

City of La Quinta Unveils Nation's First Affordable Housing Project to Achieve LEED Gold

The City of La Quinta announces the grand opening of Vista Dunes Courtyard Homes. Vista Dunes is the first multi-family, affordable housing project in the country on track to achieve LEED® “Gold” certification.

June 12, 2008 - [PRLog](#) -- The City of La Quinta announces the grand opening of Vista Dunes Courtyard Homes. Vista Dunes is the first multi-family, affordable housing project in the country on track to achieve LEED® “Gold” certification.*

LEED, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is an ecology-oriented building certification program run by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). LEED concentrates its efforts on improving performance across five key areas of environmental and human health: energy efficiency, indoor environmental quality, materials selection, sustainable site development, and water savings. Building LEED affordable housing directly benefits both the developer and the families that will inhabit the homes. LEED for Homes provides a tool for recognizing homes that are designed and built to be energy-and resource-efficient, durable, less costly to maintain, and healthy for their occupants.

Vista Dunes Courtyard Homes is an 80-unit complex that will house more than 300 low income residents on a 9.5 acre site located in La Quinta, California. Vista Dunes incorporates principles of environmentally friendly design, energy and water efficiency, durability, and sustainability. The homes include some of the most advanced water and energy efficiencies in home building today.

“This project is four years in the making,” said Mayor Don Adolph, City of La Quinta. “Vista Dunes provides affordable housing to low income residents, and offers them better living through all of the environmentally sensitive features. This neighborhood and these homes will be a wonderful place for families to live. Vista Dunes represents a significant positive change for residents – increasing their quality of life physically and financially.”

The City of La Quinta Redevelopment Agency embarked upon the Vista Dunes Courtyard Homes Project for the purpose of eliminating a blighted property and increasing the community’s supply of affordable housing. The \$36-million project entailed the acquisition of a dilapidated mobile home park with 92 homes, relocation of the 398 mobile home park residents, demolition and clearing the site, construction, and retention of a non-profit management company.

Vista Dunes is available to individuals and qualifying families with a salary range 30-50% of the Area Median Income for Riverside County. Rent will range from \$374 to \$775 per month, depending on the income of the family and also if it is for a 1, 2 or 3 bedroom home.

The City of La Quinta Redevelopment Agency has been actively implementing affordable housing initiatives since 1991. The City of La Quinta has taken a proactive approach towards building a greener city and is moving forward with policies and programs centered on a sustainable city. The Vista Dunes Courtyard Homes was a perfect opportunity for the City to accomplish building green affordable housing that not only benefits the environment but also the tenants that will live there.

“All the homes at Vista Dunes were designed with energy savings in mind,” said Chairman Tom Kirk, La Quinta Redevelopment Agency. “From the solar panels on the roof to the tankless water heaters, residents are going to save a significant amount of money on their monthly bills. Building these Green homes also means less maintenance and more durability over the long run. We are thrilled our efforts have led to Vista

Dunes being on track for Gold LEED Certification.”

Vista Dunes Courtyard Homes were designed with the idea of creating a sense of community for the residents. Upon entering the project, a deep setback from Miles Avenue acts as a sound and safety buffer.

Circulation through the project is achieved by an interconnected paseo/sidewalk system that promotes pedestrian-friendly interaction. Units and common spaces are oriented along the paseo system, with units clustered into neighborhoods and courts. To enhance the community spirit, the front porches and terraces of every unit overlook the courts and paseo system, allowing children and families safe passage throughout the project. Tenants enjoy amenities such as an onsite basketball court, swimming pool, community center (Commons Building) and play areas. The Commons Building has a kitchen, computer lab, and a large multi-purpose community room and is adjacent to the swimming pool.

Vista Dunes Green Features:

- Energy savings through design:
 - o Orientation of homes to minimize western exposure
 - o Landscaped trellises to shade west facing walls
 - o Thermal chimneys let in natural light and helps with air circulation and air ventilation

- Energy saving features:
 - o Photovoltaic solar panels on every unit (16, 175 watt panels per unit)
 - o Tankless water heaters
 - o Energy Star fans, roofing and windows
 - o R-19 insulation in exterior walls aids in reducing energy consumption

- Water savings
 - o Drought tolerant landscaping
 - o Efficient irrigation
 - o Dual Flush Toilets
 - o Low flow and oxygenated shower heads and faucets
 - o Water efficient front loading washing machines

- Green building and sustainability
 - o Recycling effort during construction - nearly 88% of the materials were recycled
 - o Low and No VOC (Volatile organic compounds) paints and sealers
 - o Enhanced filtration in HVAC system (heating, ventilating, and air conditioning)
 - o Durability of building materials (concrete block walls at carports, steel posts and beams in exposed elements, solid quartz counters)

Visit [http:// www.goldinthedesert.com](http://www.goldinthedesert.com) for more detailed information on Vista Dunes - the first multi-family, affordable housing project in the country on track for LEED “Gold” certification.

* Project is awaiting final certification.

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