

PHOENIX REPUBLIC

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LEADERS HONORED

The Downtown Phoenix Partnership distributes its annual DREAMR awards to businesses and individuals for their contributions to improving downtown.

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Basis Phoenix fills up, asks for security deposit

Nearly 400 kids are signed up for charter school that's charging as much as \$300 to cover damaged instructional material.

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Housing helps fill need

Renovations on an affordable-housing complex to be named Collins Court are nearing completion. The former Royal Suites site near Metrocenter mall will feature 80 units. **PAGE 3**



Many units are already renovated as construction continues at Collins Court apartment complex in Phoenix. The 80-unit housing project was acquired by the Central Arizona Shelter Services Inc. and will be completed in March. CHARLIE LEIGHT/THE REPUBLIC

Lola changes owner, name

The coffeehouse at Highland and Central avenues is now Citizen Espresso Bar.

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Festival opens beer week

The 12th annual Arizona Strong Beer Festival is Saturday at Steele Indian School Park.

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Low-income housing gets update

Collins Court set for spring start near Metrocenter

By Betty Reid

The Republic | azcentral.com

Collins Court, an affordable housing project that replaces Royal Suites, is scheduled for a ribbon-cutting this spring near Metrocenter mall.

Arizona Housing Inc. bought the 80-unit Royal Suites complex in 2010 to house low-income residents. Arizona Housing used money it borrowed from Phoenix to purchase and renovate the property at 10421 N. 33rd Ave.

The renovated property is named for Kevin Collins, who was killed by a client at Central Arizona Shelter Services, said John Wall, Arizona Housing's supportive-housing director.

Arizona Housing manages low-cost apartments for individuals and families living below half the area's median income. CASS manages homeless shelters, temporary living places for those who need help.

Monday, several staff members were on site viewing the renovation that sets aside 10 suites for veterans.

The project is about 75 percent complete, said Luis Arevalo, a designated broker for Foundation for Senior, which put the contract together for the acquisition.

"Renovation is wrapping up in two months and we are very proud of it," Wall said.

Phoenix lent \$3.8 million to Arizona Housing Inc., which used about \$1 million to buy the property. The rest of the money was spent on renovations, city officials said.

Among the renovations and repairs: installing partitions to create privacy for bedrooms, new tile, new appliances and the conversion of a swimming pool into a community garden.

When the property owners



Many units are already renovated as construction continues at the Collins Court apartment complex in Phoenix. The 80-unit housing project was acquired by the Central Arizona Shelter Services Inc., and 10 units are set aside for veterans. PHOTOS BY CHARLIE LEIGHT/THE REPUBLIC



Electrician Landrey Alex of Mesa attaches a faceplate at Collins Court, where renovations will be completed in March.

bought Royal Suites, the motel was not in good shape, said Councilwoman Thelda Wil-

liams, in whose district the property is located. The District 1 councilwoman said the

property had started to become an eyesore before the recession. Police often responded to incidents at the site as neighbors complained about the clients' activities.

The property was foreclosed before Arizona Housing bought the motel, Williams said.

"The motel was a dump filled with prostitution," Williams said. "It has been totally remodeled and will provide stable housing and will be an asset to the neighborhood. You got rid of prostitution and it's a new gated community and it will have a stable residency in there. It's attractive, functional and it's a very positive thing for our community."

Arevalo said renovation on the small studios started in July.

The new property owners helped 22 residents who were living in the suites. Arrangements were made to have them

stay or residents were helped with relocation into other apartments, Arevalo said.

Many of the residents had become homeless as a result of the recession, Arevalo said. A family of four, for example, had lost its home to foreclosure and had lived in a small suite for months.

The new owners helped move that family because their policy is to have two people per studio. Applicants must earn no more than \$23,250 per year to be eligible.

Arizona Housing owns three properties used as low-income housing. Steele Commons and Collins Court are meant for individuals, while North 17 is used as family housing.

The organization owns a fourth property in Sunnyslope but leases it to CASS to operate as a family shelter.