Low-income Sunny Meadows renovation moves forward

By TODD GULLD

IN WATSONVILLE — The roofs were red, the front doors were a golden brown and the appliances were pristine.

That’s what the residents of Sunny Meadows apartment found when they returned to their residences Thursday after a six-month renovation project displaced them.

The four-stage project to rebuild the 200 units at Sunny Meadows was being conducted by nonprofit Madison Housing, which purchased the property in 2010.

The original owner, Great Valley Apartments, was a nonprofit group made up of United Presbyterian and Unitarian Universalist churches. When the time came to sell, they wanted the complex to go to an owner that wanted to keep the units affordable for low-income people.

Today, the units are occupied by individuals and families with income no greater than 60 percent of the area median income.

Rents range from $619 for the smallest studio apartment to $1,820 for the most expensive four-bedroom apartment.

The remaining three phases are expected to wrap up in December. Along with the $6.5 million purchase of the complex, the entire project will cost about $22 million.

The city of Watsonville Redevelopment Authority approved a loan to finance the rehabilitation, contributing a total of $3.25 million.

“We are proud to play a role in updating and preserving the affordability of these homes for 200 families in Watsonville,” Watsonville Mayor Ricardo Mon- totes. “Sunny Meadows is one of the largest apartment communities in Watsonville.”

See HOUSING, page A8

Teresa Rodriguez admires her newly refurbished apartment on Friday at Sunny Meadows affordable housing community. "Sunny Meadow is one of the largest apartment communities in Watsonville,“ Mayor Ricardo Montes said.

‘I want to teach freshmen that high school is not as bad as the media makes it out to be.’ — Ricardo Abuenas, 16, member of the Link Crew

Sandra Nichols seeks seat on County Board of Education

By TODD GULLD OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

WATSONVILLE — Sandra Nichols, who has served on the Pajaro Valley United School District Board of Trustees for 12 years, announced Thursday that she plans to run for a seat on the Santa Cruz County Board of Education in the November election.

The announcement came with her resignation from the PVUSD board of trustees, which was confirmed Wednesday when she registered to vote at her new address in Santa Cruz.

“No matter where I live I would want to be on the school board,” Nichols explained. “I enjoy the opportunity to work for what I believe to be a great future for California.”

Nichols and her husband Peter Nichols purchased a new home in Santa Cruz last year where they intend to retire. They initially planned a yearlong move with Peter occupying the Santa Cruz residence while Sandra maintained the Lakeview residence to complete her third school board term in Watsonville.

But when SCOR trustee Anna Levine announced she was not working another term, Nichols said he was not planning to change.

See NICHOLS, page B1

Man, 28, killed in Soquel; no suspects identified yet

By TODD GULLD

IN WATSONVILLE — Sgt. Steve Carney said emer -

Sunny Meadows is one of the largest apartment communities in Watsonville, Mayor Ricardo Montes said.

Seeing each other for the first time after a six-month renovation project has displaced their residents, Sunny Meadows residents Alejandra Avina (left) and Lupe Alejandia (right) share a hug on Friday. Sunny Meadows is one of the largest apartment communities in Watsonville, Mayor Ricardo Montes said.

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Sunny Meadows residents Alejandra Avina (left) and Lupe Alejandia (right) share a hug on Friday.
ties in the county of Santa Cruz and provides much-needed affordable housing for our residents, who said they had been patient during the construction. “It was coming to the end of its useful life,” she said. “It needs a renovation so it can continue to be useful for the next 15 years.” Lindenthal tipped her hat to the residents, who she said have been patient during the construction.

“Most of them have chosen to remain at Sunny Meadows during the renovations in large part due to the wonderful sense of community that they’ve established here with their neighbors,” she said. “Then, when complete, they will continue to pay very affordable rents for life-new apartments with enhanced amenities and enjoy an even stronger sense of community. The renovation includes all mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems, as well as new windows and flooring. Kitchens will receive new cabinets, countertops, appliances, and lighting. In addition, doors will be replaced and solar panels will be installed.

Teresa Rodrigues, who has lived in a two-bedroom apartment for eight years, said the cabinets were old, the oven door allowed light to seep in from outside and the fixtures were unsafe. “I was afraid to use them because they would spark when I turned them on,” she said. “Now, everything in her apartment is new, she said. “I didn’t expect these changes.”

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