That's two government agencies working together for a low-cost solution to meet the needs of our seniors."

The Villas leasing office contains several large, black and white photos showing the history of Hesperia. Some of the photos include the Hesperia Hotel built in the 1880s and workers harvesting Tatum's T Brand white rose potatoes in the 1940s.

The ribbon cutting included music by Phat Cat Swinger, presentations by local and regional representatives, and brunch. Several residents, who will move into the apartments when they are completed in about two weeks, were also in the attendance.

During the event, several workers put the finishing touches on the project, which includes gas meter installation, landscaping and painting.

The \$13 million gated community on 10 acres broke ground in August 2016 and includes four two-story buildings, each consisting of 24 units each. Other amenities include a pool, Jacuzzi, fitness center, media center, community room, putting greens, dog park, in-unit washers and dryers, carports and on-site bus stop.

Units include 629-square-foot one-bedroom and 875-square-foot two-bedroom apartments. Monthly rates for one-bedroom units range from \$640 to \$840, with the lower range sold out, and \$952 for the larger units.

Friend said he's proud the construction of the senior community included several local subcontractors at the request of the City Council.

Some local companies involved in the project include: Apple Valley Insulation, David's Drywall Company, Medrano's Paving, Ron Shamlin Plastering, W.W Nelson Carports and Inline BluePrinting.

Despite last year's Bluecut Fire hindering subcontractors and forcing the shutdown of the job site, the housing project remained on schedule, said Friend, who thanked neighbors near the project for "courtesy and cooperation" during construction.

Eagle is currently under exclusive negotiation agreements to bring similar affordable senior housing communities to the communities of Barstow and Yucaipa, Friend said.

"Eagle is very appreciative of Hesperia's mayor, City Council and its staff for their amazing vision and leadership for this great community and their collective trust in Eagle to make their vision a reality," Freind said.

The Villas 55+ is located at 13552 Avenal St., just east of Mariposa Road, in Hesperia. For leasing and general information on the Villas, call 909-370-4554 or visit www.eaglereg.com.