

MEMORANDUM



The
**Long Beach
Housing
Development
Company**

DATE: March 17, 2010
TO: Board of Directors
The Long Beach Housing Development Company
FROM: Ellie Tolentino, Vice President
PREPARED BY: LaVerne Duncan, Housing Communications Officer
SUBJECT: Communications Plan Update

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file.

BACKGROUND

In 2006, The Long Beach Housing Development Company (LBHDC) authorized the development of a Communications Plan (Plan) to meet its communication needs, to capitalize on the numerous opportunities created by the active and successful work of the LBHDC, and to promote and increase awareness of the City's overall mission to provide affordable housing in Long Beach. The goal of the Plan is to communicate clearly, proactively and effectively with key Long Beach audiences through the implementation of an integrated set of communications tools and activities.

In accordance with the Plan, staff has undertaken key communications projects and activities, including the successful rebranding of the LBHDC and the creation and development of the theme "**Affordable Housing For All.**" The new brand and theme have since been applied across all advertising, marketing and community outreach materials. Following is a detailed description of the activities carried out to date.

Quarterly Housing Services/LBHDC Newsletter

- Created a new look for the quarterly LBHDC newsletter, **Solutions For Living**, to increase understanding by public and city officials of the importance and need for the projects and activities of the LBHDC. Since the first issue in Spring 2007, over 3,000 copies of the newsletter have been disseminated to residents, board members, City staff, commissioners, developers, non-profits, and housing advocates through mail, and e-mail blasts. Past and current newsletters have been posted on the LBHDC's website.

**MAKING
AFFORDABLE
HOUSING
HAPPEN**

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9

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LBHDC Website Redesign and Development

- Redesigned the LBHDC website into a dynamic source of information on projects and activities, and the critical need for housing development in Long Beach. The website is monitored daily. As of January 2010, a total of 79,900 hits have been recorded.
- Included navigation links to other housing related resources, such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and California Housing Finance Agency (CalHFA) loan programs.
- Provided e-Notify section allowing people to receive information on our housing events and activities.

Media Relations Activities

- Created the LBHDC Twitter and Facebook social media network sites as a communications channel to promote the mission and accomplishments of the LBHDC.
- Organized four affordable housing tours in 2008 and a joint LBHDC and Redevelopment Project Areas Bus Tour in 2009 for the media, advocates, board members, City Commissioners, HUD officials, developers, non-profits, businesses, and city staff to tour existing and proposed LBHDC and Redevelopment projects. Approximately 200 people participated in the tours.
- Successfully provided opportunities for print and television media to promote LBHDC events and profile residents/homeowners assisted by housing development in Long Beach.
- Regularly issued media advisories and press releases promoting affordable housing events and milestones.
- Expanded marketing and outreach efforts for all LBHDC events and initiatives to faith-based organizations, trade shows, and over 1,500 community organizations.

Speakers Bureau Involvement

- Participated in the City's Speakers Bureau as housing representative.

Program Brochure Development

- In 2008, installed bus cards with LBHDC's logo, website and phone number inside 300 Long Beach Transit buses. We also designed and installed 70" X 48" sized bus shelter posters in 18 different locations citywide for a period of eight weeks with our logo, website and phone number, and in 20 different locations citywide for a period of four weeks in 2009.

- Created a new LBHDC postcard lead piece with photography capturing families involved in and affected by affordable housing - showing success stories.
- Created and installed new signage on LBHDC predevelopment properties.
- Currently developing brochure highlighting LBHDC programs and services.

