

Columbia Parc at the Bayou District In National Awards Spotlight

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New Orleans, LA - -

Columbic Parc at the Bayou District, which transformed Gentilly's former St. Bernard Housing Development into a renowned example of holistic, affordable neighborhood redevelopment, has recently earned a number of prestigious national awards, including "Project of the Year" by one leading housing trade journal and "Community of the Year" by another.

In the fall, the prominent **National Association of Home Builders** (NAHB) announced that Columbic Parc at the Bayou District won three 2011 "Multifamily Pillars of the Industry" awards, including the "Multifamily Community of the Year" distinction. Other NAHB awards included "Best Affordable Apartment Community" and "Best Multi-Family Community Site Plan."

NAHB's Pillar Awards are generally considered the most significant in the multi-family housing industry's development, design, marketing and management segments.

In addition, Columbia Parc at the Bayou District also earned recently:

- **Multi-Family Executive Magazine** – "Project of the Year – Land Reuse" and "Project of the Year Merit Award – Best Mixed Income Category"
- **Affordable Housing Finance Magazine** – "Reader's Choice Award as Overall Winner - -Best Family Project"
- **Affordable Housing Tax Credit Coalition** – "Charles E. Edison Tax Credit Excellence Award – Best Public Housing Revitalization"

Columbia Residential President Jim Grauley, Administrative Receiver of The Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) David Gilmore and Bayou District Foundation Chairman of the Board Gerard W. 'Gerry' Barousse Jr. were featured on the cover of **Affordable Housing Finance Magazine** as part of the award presentation.

<http://mydigimag.rrd.com/publication/frame.php?i=89204&p=&pn=&ver=swf>

Columbia Parc at the Bayou District officials cite the project's success as the result of the unwavering vision and strong passion among its numerous private-public partners to transform one of New Orleans' most desperate pre-Katrina communities into a national model of place-based, neighborhood redevelopment.

Modeled closely after Atlanta's remarkable East Lake Villages mixed-income community, Columbia Parc at the Bayou District broke ground just three years ago in December and is now home to more than 500 families with additional construction phases underway for nearly double the current total.

Moreover, Bayou District Foundation will break ground this year on a new early learning education center for toddlers and a new K-8 charter elementary school – both within walking distance of all Columbia Parc families. Plus, a new LSU/Bayou District Health Center opened in November to serve residents in and around the new community; and a new YMCA and retail stores (bank, grocery, drug store) are also planned within the Columbia Parc at the Bayou District footprint on St. Bernard Avenue just off I-610.

“These recent industry awards are certainly validation and a testament to the power of effective and well-chosen partnerships which have allowed us to move tremendous ideas and aspirations to a point of reality that exceeds expectations.” commented Gerard W. “Gerry” Barousse, Jr., chairman of the non-profit Bayou District Foundation (www.bayoudistrictfoundation.org.)

BDF partner Columbia Residential (www.columbiar.com), one of the nation's leading multi-family developers and managers, is equally pleased to acknowledge the project's acclaim among industry peers.

Columbia Residential Chairman Noel Khalil said his company is humbled and proud of its success in New Orleans. “We've had a great opportunity to partner with BDF on this hugely impactful community redevelopment project,” he said. “These recent industry awards are a reflection of not only the high quality of our planning and construction efforts, but also the steadfast commitment of all of our partners to rebuild a community that people are proud to call home.”

“Industry peers across America have looked at this project in New Orleans and simply said ‘wow,’ ” said David Gilmore, administrative leader of the Housing Authority of New Orleans.

“High quality affordable housing is our goal, and Columbia Parc at the Bayou District has delivered everything we dreamed of and more. Congratulations to all the private-public partners who have made this all possible.”