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2 low-income-housing projects get boost

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Two South County housing projects planned for low-income people moved ahead recently. A rental project planned for the 100 block of Main Street received a significant chunk of the funding it needs and escrow closed on a 52-unit rental and ownership project planned for Atkinson Lane.

The Community Housing Improvement Systems and Planning Association Inc. (CHISPA) was recently notified that its Main Street project was ranked number one in the state for funding under a construction program of the federal Department of Housing and Community Development. The ranking ensures a loan of \$2.425 million.

Ed Moncrief, the executive di-

rector of CHISPA, estimated the total project cost at about \$4 million. He said the need for the project, the association track record and who the target tenant group is all played a part in the high ranking.

CHISPA, which is led in

Salinas, has also received money from the funds allocated to the city through the American Red Cross, the Catholic Diocese of Monterey and the Hewlett and Levi Strauss Foundations. The association is counting on a low-

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income-housing tax credit financing mechanism to make up the balance.

Moncrief said that with the loan in place, getting enough money from the tax credit program is "almost a certainty."

The project, called La Posada, will rent to low-income people, and will give first priority in rentals to earthquake victims. It will contain 40 two-, three- and four-bedroom rental units, most of which will be townhouses. The tentative plans include two playgrounds and plenty of trees and landscaping. Access to the project is planned from Front and Rodriguez streets rather than from Main Street.

Rental rates will be based on the tenants' incomes. With most of the families making about \$12,000 to \$18,000 per year, Moncrief said the average rents will be about \$200 to \$300 per month.

The project will most likely be finished by the spring of 1992, he said.

CHISPA is a non-profit, low-income housing development corporation which operates in Monterey and Santa Cruz counties. It was founded in 1980 and has completed nearly 400 units of low-income housing.

The Atkinson Lane project is a joint project of Habitat for Humanity, an international agency that builds homes for poor people through volunteer labor, and the Santa Cruz County Housing Au-

thority. Habitat, whose most famous regular volunteer is former President Jimmy Carter, plans to build about nine of the 52 units proposed for the 3.87-acre parcel. The Housing Authority will build the rest. All of Habitat's homes and some of the Housing Authority's homes will be for sale to low-income people; the rest will be rentals.

The Housing Authority has received \$750,000 from the Red Cross, \$100,000 from the Farm Bureau, \$100,000 from United Way and \$200,000 from the Greater Santa Cruz Community Foundation for the project. The land cost about \$1.2 million. Mary James, the executive director of the Housing Authority, said that she couldn't give an estimate of the total cost of the project.

Habitat volunteers built three homes in Soquel in 1989 and last year completed a small townhouse to provide additional housing for Pajaro Valley Shelter Service's "transitional" housing program. The shelter project was a bit unusual for Habitat, which generally builds homes for individual families, who make a small down payment and help in constructing their homes.