

MERRITT

messenger

Klimm Apartments: *An Energy Efficient Oasis*

W

hen you think of San Francisco's

Tenderloin neighborhood, one of the last things that comes to mind is safe, clean, affordable and energy-efficient housing. That is unless you're familiar with the work of the Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation (TNDC). The agency provides homes for 2,400 extremely low income people—seniors, children, people with disabilities, low income wage earners, people with HIV/AIDS and immigrants—by creating housing they can afford. Not only does TNDC rehabilitate run-down residential hotels and rental buildings, but in the case of the 94-year-old Klimm Apartments, does it in a way that promotes energy efficiency and lower operating costs.

According to Jerry Jai, the Klimm's Project Manager, "We wanted to make sure that we made the Klimm an energy efficient 'green' building and one that provides indoor air

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Tenderloin After School Program

It is estimated that about 3,500 children are growing up in San Francisco's Tenderloin neighborhood. Among the various neighborhoods in San Francisco, the Tenderloin has one of the highest percentages of youth in low income families. While the number of families living in the Tenderloin has increased 200 percent since 1980, facilities serving children have not kept pace with this growth.

TNDC's After School Program (TASP) provides educational, cultural and recreational activities to children and youth from the ages of five through 17. TASP was started with the help of parents in one of TNDC's buildings in August 1993. It now serves an average of 50-55 kids daily and reaches more than 200 of them over the course of a year. It provides a safe place for neighborhood kids to do homework, get

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Katrina's Aftermath: Everyone Can Help

A First-Hand Report from Merritt's Maria Duarte

As soon as Maria Duarte arrived at Habitat for Humanity's Camp Hope in St. Bernard's Parish they put her to work. Once she handed over the requisite \$100 contribution, registered and received her ID tag, Duarte was telephoning residents to notify them about a toy giveaway and Christmas Party that was going to be held on December 17, 2006 at the Camp. "My first impression of Camp Hope was that it looked like a MASH (Mobile Army Surgical Hospital) unit with all of its frenzied activity. It's actually a school damaged by the hurricane that has been converted to provide accommodations to house volunteers." In addition to her financial contribution Duarte brought a sleeping bag, work clothes and toiletries. "They provided us with three meals a day. Cots were set up in the classrooms for us to sleep on. The showers were in the school's gym and the bathrooms

DEBRIS CONTINUES TO DEFINE MUCH OF THE LANDSCAPE OF NEW ORLEANS 9TH WARD AND ST. BERNARD'S PARISH.



were down the hall. There was no heat except in the common areas."

Duarte was assigned to help with Habitat's "Musicians' Village." This village was conceived by Branford Marsalis and Harry Connick Jr. and consists of homes constructed by Habitat for Humanity in partnership with displaced New Orleans musicians and other qualifying low income homeowner families. The centerpiece will be the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music, a performance, instruction and recording complex named for the modern jazz pioneer and native New Orleanian. The Center will be surrounded by 82 single-family homes, three of which are duplexes designed to serve seniors who have assisted living needs. "Everyone had seen the suffering and devastation that had occurred throughout the Gulf region and I knew that Habitat for Humanity goes into places like that to help them rebuild." Because of her background as a building contractor Duarte felt she had the skills that could be utilized in the reconstruction effort. "Soon after the hurricane I emailed Habitat to volunteer. I knew I was going to be attending a Consortium for Housing and Asset Management conference in New Orleans in December 2006 and I was wondering if it would be o.k. to volunteer the week following it. They got right back to me and told me they'd love to have me volunteer

and that they will be needing help for years to come."

Duarte stresses that you don't have to be a contractor to volunteer. "The logistics of running Camp Hope are amazing. They need people to register volunteers, serve meals, clean and do community outreach. It's not just pounding nails and wielding a paintbrush. They have all types of jobs for volunteers. There is something for everyone and everyone is needed."

Duarte's day started early. Volunteers needed to arrive at the worksite by 7:30 A.M. and the location was a half hour drive from Camp Hope. "Each day the job supervisors—usually AmeriCorps volunteers—would ask how many people were willing to do a specific task. I chose to do window trim and siding and there were about eight people working on that. Other volunteers sanded decks, built platforms for the air conditioning units, constructed stairs and worked on roofing. There were about 50 volunteers at my job site." After a break for lunch, the crew worked until 2:30 or 3:00 in the afternoon says Duarte.

