

Fri, Oct. 26, 2012

## Low-cost housing is being built in Turlock, Modesto

By MarijkeRowland [mrowland@modbee.com](mailto:mrowland@modbee.com)

Two new low-income housing projects in Turlock and Modesto are taking shape and have begun the preapplication process.

Construction is well under way on Turlock's 80-unit Avena Bella apartments on Linwood Avenue. Developer EAH Housing opened a leasing office in downtown Turlock earlier this month and has begun collecting information from potential renters. The apartments should be open by June 2013.

"People are really excited about the prospect of living in apartments like this where everything will be brand new," said Deena Luce, Avena Bella property manager. "It's going to be gorgeous, with a pool and patio area, granite countertops and wood cabinets. There's a lot of interest."

Work has begun on the new 76-unit Archway Commons housing in Modesto, which EAH also is developing. The first 35 units should be ready for people to move in by summer 2013, around the same time as Avena Bella. The remaining 41 units should be ready by fall of 2013.

Felix AuYeung, senior project manager for San Rafael-based EAH, said the Avena Bella apartments are about 25 percent to 30 percent completed, with second-story framing beginning. The apartments will be a mix of two- and three-bedroom units.

A temporary leasing office has been opened on West Main Street in the Main Street Plaza building. The company is compiling interest lists for both developments. People on the lists will be contacted with updates and application information once it becomes available.

Rent prices have been set for both properties. Depending on income, renters at Avena Bella will pay \$457 to \$736 for a two-bedroom unit and \$536 to \$858 for a three-bedroom unit. At Archway Commons, rent will be \$330 to \$609 for two bedrooms and \$377 to \$800 for three.

Progress 'really exciting'



MARIJKE ROWLAND/mrowland@modbee.com The new low-income housing project Avena Bella in Turlock is taking shape. The project, which will open its first phase of 80 units in summer 2013, has opened a leasing office and will begin accepting applications soon. Construction is about 30 percent complete. The first phase will have two and three bedroom houses. - Modesto Bee - Marijke Rowland

Turlock Housing Program Services Manager Maryn Pitt said she is pleased with the progress at Avena Bella. Groundbreaking on the project was in March and construction began in April.

"It's starting to come to fruition and that is really exciting," Pitt said. "We can't wait for people to be able to move in."

The \$19 million project was one of the last funded by Turlock's redevelopment agency before state budget cuts ended the program. The Mediterranean-themed Avena Bella, which means "beautiful oats" in Italian, sits on 4.3 acres across from Cunningham Elementary School. Once completed, the grounds will include a community center, swimming pool, garden and computer lab.

To qualify for either complex, renters must meet federal and state affordable housing income standards. Applicants will have credit and background checks.

Luce said people can put their names on the Turlock and Modesto lists. She already has about 30 names for Avena Bella list and 20 for Archway Commons.

Plans are to hand out applications the first two weeks in January and accept completed forms the second two weeks. A lottery will then be held to determine which applicants will be called in for an interview and begin the qualification process.

"I don't think we'll need to worry about finding applicants," Luce said. "I expect to have five to eight times the number of applications needed."

No applications currently are being accepted. But once they are available, potential renters will be able to pick them up at the leasing office and or download them online.

A Web site has been set up for the Avena Bella apartments that includes site information and an "apply here" link. Luce said renters those who give their information online still will need to fill out a formal application later.

To improve their chances of qualifying for the Turlock or Modesto apartments, Luce said, residents should begin saving their paycheck stubs and bank statements. Applicants must provide three and six months of each, respectively. She said they should try to clean up their credit history. Renters cannot have more than \$1,000 in collection.

AuYeung said EAH has opened the leasing office early to establish itself in the community and get information to the public as soon as possible. Leasing for both properties will be handled out of the Turlock office.

The EAH leasing office is at 121 W. Main St., Suite I, in Turlock. It is open 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and noon to 5 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. For more, visit <http://avenabellaapts.rentaladdress.com> or call (209) 496-9961.

**Bee staff writer Marijke Rowland can be reached at [mrowland@modbee.com](mailto:mrowland@modbee.com) or (209) 578-2284. Follow her at [www.twitter.com/TurlockNow](http://www.twitter.com/TurlockNow).**