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— MAY 11, 2011 —

2011 CHARLES L. EDSON TAX CREDIT EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNER:

# Columbia Parc at the Bayou District

## New Orleans, Louisiana

Developers: Bayou District Foundation, Columbia Residential,  
and Housing Authority of New Orleans

Columbia Parc at the Bayou District is one of the largest single-site Housing Credit developments in U.S. history — 466 units — and serves as the centerpiece of a comprehensive redevelopment of the Gentilly neighborhood of New Orleans, LA. The area, which was substantially affected by both a large distressed public housing development and the devastating flood resulting from Hurricane Katrina, occupies 52 acres that previously housed the St. Bernard public housing development.

Originally built in 1939, St. Bernard housed a number of prominent New Orleans citizens and provided important family and workforce housing for decades. By 2005, the development had fallen into disrepair to the point that the resulting blight permeated the surrounding neighborhood. In 2007, the Housing Authority of New Orleans began the process of redeveloping the property in the hopes of restoring much needed housing and Columbia Parc at the Bayou District was born.

Columbia Parc at the Bayou District faced unique challenges due to the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. These included an obligation to reach out to and allow for priority return of former residents dispersed by the storm, while at the same time attracting a significant number of new residents and market rate renters. The development team made attempts to contact all 900 displaced families and offered a series of planning and informational meetings.

In further efforts of community outreach, a pre-leasing storefront was opened in 2009 two miles from the site. Kinglsey House of New Orleans, a social service agency, provided onsite case management and supportive services to assist

*Brian van Hook, senior policy advisor to Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA), presents the 2011 Charles L. Edson Tax Credit Excellence Award for Public Housing Revitalization to Columbia Parc at the Bayou District. Accepting the award are Ben Henderson, AEGON USA Realty Advisors; Jakob von Trapp, Columbia Residential; and Jim Grauley, Columbia Residential.*

future residents with paperwork and provide job training, job placement, and other services to help ready them for living in the new mixed-income community.

Columbia Parc at the Bayou District offers 10 percent of its units as fully handicap accessible. Additionally, 5 percent of the units are set aside for participation in the Louisiana OCD Permanent Supportive Housing Program. Onsite amenities include a new large community room, catering kitchen, state-of-the-art fitness center, business center, and internet café. Residents may also enjoy a 46-seat theater, salt water pool and splash park, playgrounds, and lush landscaping. The development is built to LEED for Homes Silver standards — the only major public housing redevelopment in New Orleans built to LEED standards.

Columbia Parc at the Bayou District was financed with \$65 million in Housing Credit investment through AEGON USA Realty Advisors, Inc. A Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) loan funded through the Louisiana Office of Community Development and acquisition and construction loans through the Housing Authority of New Orleans, in addition to other federal, state, and local sector funds, completed the financing package.







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