

palm springs

Rosa Gardens will help fill housing need

Construction set to begin this month on the 57-unit apartment complex

BY MARCEL HONORÉ
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Workers will break ground on a new 4.5-acre affordable housing complex in the Desert Highland Gateway Estates community of Palm Springs later this month, local housing advocates announced Friday.

The 57-unit complex, called Rosa Gardens Apartments, will be built at 555 Rosa Parks Road where an abandoned apartment building once stood, said Mary Arin Ybarra, project manager with the Coachella Valley Housing Coalition. The coalition is a local nonprofit housing group for low-income families and the project's developer.

Construction on Rosa Gardens begins April 14 and the complex is expected to be completed in January, according to a coalition release.

The complex aims to address a "high need for affordable housing" in Palm Springs — particularly for the service-sector workers who represent the backbone of the valley's tourism

industry, Ybarra said.

A public-private partnership between U.S. Bancorp, Wells Fargo Bank, the Palm Springs Community Redevelopment Agency, and state affordable housing agencies helped finance the \$18.9 million project, she added.

An April 2008 cleanup of asbestos at the surface of the future complex's site prompted nearby residents to express concerns at a May 2009 Desert-Highland community action association meeting that they hadn't been informed of the cleanup beforehand.

Environmental workers cleaned the site further in February, to remove more asbestos from the former apartment building's tiles that had been buried in the ground, Ybarra said.

Desert Highland residents were informed before the latest asbestos cleanup during a December neighborhood organization meeting, and no one expressed concerns, she said.