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Master-planned villages go forward

Two housing complexes designed by Irvine, CA-based architecture and planning firm MVE & Partners are slated for construction, as developers find that deftly executed masterplanned villages will command tenants. “It’s a good sign that these projects are moving forward,” says Richard Emsiek, AIA, president and COO at MVE & Partners. “As a result of increased workload, we have been compelled to boost staff by 20%.”

In Northern California, MVE & Partners is designing the San Jose community of Crescent Village, a mixed-use neighborhood with 1,750 residential units, developed by longtime MVE & Partners client the Irvine Company Apartment Communities. The four-story apartments sit on nearly 40 acres and feature five residential podium buildings that create their own architecturally defined neighborhoods.

In Southern California, the Westside Apartments at Civita will feature 306 residences designed by MVE & Partners on 10.6 acres for the Sudberry Properties Inc. The San Diego development will be part of a larger master-planned district comprising a variety of apartment and mixed-use architectural typologies that will create dynamic urban qualities. Both Civita and Crescent Village are near mass transit and will feature abundant village-enhancing amenities, such as signature towers and wayfinders, plentiful commons areas and green spaces, and housing and retail fronts that engage the sidewalk and street to promote pedestrian activity. Civita is slated to start construction late 2010, and Crescent Village in 2011.

Sharbell Development Corporation, along with Feinberg and Associates, PC, a Voorhees, NJ-based architectural design firm, and the town of Robbinsville, NJ, have won the 2010 New Jersey Future Smart Growth award in the New Town Center & Traditional Neighborhood Development category for Robbinsville Town Center. **The team’s core goal for the winning project involved creating a walkable and friendly, yet diverse community.**

Housing styles within the center range from small-lot single-family homes and duplexes to

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townhomes and loft units—integrating many options as well inclusionary affordable housing all in the same project. New Jersey Future is a statewide research, policy and education group that advocates for sustainable growth, environmental preservation, neighborhood revitalization and transportation choice.

According to a report in the Hartford Courant, Waterbury, CT-based Webster Bank was ordered to pay \$19 million in “jury-ordered damages related to a condominium conversion project in Ohio it agreed to finance in 2006. The developer and the unit owners sought damages in court after they say Webster refused to continue funding construction loans. Borrowers sought additional damages for defamation of their credit, according to the filing, reports the Courant.

National Condo Advisors, LLC, a condominium project approval service for FHA and FNMA financing, announced its expansion by launching a new subsidiary company, National Condo Inspections, LLC. With tightened credit restrictions that have made it more difficult for consumers around the country to obtain mortgages, FHA and FNMA financing have become much more popular, with nearly 95% of all new mortgage applications going through these agencies nationally. In order to offer these financing options to buyers, the entire condominium development project must be approved, but FHA and FNMA project approval is a complex process that requires a number of physical and environmental studies and inspections to be performed before or during submission. “With the expansion of our new subsidiary, **we will be able to better service the huge demand of our clients who need extra assistance to achieve project approvals or renewals**,” said Orest Tomaselli, CEO of National Condo Advisors.