Two of Duarte's coworkers were Habitat participants, people who lost their homes, but qualified for new homes by donating sweat equity. Audrey Wilson and Eugene Brooks were working off some of the 350 hours they are required to contribute in order to qualify for their own homes. As Habitat participants they are not required to make a down payment, but they learn construction skills needed to maintain their home in the future. Wilson and Brooks will pay back the cost of their homes, which is typically \$75,000, through a 20-year interest free mortgage. This mortgage is often less than participants had previously paid for rent.

Duarte was impressed with the dedication of other volunteers she met at Camp Hope. "There was a career military woman serving in Baghdad who spent her two week leave volunteering at Camp Hope. Another group came in a Volkswagen bus all the way from Canada to spend a couple of weeks volunteering for Habitat."

MARIA DUARTE, SEATED ON RIGHT END OF THE FIRST STEP, AND HER CO-WORKERS POSE IN FRONT OF ONE THE HOMES BEING BUILT AT THE MUSICIAN'S VILLAGE. THE HOUSE IS 950 SQUARE FEET AND HAS THREE BEDROOMS AND ONE BATH.



AUDREY WILSON AND EUGENE BROOKS ARE PARTICIPANTS IN HABITAT FOR HUMANITY'S SWEAT EQUITY PROGRAM. THEY MUST CONTRIBUTE 350 HOURS OF SERVICE INCLUDING 100 HOURS OF WORK ON THEIR OWN HOMES.

In the evenings movies were shown at the Camp or you could relax at the Voodoo Lounge where they had books, computers and games says Duarte. Some volunteers ventured into New Orleans for some nightlife, but the Camp curfew was 10:00 P.M. "You had to put up with a few snorers, and one woman was asked to leave because she broke Camp rules, but overall it was a terrific experience."

Duarte says she would like to return to Camp Hope. "They are going to need help there for many years to come. I look at it as a way of 'paying it forward.' You never know when we are going to need help after a disaster."

Duarte urges Messenger readers to do what they can to help. "Volunteer or make financial contribution to the New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity." To donate on-line or to volunteer, go to www.habitat-nola.org and click on "Musician's Village." You can also send a check to NOAHH, P.O. Box 1502, New Orleans, LA 70175.

President's Message

by Bernard T. Deasy

NIMBY, the acronym for "Not In My Back Yard" has been an issue in many communities for several years. In response, the quality of the affordable housing product and the competence of affordable housing management have scrupulously and effectively countered each and every argument put forth by the NIMBY advocates. Today, in almost every community in Northern California, NIMBY forces have failed to deter or delay much needed affordable housing developments. But, there are always a few stragglers who don't get it. An article in the January 25, 2007 issue of the San Francisco Chronicle described just such a situation.

Habitat for Humanity has proposed the construction of four – yes, just four – affordable housing units in their highly successful sweat equity home ownership program. Habitat for Humanity had negotiated with a local developer who was planning to build several luxury homes on a 16.5 acre site in unincorporated Marin County just west of the Tiburon city limit and needed to satisfy the County's affordable housing requirements. The agreement between Habitat for Humanity and Pan Pacific Ocean, Inc., the developer, would provide a site for the construction of two duplex units each comprising two 1,400 square foot residences. The units would be available to families earning less than \$56,000 per year. The site is less than a block from Tiburon Blvd., a very busy thoroughfare and within earshot of Highway 101.

Judging from the reaction of some of the local residents, one could infer that the County was planning a west coast version of Chicago's Cabrini Green project on this tiny site. According to the Chronicle article, opponents of the Habitat proposal cited the potential loss of property values, increased traffic and general inappropriateness of the plan as their principal objections. One local citizen even objected to the project because he claimed that the County had no right to choose his neighbors. As far as I know, the County would not be involved in the selection of the sweat equity participants. With regard to the property value argument, there is almost no data anywhere that would support the contention that property values fall when quality affordable housing is added to a community. But to make this generally specious argument in southern Marin County, where tiny, fixer uppers sell for over \$1 million is really pushing the envelope. In fact, the need for affordable housing in southern Marin County is



extreme, even though several very successful developments have been built in the community. And the increased traffic argument? PLEASE. We are talking about four units – FOUR UNITS – each with one garage space. I can't wait to see the traffic expert who will postulate on negative impact on local traffic caused by four houses! Such an analysis could turn into the poster child for the notion of "lies, damn lies and statistics." And this in a community where it is not unusual for a household to own four to five or more vehicles.

