



**For Immediate Release:  
September 27, 2012**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



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## **CEDC TO CELEBRATE GRAND OPENING OF VALLE NARANJAL COMMUNITY IN PIRU ON SATURDAY**

### ***66 Farmworker Families Now Have a Safe, Decent Place to Call Home***

Ventura, CA –The Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation (CEDC) will celebrate the grand opening of its newest development, Valle Naranjal, on Saturday, September 29, in Piru. Located at 4268 Center Street, the celebration will take place from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tours of homes will be included in the celebration activities.

Valle Naranjal is a community of 66 affordable rental homes for farmworker families whose incomes are at or below 45 percent of the area median income as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This is significant because homes that farmworkers can afford are scarce. The project is located in the rural Santa Clara Valley of Ventura County and is home to many farmworker families living in less-than-desirable conditions. The development assists the County of Ventura in meeting its requirements for very low-income housing mandated by the State of California.

Homes at the community range in size from two to four bedrooms. Rent is approximately \$1,000 a month for a four-bedroom home. Families pay 30 percent of their income and the U.S. Department of Agriculture assistance fund provides the balance of the rental cost. Rentals are only available to families headed by farmworkers who are U.S. citizens or permanent legal residents. The community is managed on site by CEDC's expert property management team.

According to the Ventura County Ag Futures Alliance's recent report, "Estimates of farmworkers' salaries in Ventura County range between \$19,000 and \$36,000 a year. There are currently fewer than 1,000 units dedicated to farmworker housing in Ventura County. Added to other available low-income housing in the area, the housing stock does not begin to close the gap between the need and the supply. Farmworkers live where and how they can, which in Ventura County often means overcrowding and living in dilapidated or unsuitable structures."

Valle Naranjal, located on eight acres, features a large community center, several recreational play fields, two tot lots, a community garden and a public soccer field. General Manager Ranbir Shergill of local pro soccer team Fusion will be on hand at the ceremony to make a few remarks,

as well as to kick a few balls around on the soccer field later in the day with residents, youth and guests.

Service amenities at the community include: adult and youth leadership development, youth activities (art, literacy and computers), gardening and food cultivation, youth financial literacy, resident education on the natural environment, and health services for all residents through a local provider.

Scheduled to attend the celebration are Richard R. Rush, President of Cal State University Channel Islands, Ventura County Supervisor Kathy Long, and City of Ventura City Councilmember Neal Andrews.

The development, completed in July 2012, is situated on a former farmworker labor campsite built in the 1950's that received historical designation by the local Cultural Heritage Board. It includes a special exhibit documenting the history of the labor camp and the agricultural legacy of the area. The exhibit will be dedicated on Saturday by Ignacio Guevara, who was an original tenant of the former bracero labor camp.

The homes were built by the CEDC's expert construction team, which is known for its expertise in building green homes. CEDC has applied for a Green Point Rated Certification on the project, which is still pending. "Green" features at the community include Energy Star rated appliances, photovoltaic, ultra-low flow plumbing features, and tankless water heaters. Most of the materials used for construction came from recycled or sustainable/renewable sources. Green homes substantially lower utility bills which can result in lower costs for low-income families, desperately needed in today's tough economic times.

"The development provides families with attractive, safe, modern and energy-efficient homes," says Miguel Garcia, Project Manager for the development. "The new affordable homes are a valuable addition of sorely needed farmworker housing for Ventura's East County. Moving into this community will not only improve the families living conditions but will create a foundation for their children to aspire to greater success."

Valle Naranjal joins with five other developments with 148 other farmworker apartments CEDC has built in the past seven years. Valle Naranjal's 66 homes brings the total of farmworker homes to 480 that CEDC has built or rehabilitated.

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#### **About CEDC**

CEDC is a private non-profit community development corporation that provides comprehensive housing services, through a community building approach, in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. Since its incorporation in 1981, CEDC has built 1,634 units of affordable for-sale and multi-family rental homes, manages 973 affordable rental units, and has assisted more than 817 families into home ownership through education, counseling, and lending services since 2004. This includes more than \$110 million in first and second mortgage financing and down payment assistance. CEDC is a chartered member of NeighborWorks®, a national network of more than 235 community development and affordable housing organizations. This year marks CEDC's 31st year of operation.