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CEDC's RODNEY FERNANDEZ RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS NEIGHBORWORKS AWARD FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Ventura, CA – Rodney Fernandez, founding Executive Director of the Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation (CEDC), has been awarded the “Lifetime Achievement Award” by the National NeighborWorks® Association (NNA -- <http://www.nnwa.us>). The award is given annually to an outstanding individual in the NeighborWorks® Network who has demonstrated innovative talent and dedicated commitment to the housing and community development industry. The award was presented April 7, 2011 at the Annual NeighborWorks® Executive Directors Symposium in Arlington, Virginia.

NNA is the national association of NeighborWorks® organizations (NWOs) that advocate for better neighborhoods and housing for low- and moderate-income individuals and families, and work to create new homeowners, revitalize distressed communities, and build single family and multi-family housing for low- to moderate-income families in urban and rural communities throughout the country.

Through Rodney's keen leadership, CEDC has become one of the top affordable housing community development corporations in the country. Incorporated in 1981, CEDC grew out of Rodney's work in the 1970's to empower Latino farm workers in the rural town of Saticoy to organize and prevent the razing of their substandard homes and eviction by the farm's growers.

With the mission, “*to provide comprehensive housing services, through a community building approach, that facilitate self-sufficiency for individuals and families who are most lacking in opportunity,*” CEDC's diverse services and activities include:

- Affordable housing development of more than 1,300 homes across 10 of 11 Ventura County municipalities in one of the country's highest-cost markets
- Property management of 18 properties totaling 715 apartments for very-low and low income families, seniors, special needs individuals and farm workers
- Home ownership counseling, education and foreclosure prevention assistance to thousands of households and millions of dollars in first- and subordinate lending services through one of the county's only Community Development Financial Institutions;
- Community building and neighborhood revitalization activities to empower hundreds of individuals in and around the communities where CEDC operates; and
- Policy and advocacy efforts at the local, state and national levels through participation in key organizations and publication of original research on the impact of and need for affordable housing in CEDC's service area..

Rodney Fernandez is well-known at the local, state and national levels as an advocate for safe, high-quality affordable housing. Within Ventura County, California, CEDC's primary service area,

Rodney is involved in several community groups that work to increase the supply of affordable housing and provide a voice for underserved communities.

“I feel very blessed to have found my path in life through community-based development,” said Mr. Fernandez. “My true reward comes from the many lives that we have improved as the result of our mission work, as families reach their dreams and prosper. To have been selected by my NeighborWorks colleagues for this award is a true honor and one I will cherish.”

CEDC’s Board of Directors announced in November 2010 that Rodney would be retiring in 2011, but would continue to lead the organization until a new Chief Executive Officer is found.

“I congratulate Rodney for this recognition of his life’s work,” said David Rodriguez, President of the CEDC Board of Directors. “For more than three decades, Rodney has tended to the needs of those who cannot afford a home and I am honored to work with him. His work will live on through the many lives he has touched.”

As the organization prepares to celebrate its 30th anniversary in 2011 and as Mr. Fernandez prepares for retirement, his work will continue on through the impact CEDC makes on thousands of individuals in the Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties and the Santa Maria area.

CEDC is a private non-profit affordable home and community development corporation that provides comprehensive housing services, through a community building approach, in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties, and the Santa Maria area. Since its incorporation in 1981, CEDC has built more than 1,400 units of affordable for-sale and multi-family rental homes, manages 715 affordable rental units, and has assisted more than 8,000 individuals and families with homeownership education, counseling and lending services. CEDC is a chartered member of NeighborWorks®, a national network of more than 230 community development and affordable home developers. This year marks CEDC’s 30th year of operation.

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