

Construction Begins on Ten Homes for Lafitte Redevelopment

(NEW ORLEANS, August, 22, 2008) – Providence Community Housing and Enterprise today celebrated the ground breaking of the Edmundite Homes, 10 wood-frame houses located in the historic Tremé/Lafitte neighborhood just four blocks from the site of the former Lafitte Public Housing development. The Society of St. Edmund donated nine of the 10 homes to Providence after Hurricane Katrina, with the intent of providing homeownership opportunities for families and individuals returning to New Orleans. To complete the block where the homes are located, Providence and Enterprise purchased the tenth home in a joint partnership.

“Providence is diligently working to fulfill our commitment to providing strong communities filled with homeownership opportunities, sound rental options and dynamic neighborhoods,” said Jim Kelly, president of Providence Community Housing. “The Edmundite Homes and the Lafitte Homeownership Program are our initial steps in the overall redevelopment of Treme and Tulane/Gravier neighborhoods.”

To ensure success for former Lafitte residents interested in purchasing one of 600 for-sale homes that will be available through the Lafitte Homebuilding Plan, potential homeowners will be provided homebuyer training, personal counseling, credit repair services and home maintenance workshops. These programs operate through a cooperative relationship with the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) and Providence/Enterprise. Case management services are provided by a \$2 million grant from Catholic Charities, USA. Through the Tenant Protection Voucher program, former Lafitte residents may also be able to use rent subsidies towards purchasing a home.

Scheduled to be finished in December of 2008, the Edmundite Homes were originally built in the early twentieth century. The properties will be available for purchase by market-rate homebuyers and low-income homebuyers earning up to 80 percent of the area median income. The homes are being rehabilitated into three-bedroom, two-bathroom single family properties with “green” features such as bamboo and linoleum flooring, Energy-star appliances, hardi-board for cladding instead of vinyl siding and the re-use of existing materials.

The total construction cost for the homes is \$1.6 million. Development costs were off-set by a \$90,000 grant from Enterprise and the AIG Disaster Relief Fund. The city of New Orleans plans to fund nine of the 10 homes with soft-second funds equaling \$440,000 to support the purchasing efforts of low-income buyers. Construction costs have been financed through a 3.5 percent loan from the Neighborhood Housing Services of America-Community Development Financial Institution (NSHA-CDFI), which is sponsored by Whitney Community Development. The general contractor on the property is Bethany PAR, a minority-majority joint venture between Bethany Builders LLC and PAR Custom Homes.

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Based in New Orleans, Providence Community Housing is a non-profit affordable housing developer founded by a coalition of Catholic groups in April 2006 in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Providence has a five-year goal to bring home 20,000 victims of Hurricane Katrina by restoring, rebuilding or developing 7,000 homes to foster healthy, diverse and vibrant new communities, both single-family homes and apartments – including 1,500 affordable homes for seniors. Visit www.providencech.org to learn more about Providence’s work in the City of New Orleans.

Enterprise is a leading provider of the development capital and technical expertise it takes to create decent, affordable homes and rebuild communities. For over 25 years, Enterprise has pioneered neighborhood solutions through public-private partnerships with financial institutions, governments, community organizations and others that share our vision. Enterprise has raised and invested over \$9 billion in equity, grants and loans to help build or preserve more than 240,000 affordable rental and for-sale homes to create vital communities. Enterprise is currently investing in communities at a rate of \$1 billion a year. Visit www.enterprisecommunity.org and www.enterprisecommunity.com to learn more about Enterprise's efforts to build communities and opportunity.