



\$49 Million in Changes Coming to Public Housing

Jennifer Heathcock

July 12, 2007 - 7:33PM

The first tangible sign of \$49 million worth of changes coming to the Beaumont housing authority took place during today's groundbreaking for the new Magnolia Gardens and another housing project at the old fairgrounds.

Jennifer Heathcock reports, the goal is to create not another housing project, but a new community.

It is a groundbreaking event the housing authority says will change lives.

"Right now, the development is only this vacant piece in front of this building, all of this area here and the single family homes will come around and exit on Concord," says the Executive Director of the Beaumont Housing Authority, Robert Reyna.

A new multi-million dollar housing project will be placed here, where the old fairgrounds are located.

Many realize the need for an affordable place to live in Beaumont.

"Housing is so very needed in our area," says Beaumont Mayor Becky Ames.

"Means a lot cause a lot of people, they don't have too many apartments in Beaumont or affordable apartments in Beaumont," says Larry Bradley, a former resident of Magnolia Gardens.

There will be more than three hundred new apartments between the two complexes, as well as single family homes.

"It's going to provide training opportunities for those who need it. It's going to help them get jobs so that eventually, the home-ownership units that we build, they can qualify to buy. The idea now is to move people through the system, not to let them stay here forever," says Reyna.

Magnolia gardens opened more than 50 years ago and Reyna says the goal is to make sure several generations of families don't call this kind of place home. With all of the training the housing authority will provide, people have opportunities.

"We've got a new generation coming up so , they'll have the opportunity to get GED's or take computer classes, go to Lamar, get grants. So to me, I think it's a blessing," says Bradley.

Reyna says this development will bring in thousands of people, making it a blessing for businesses too.

"So as businesses build, they'll have a built in clientele to work as well as to buy," says Reyna.

"All opportunities. It'll be up to me what I want to make out of it," says Bradley.

And hundreds will have the chance to make this new place their homes.

The first stage of the project at the old fairgrounds is scheduled to open in October of 2008.