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Iberville Demolition Marks Milestone For Choice Neighborhoods Initiative

Last standing public housing development poised for full transformation

New Orleans, LA (September 9, 2013) – Tomorrow, September 10, The Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) and The City of New Orleans will begin the demolition of 59 of the 75 buildings on the site of the Iberville Housing Development to launch the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Choice Neighborhoods Initiative (CNI). The selective deconstruction and salvaging of historical elements including roof tiles and iron work began last month.

In 2011, HANO and the City of New Orleans were awarded \$30.5 million from HUD to transform the Iberville development and to revitalize the historic Tremé neighborhood as a part of CNI. New Orleans was one of five cities to receive an Implementation Grant in its inaugural round.

“The revitalization of the Iberville housing site and the implementation of HUD’s \$30.5 million Choice Neighborhoods Initiative will reenergize Iberville and Tremé,” said Mayor Mitchell J. Landrieu. “The construction of new, low, moderate and market rate housing complete with retail, school, and public space improvements will strengthen these important neighborhoods that are at the heart of our city. By connecting residents with wrap around services like high quality resources, programs, and training in workforce development, education, health, and transit, New Orleans will stand as a national model for redeveloping urban neighborhoods. This project will create better housing, safer streets, and economic development.”

The New Orleans CNI Transformation Plan covers the one-for-one replacement of all 821 dwelling units at Iberville both on-site and in the surrounding CNI neighborhood, and the revitalization of more than 300 blocks within the boundaries of Rampart Street, Tulane Avenue,

Broad Street, and St. Bernard Avenue. The full plan is estimated to cost approximately \$600 million.

Phase I and II of the onsite redevelopment plan include 227 mixed-income rental units; 81 public housing, 49 workforce and 97 market rate. At the completion of the full project, the new community will house 880 units on-site; 304 public housing, 261 workforce, and 315 market rate homes. The plan also includes construction that began in November 2012 at the former Texaco Building located at 1501 Canal Street, which will provide 112 new housing units for elderly Iberville residents.

“Iberville is a very significant link in a much bigger picture of the revitalization of downtown New Orleans, which can be stimulated by the investment of transforming a public housing development into a mixed-income community,” said Administrative Receiver David Gilmore. “And we are excited about expanding the scope of public housing redevelopment beyond the bricks of a building, while integrating revived infrastructure, linking educational and workforce opportunities, and making social services available to the entire community.”

The Iberville Working Team (IWT), comprised of residents, HANO and City staff, developers HRI Properties and McCormack Baron Salazar, Urban Strategies, Inc. and community engagement consultants GCR and The Black Men of Labor Inc. was organized to turn Iberville into a mixed-income, mixed-use community and to revitalize the surrounding CNI neighborhood by focusing on three main components: housing, people, and neighborhood.

For more than a year, the IWT had been engaged in the environmental review process, including the Section 106 historic review process as required by the National Historic Preservation Act to mitigate any impact that the redevelopment of the community might have on any on or off-site historical elements. A Programmatic Agreement with Federal, State and local preservationists was executed earlier this year and includes plans to preserve and renovate up to 16 historic buildings currently on site, conduct extensive archaeological studies and return to green space areas where an extension of the St. Louis cemeteries was discovered. During demolition and reconstruction, vibration from construction activities will be monitored to ensure that no damage occurs to the historical structures nearby.

“The number of Iberville buildings slated for historic preservation on one site is unprecedented in the redevelopment of public housing in New Orleans,” said Administrative Receiver Gilmore. “In fact, it is equal to the number of original buildings preserved in the redevelopment of the “Big Four” and St. Thomas developments combined.”

Recently HANO launched the Iberville Employment Training Program, hiring 30 at-risk-youth and young adults to assist in pre-demolition activities and to receive hands on deconstruction training. The program also encourages job readiness and economic self-sufficiency.

Councilmember Gisleson Palmer stated, "This demolition brings us one step closer to the complete redevelopment of Iberville. I commend HANO for creating a plan that incorporates the area's history and historic structures into the final design. The demolition is also an opportunity for the city to create jobs, support local small businesses and DBE's, and provide work experience and workforce skills for our citizens. The redevelopment will incorporate a construction training program for residents, which is essential, as cultivating our own citizens with job development skills is key to the viability of our city long-term."

To date, over 250 families have been relocated off-site, with the remaining 100 families to be relocated by January 2014. All original Iberville families will continue to receive day-to-day case management and supportive services such as job training and placement opportunities, enrichment activities for children and youth, adult education, physical and mental health services, and other critical programs.

Iberville, the City's last standing conventional public housing development, was originally constructed in 1941. The demolition of Phase I and Phase II is estimated to be completed by October with the start of construction to immediately follow.

For more information, visit www.cnineworleans.org.

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