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CARDIN WELCOMES TAKOMA PARK RESIDENTS BACK HOME TO RENOVATED “GREEN” APARTMENTS

Takoma Park, MD – **U.S Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD)** joined local elected officials from Montgomery County and Takoma Park today to celebrate the fruition of the *Takoma Park Preservation Project*. This \$14.8 million housing rehabilitation project has helped stave off evictions for dozens of local families and created affordable, energy-efficient housing for 75 families. Grants from Montgomery County, Enterprise, Citibank, and NeighborWorks America helped make this project possible.

“Preserving affordable housing is a core necessity during our current economic crisis,” said **Senator Cardin**. “I am proud to help the citizens of Takoma Park celebrate their successful drive to save their homes and improve our community. They have taken a major step toward preserving local, affordable housing and reducing energy consumption at a time when energy costs are draining all of our budgets.

“Regrettably, home energy costs have increased much faster than incomes for low-income households in recent years, rising 33 percent since 1998. As a result, utility bills can impose a financial hardship on families. Nearly 17 percent of a low-income family’s earnings are consumed by energy costs and nearly 40 percent by transportation costs.”

The *Takoma Park Project* includes the rehabilitation of 75 affordable housing rental units in four apartment buildings at three sites: Merrimac Gardens, The Crossroads at Flower and Sligo View Apartments (formerly Houston Apartments). Along with green landscaping features at each location, each individual unit now includes many environmentally friendly features such as Energy Star appliances and lighting, individually metered in-unit HVAC systems and low-flow toilets, faucets and showerheads. Almost entirely new plumbing and electrical systems, along with these features, will save energy and reduce utility bills for residents.

“Building ‘green’ saves money and saves our environment. People think it’s only cars that contribute to global warming but residential units consume 22 percent of the nation’s energy and cause 20 percent of our greenhouse gas emissions,” said **Senator Cardin**, “**a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee**.

Residents of the Houston Apartments (now Sligo View) began organizing in 2005 when they received eviction notices after the building’s owner had decided to convert the apartments to condominiums. They contacted the Montgomery Housing Partnership (MHP), which helped them begin to purchase individual units. MHP is a community-based, nonprofit organization that works to preserve and expand affordable housing in Montgomery County, Maryland, and to strengthen neighborhoods through housing and community revitalization activities.

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