Perhaps the most telling comments were vague and general, but really showed the true colors of the typical NIMBY advocate. Several residents were quoted as saying that the affordable units would not be "appropriate" for the neighborhood and would not fit in. They must have been referring to the new residents because they could not have meant the current housing stock. While prices in the area today are well over \$1 million, the houses themselves are hardly mansions, but rather 1960's vintage California ranch homes in the range of 1,400 to 2,000 square feet and possess a footprint very similar to the proposed affordable units. Remember, this site is just behind a bank and a gas station, very close to the 101 freeway and hardly in the Tiburon high rent district! These comments are nothing short of a blatant expression of prejudice against moderate income families and constitute an embarrassment to most of the residents of Marin County and the greater Bay Area.

Over the years, the affordable housing industry has made great strides in ensuring that affordable developments do fit in, are well designed and well managed and result in a demonstrative benefit to their immediate surroundings and to their communities. These efforts have been not only successful, but have turned the NIMBY tide in many communities and increased the grassroots support for more quality affordable housing. If you need a

proof of these results, one needs look no further than the results of the vote on Proposition 1-C, the Housing and Emergency Shelter Trust Fund Act of 2006, in the last election. But, as the Chronicle article demonstrated, our work is not done and there are NIMBY battles yet to be waged. However, judging from these misguided souls in southern Marin County, the NIMBY folks are clearly grabbing at straws!

Point Reyes Family Homes Celebrates Grand Opening

Point Reyes Family Homes celebrated its Grand Opening on June 30, 2006 after a nine-year development process. The project consists of 26 affordable rental units in Point Reyes Station in Marin County. The apartments are available to households at or below 60 percent of the area median income. Rents range from \$368 to \$1400 month. Some of the units have been earmarked for farm workers. The Point Reyes Family Homes apartments provide a quiet, relaxed living with panoramic views of the surrounding fields and hills. Point Reyes Family Homes received equity funding from Merritt's Partnership Fund IX.

PICTURED BELOW: BARNEY DEASY ADDRESSES THE CROWD AT POINT REYES FAMILY HOMES GRAND OPENING AS MARY MURTAGH, EAH'S PRESIDENT LOOKS ON.



MERRITT MESSENGER

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Board MEMBER Profile

Jon Gresley's first international experience was spending a couple of weeks in Mexico when he was 14-years-old. "This gave me a desire to see other parts of the world," he says. After he received a bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts from DePauw University in Indiana, he had to decide what he wanted to do next. "I was a child of the 60s so my choices were graduate school, Viet Nam or the Peace Corps. I didn't know what I wanted to study in graduate school, so I decided to join the Peace Corps and I was sent to the Philippines."

Gresley was supposed to be an education volunteer but he ended up helping a mental health consultant start up an unlocked residential treatment center for juvenile delinquents. "I helped secure the money to get the facility started," says Gresley, a role he would repeat later in life through his association with the Rotary Club. "I resigned my assignment a month early and trained new Peace Corps volunteers for their service in the Philippines."

When he returned to the United States Gresley wanted to become involved in urban issues. "In 1971, I was encouraged by people to enter the HUD Urban Intern Program and I gravitated to public housing." He would go on to working as Public Housing Specialist in HUD's Housing Management Office and eventually help establish a HUD office to deal specifically with American Indian tribes. "At that time there was no office to interface with tribal housing authorities or tribal consortiums; they simply dealt with their regional HUD office. The tribes felt that their concerns, their business, fell through the cracks. HUD was going through a national reorganization at the time and it was decided to set up two HUD offices to handle American Indian tribes, one in San Francisco and one in Denver," he explains. Gresley was tapped to run the Housing Management Division of the San Francisco office. "I was HUD's Indian Program Director of Housing Management working with 42 Indian housing authorities in Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada and California."

