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## New senior housing facility The Villas opens in Colton



COLTON >> When Christina Duran took a tour of The Villas last week, she couldn't help but think how much her sister would love the bathrooms.

The senior housing facility at 501 N. Ninth St. has such features as a community garden, pool and spa areas with a chair lift, a dog park, widened walkways and doors, elevators, and all bathrooms have grab bars and are designed to accommodate wheelchairs.

Currently, said Duran, her sister, who has cerebral palsy, parks her wheelchair by the bathtub and dives in "like a seal."

"But if she can roll her chair into the shower it would give her so much freedom," said Duran, of Riverside.

The Santa Barbara mission-style complex, on 3 acres and within walking distance of City Hall, has 101 affordable and 19 market rate rooms.

The Villas was built to replace the previous senior housing facility called The Palms that was demolished in 2005 due to mold.

The Palms was built using redevelopment funds.

Although redevelopment no longer exists, under its law if affordable housing were demolished it has to be replaced, said Art Morgan, Colton's economic development manager.

"This is basically our replacement housing project," he said. "We had it underway before the full dissolution of the redevelopment law."

The city sold the land to Eagle-Colton 55 LLC and made it so there are affordable housing restrictions that continue for 45 years, Morgan said.

Developer of The Villas is the Costa Mesa-based Eagle Real Estate Group. The architect is Jim Miller of Miller Architecture Corp. in Redlands. Construction cost is about \$11.95 million, Morgan said.

After less than a year of building, The Villas hosted an open house on Feb. 1.

Dozens showed up to tour the facility, which includes two two-story and two three-story buildings.

"All my friends around my age are moving in here, so for me it was a right place at the right time," said Avelina Villa, a retired Colton High School teacher.

On Monday, Villa moved into her new one bedroom apartment that has a view of a park.

Each room at The Villas has central air conditioning and heat, a refrigerator, a microwave, a ceiling fan, individual washer and dryer that's located on their private patio or balcony and a walk-in closet.

"It's the little things that you don't think about that are here," said Crystal Garcia, Eagle Property management regional manager. "You can grow with these apartments."

Upon walking into the facility there are historical black and white photos from the library of Colton hanging in the walls. Some of the photos date back to the city's beginnings with Wyatt Earp.

There's also a community barbecue, a clubhouse, a fitness area and a large church bell.

What made the complex attractive to Villa is that it's located near the bank, bus stop, Police Department, library, Stater Bros. and the park.

"In fact, I'm going to my nail place down the street," said the 70-year-old.

When asked how long she plans to stay, Villa said, "This is where they're going to carry me out from."

There are still 38 apartments available at The Villas. Those interested can call 909-370-4552.

**URL: <http://www.sbsun.com/lifestyle/20140207/new-senior-housing-facility-the-villas-opens-in-colton>**

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