Public Outreach and Education Activities

- Organized a successful 2nd annual Affordable Housing Week that featured an affordable housing tour, a condo opportunity drawing that drew print and television coverage from the local and mainstream media, an affordable housing forum with a panel and an interactive website display, a Grand Opening Ceremony at Puerto Del Sol, and two open houses at Neo Zoe and Olive Villas. All these activities garnered increased media coverage for LBHDC activities.
- Organized a successful 3rd Annual Affordable Housing Week that featured the groundbreaking of the Long Beach and Burnett Apartments, and a *Housing Help Fair*. As the signature event of Affordable Housing Week, *Housing Help Fair* was a free, comprehensive informational event in which homeowners were invited to learn more about the foreclosure process, fraud prevention, and home preservation. Various State agencies were on hand to disseminate information and offer on-site assistance to attendees. These agencies included the Department of Consumer Affairs, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), HUD, and the Los Angeles Neighborhood Housing Services (LANHS) - a HUD-approved housing counseling agency.
- Sponsored and planned the first annual Homeownership Preservation Fair in September 2008 in which we gathered financial counselors to educate, assist, and promote homeownership to residents in an effort to avoid or to deal with the foreclosure process. A total of 50 participants attended the fair.
- In 2009, hosted a series of *Foreclosure Counseling Workshops* in each Council District. These workshops focused on foreclosure prevention, and addressed the foreclosure process, foreclosure loan scams, mortgage refinancing, and loan modification programs. LANHS facilitated the workshops.
- In 2009, organized and hosted a highly successful *Foreclosure Counseling Fair* where homeowners were invited to learn about foreclosure prevention and homeownership preservation. The LBHDC, City of Long Beach, LANHS, and LA County NeighborWorks Center for Foreclosure Solutions jointly sponsored the event. Lenders on hand to assist homeowners with their specific mortgage issues included Chase, Wells Fargo, Bank of America, Citigroup, GMAC, Freddie Mac and IndyMac. With over 1,750 in attendance, lenders were able to assist 768 households with their mortgages.
- Developed an LBHDC / RDA sponsored monthly 30-minute television show, *Inside Long Beach*, which features community residents directly involved in our

developments, explores projects and developments first-hand, and experiences the positive changes and improvements housing and redevelopment are making happen throughout Long Beach.

- In 2008, co-organized a widely attended *Inside Long Beach* TV show premiere at the newly opened and rehabilitated Art Theater.
- Hosted two focus group meetings to obtain comments and input about how to improve the *Inside Long Beach* TV show. The first focus group, with 10 people in attendance, was with constituents, business people, and activists. The second focus group, with 26 participants, was held with the Wrigley Area Neighborhood Association (WANA).
- Organized groundbreaking and/or grand opening ceremonies to promote the LBHDC's commitment to removing blight and building affordable housing, including Decro properties, Puerto Del Sol, Pacific City Lights, Olive Villas and Family Commons.
- Organized four demolition ceremonies for properties located at 2355 Long Beach Blvd., 1940 Long Beach Blvd., 116 & 124 W. 14th St., and the Azteca Bar at 1900 Long Beach Blvd. to promote the LBHDC's commitment to cleaning up blight and building affordable housing.
- In 2009, launched the *Season Two Premier of Inside Long Beach*, as part of the Bixby Knolls Improvement Association's First Friday series, reaching well over 500 Long Beach residents.
- Organized and hosted a Community Preview showcasing the future plans of the Palace Hotel as home for 13 young individuals transitioning out of the foster care system. The event was held in partnership with Councilmember Patrick O'Donnell, 4th District, LINC Housing and United Friends of the Children. The public was invited to view plans/renderings, and listen to an overview of the development as well as the social services programs to be provided. The event was very well attended and garnered publicity in local and regional publications/media.
- Organized the Youth Beautification Project 2009, a collaborative effort between the Housing Services and Workforce Development Bureaus, allowing youth in affordable housing developments to experience community building, while developing pride in their community. Over 100 youth started with cleanups within their own neighborhoods, attended an environmental workshop and then came together as a team to plant trees along the Anaheim Business Corridor.
- Awards:
 - *Inside Long Beach* won the 2009 National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors Star Award for Excellence in Video Programming.

- Family Commons (Villages at Cabrillo) was awarded the 2009 Affordable Housing Project of the Year, by the Apartment Association California, Southern Cities.
- Puerto del Sol (Jamboree Housing) was among five finalists in National Multifamily Housing Industry Award competition.

Annual Publicity Item

- Annual Affordable Housing Week
- Annual Report detailing accomplishments under development

Staff is proactively working on events to promote the accomplishments and increase awareness of the LBHDC and will continue to implement the Communications Plan.

ET:LD

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