In 1978, Gresley joined the Oakland Housing Authority as Director of Housing Management, where he was responsible for directing property management of 3100 units of housing. In 1980, he was promoted to Deputy Executive Director. "I was responsible for four public housing



JON GRESLEY

departments—Management, Modernization, Maintenance and Community Services and the Section 8 Leased Housing Department." In 1999, Gresley became the Authority's Executive Director, succeeding Harold Davis, a former Merritt board member. According to Gresley, the Authority provides 3,308 public housing units on 268 sites, 1,386 units at large developments, 1,615 units at scattered sites, and 307 units in mixed-finance partnerships. "We also have one of the largest Section 8 Leased Housing Programs in the country with 11,142 Section 8 Leased Housing Units. In 2004, we took over HUD's program administration of most its Section 8 project-based developments in Northern California. This program, the California Affordable Housing Initiative, has helped us diversify our revenue sources and we are very pleased with its operation."

Pursuing his interest in international development, Gresley has visited Central America every January for the past six years. "I attend a conference where Central American Rotary Club members seeking financial sponsorship of community development projects make presentations. I work with the Rotary Club to secure funds for some of these projects," he explains. One of those projects was to build a paved playground at an elementary school that didn't have any place for team sports. Another project was to access and improve logistics and fund a motorbike for a health care worker to identify indigenous people in need of surgery in remote areas of Guatemala. "Surgeons perform free operations on people with cleft palates, fused fingers and burn victims. I'm also working on two water distribution projects in Eastern El Salvador and I am raising funds from Rotary chapters in Oakland, Washington State, Ontario, Canada, and North Carolina for these projects."

In addition to serving on Merritt's board of

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Board Chair's Report

by John Sheldon

Bifurcate is an odd sounding

word. According to the dictionary it means to "divide into two branches." But what does this word mean when it comes to affordable housing?

We all know about the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits program and how those credits are "syndicated" or sold to investors to provide equity capital for affordable housing projects. California created a State Low Income Housing Tax Credit program in 1987 to augment the federal program. This state credit is only available to projects that receive federal tax credits and as a rule state and federal credits are sold as package. However, some of the largest affordable housing investors—notably Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac—cannot use California state credits, so they are not inclined to invest in federal/state tax credit packages unless the state credits could be sold to other investors to make these deals viable.

Back in 2000, a bill was introduced into the California Legislature (A.B. 1903) that would allow State Low Income Housing Tax Credits to be sold, transferred, or assigned separately from the federal credit. This would "bifurcate" them, improving their marketability, increase their value and allow more capital to be raised from each tax credit issued. In essence out-of-state investors could purchase the federal credits and California investors could purchase both federal and state tax credits. A.B. 1903 passed the legislature, but it was vetoed by then Governor Gray Davis. The Governor argued that allowing the credit to be separated from the economic interest each partner would have in the profits and losses of the project could lead to allocations for tax shelter purposes. While this does point to a potential abuse of the credit, the benefits of separating the credits far outweigh this possible problem.

Other states have bifurcated their tax credits and there is no reason that new legislation couldn't address the perceived shortcomings of A.B. 1903. North Carolina separated their state and federal credits with a proviso that investors who are allocated only state credits will be required to maintain ownership in the pass-through entity for at least five years—until the state credits are fully claimed. Certainly the California Legislature can craft a comparable solution so state tax credits can be better utilized.

How would the bifurcation of tax credits help Merritt? First, we would not be excluded from bidding on deals that have state credits since our largest investors can't use them. Second, the maximum equity investment could be generated for these deals that include both federal and state tax credits. This would mean more capital going to projects, possibly creating more units or targeting them to the lowest income populations in the state. Let's do what we can to bring this issue back to the attention of our legislative representatives and Governor Schwarzenegger.



