

State grants \$5.69 million for Whitewright housing

By Future Brown Herald
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WHITEWRIGHT — Whitewright will soon become the home of a new, subsidized, 48-unit apartment community.

At the end of July, Whitewright was awarded \$5.69 million for the creation of Abbington Commons of Whitewright, a market-rate rent and below-market rent workforce apartment complex.

Abbington Commons will have one-bedroom to four-bedroom units. For those that qualify for low-income housing, rent will range from \$256 to \$400 per month. Market-rate income rent will range from \$660 to \$1,021 per month for the same units.

This will be the first time Whitewright has used housing tax credits to fund a development.

“The development of Abbington Commons is very exciting for the city of Whitewright,” Whitewright Mayor Allen West said. “We do not have a lot of rental property in the city so it will be a great addition. It is in walking distance from the high school and other businesses. It may even bring in some tax base to the city.”

West also said that teachers, entry-level emergency responders and retired individuals on a pension are some of the eligible residents for the housing specifically for individuals in the workforce.

Rea Ventures, an Atlanta-based firm, will jointly own the apartment community with Stone Austin, a Texas developer. Both organizations specialize in multifamily and workforce housing.

“We chose Whitewright for this new project because of its proximity to larger urban markets. It is also a really great community,” Sean Brady, vice president of development at Rea Ventures, said.

Brady said Rea Ventures, which is also responsible for multifamily housing units in Pottsville and Howe, began speaking with Whitewright over a year ago.

“The state of Texas has uniform multifamily housing rules and qualified allocations rules that are very extensive,” Brady said. “Based upon those rules, all proposals for state funding are critiqued. We created a proposal and submitted it to the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs. Our proposal scored highest on their scoring system and that is why we were awarded.”

Construction for the \$8 million project should begin in January or February of next year.

Additional funding for the apartment community will come from the Whitewright Economic Development Corp. and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Abbington Commons will be designed by Martin Riley Associations and Cole Engineering.

“The Whitewright Economic Development Corp, is very pleased to assist Rea Ventures with the new apartment development,” WEDC President Jason Wall said in the news release announcing the apartments. “The WEDC knows the city needs more quality living spaces to bring in population and families to our city. We feel with this change and others, it will bring employment opportunities and add more quality living to our fair city.”

The apartment complex will begin accepting application during the fall of 2016 and the tentative completion date is November 2016.