Klimm Apartments: *An Energy Efficient Oasis*

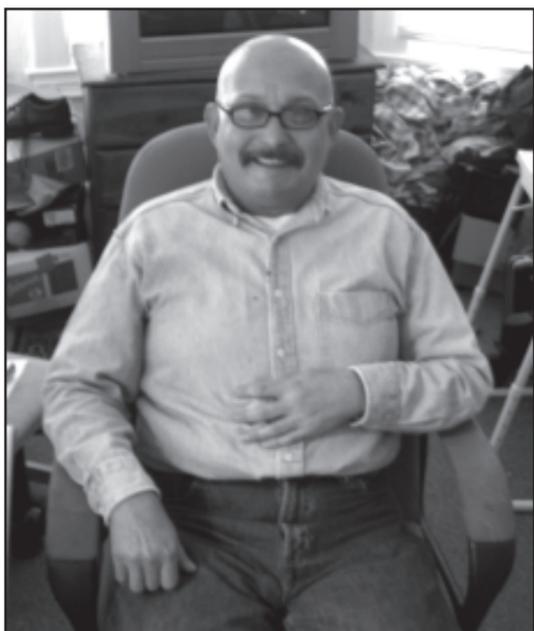
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quality for our residents,” he says. “We installed a 97-percent efficient condensing boiler, an Energy Star-rated roof, and energy efficient lighting and windows.” Electric room heaters were replaced with more efficient gas heaters that are also less costly for residents to operate. On the interior nontoxic paint and flooring were used to reduce “off gassing” from these surfaces and materials. “We are conserving resources, improving the environment for residents, and lowering their utility costs,” Jai explains.

“You’d never guess that the Klimm is in the Tenderloin,” according to Johannes Stahl, a resident of the Klimm since August 2006. “It’s clean, its quiet, and I feel safe here. All the appliances are new and Energy Star-rated. My apartment is also ADA-compliant so I have a large bathroom which helps with my mobility problems.” Stahl also likes the fact he has a “real kitchen,” something that was absent in the mother-in-law unit he lived in for one-and-a-half years in the Sunnyside neighborhood of San Francisco. He is also free of the feral cats that frequented the garage next to his unit and contributed to his health problems. “I like the convenience of the Klimm’s location,” he says. “It’s close to the City College downtown campus where I volunteer tutoring students in English as a Second Language. I’ve had a housing subsidy for the past nine years which covers \$400 off the cost of my rent. Even so, it’s hard to find a place in San Francisco that was in my price range, so I feel lucky a friend of mine moved here and told me about it. I love it.”

The rehabilitation of the Klimm took a year and it included the installation of fire alarms, sprinkler systems, and accessibility upgrades. According to Jai “We replaced the building’s elevator and much of the building’s plumbing and electrical wiring. The frame of the building

JOHANNES STAHL, PICTURED BELOW, LIKES THE KLIMM APARTMENTS’ LOCATION. IT PROVIDES EASY ACCESS TO CITY COLLEGE’S DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO CAMPUS WHERE HE TUTORS ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE.



was braced at the front, and steel reinforcement was installed in the basement through the first floor to stabilize it in the event of an earthquake. Concrete was added to the foundation in the basement to provide additional stability.” Jai notes that kitchen cabinets, counters and sinks were replaced in each unit and upgrades were made to the community room, laundry room and manager’s office. Security improvements were made to the lobby entrance and community room, laundry room and manager’s office.

Although the rehabilitation of an old building is always a difficult task, the process of relocating existing residents during the process was the project’s biggest challenge. According to Jai, “Half of the units in the building were cleared at a time for rehabilitation. It is always difficult when you displace 20 families. Some tenants had to be temporarily moved out prior to the work and others were temporarily relocated to other comparable properties halfway through the project. Most of those were owned by TNDC.” Tenants were relocated for a period between seven to 16 months so these costs were significant.

As with all TNDC projects Klimm Apartment residents have access to staff social workers to help them stabilize their lives, find resources for special medical, mental health or substance abuse issues, and to assist in developing a sense of community in the building. The children of residents can also participate in TNDC’s After School Program which provides educational, recreational and cultural activities. (See side article on TASP on page 1).

Most TNDC residents have extremely low incomes. The Klimm provides 40 studio apartments and two one-bedroom units. Rents for the studios range from \$594 - \$850 per month; the one-bedrooms rent for \$858 per month. A comparable market rate for a studio is \$1,000 and the rent for a one-bedroom market rate unit is \$1,345 per month. The Klimm is clearly providing an oasis of affordability to residents in San Francisco’s expensive rental housing market.

Because of the efficiency of the financing package TNDC put together to rehabilitate the Klimm, the project has no permanent debt. The City of San Francisco provided \$2.4 million in soft loans. Bank of America provided the construction financing and an Affordable Housing Program loan. Silicon Valley Bank provided a bridge loan, and Merritt’s Fund IX Partnership provided an equity investment of \$5 million. Fund IX investors are Bank of America, Bank of the West, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, Union Bank of California, Washington Mutual and Wells Fargo Bank.

A Grand Reopening will be held at the Klimm Apartments in Spring 2007. For more information on the Klimm Apartments contact Jerry Jai at (415) 776-2151 or e-mail him at jjai@tndc.org.



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tutoring, use computers, play games, dance, make art, and celebrate cultural holidays. Other activities include soccer, basketball, volleyball, and field trips to beaches, museums, the Monterey Bay Aquarium and cultural institutions. TASP also provides one-on-one college guidance support to its interested high school participants, which includes an annual College Tour to a different U.S. city every year.

According to Laura Choe, TASP Program Manager, “Given the diverse ethnic background of our kids we place an emphasis on cultural diversity in our programs. We team with Boedekker Park, Tenderloin Children’s Playground, and the Central YMCA to host a mini-African American Festival, and Cinco de Mayo and Halloween celebrations,” she says. “Another service we provide is referrals for youth employment and assistance in the job search and interview process.”

TASP is located at 225 Eddy Street and it is open from noon to 6:00 P.M. Monday to Friday, and on Saturdays from 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. For more information contact Laura Choe at 415-776-8407 or email info@tndc.org.



TENDERLOIN AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM KIDS PARTICIPATE IN A HALLOWEEN OUTING TO BARCLAYS GLOBAL INVESTORS’ OFFICE WHERE EMPLOYEES HAD DECORATED THEIR DESKS AND HANDED OUT CANDY TO THE TRICK-OR-TREATERS.

Board MEMBER Profile

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directors, Gresley sits on the boards of Oakland Housing Initiatives, Inc., Keller Housing Initiatives, Inc., Chestnut Linden LLC, Community Housing Development Corporation of North Richmond and the Jack London Aquatic Center. He also serves as treasurer of the board of directors at the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities (CLPHA). "We are proud to have Jon join Merritt's board," says Barney Deasy, Merritt's President. "We look forward to his leadership and expertise on public housing issues and how they relate to the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program."

Gresley has earned a Masters of Business Administration degree from St. Mary's College. He lives in El Sobrante with his wife, Gudrun Dybdal, who works in education program development at Doctors Hospital in San Pablo. Gresley and Dybdal have four grown children.

Merritt's 10th Annual Partnership Luncheon

Over 150 people attended Merritt Community Capital Corporation's 10th Annual Partnership Luncheon held November 2, 2006 at the Lake Merritt Hotel in Oakland. This event is held to say thank you to all of Merritt's business partners and to recognize three outstanding leaders in the affordable housing industry.



PICTURED ABOVE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: PHIL CLARK, EPISCOPAL COMMUNITY SERVICES ACCEPTING THE AWARD FOR SPONSOR OF THE YEAR; DIANNE SPAULDING, NONPROFIT HOUSING ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA, ACCEPTING THE AWARD FOR 2006 PIONEER OF THE YEAR; BARNEY DEASY, AND MARY MURTAGH OF EAH, ACCEPTING THE PROJECT OF THE YEAR AWARD FOR POINT REYES FAMILY HOMES.

MERRITT BOARD MEMBERS FROM LEFT TO RIGHT ARE: RICK YEE, BANK OF THE WEST; JOHN CHAN, CALIFORNIA BANK & TRUST; ROY SCHWEYER, RETIRED, CITY OF OAKLAND; MERRITT'S PRESIDENT BARNEY DEASY; AND CHRIS LONG, BANK OF AMERICA.



PICTURED BELOW ARE WILLIAM LOFTON, MERRITT'S BOARD VICE CHAIRPERSON OF LOFTON & JENNINGS LLP, AND DIANNE SPAULDING, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NONPROFIT HOUSING ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA.



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