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CUOMO TOURS REGGIE RODRIGUEZ COMMUNITY CENTER

MONTEBELLO, Calif. ♦ U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Andrew Cuomo today toured the Reggie Rodriguez Community Center, one of several HUD-funded projects that is part of the city's effort to revitalize the Lohart neighborhood.

The Reggie Rodriguez Community Center, which is approximately 80 percent complete, is a centerpiece of the Lohart Neighborhood Revitalization Project. The City of Montebello has invested \$73,000 in HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds in the center, with plans to invest a total of approximately \$100,000 in CDBG funds once the project is completed.

"This is a perfect example of what we mean when we say ♦from the bottom-up♦. Government cannot dictate these types of projects, only a neighborhood knows best how to heal itself, and I applaud the residents who have invested their time in making this center a model for other communities to follow," Cuomo said. Cuomo today concludes a three-day, 20 city tour of southern California communities.

The two-story, 5,000-square-foot community center will focus on serving local at-risk youth. The city is working with four non-profit organizations to provide services and operate the community center: HealthCare Partners for health services; El Centro Del Pueblo for youth job training and placement; Latin American Professional Women's Association, which offers math and science tutoring through the Hermanita/Little Sister Program; and Community Union for computer technology and education.

All together, the city has dedicated more than \$780,000 in HOME and CDBG funds as it enters the second year of implementation of the revitalization project. The comprehensive plan was prepared with the assistance of the Los Angeles Design Center Development Corporation after an extensive 18 month community outreach process.

The project addresses crime and physical deterioration that blight the Lohart neighborhood and affect the quality-of-life of its nearly 900 predominantly low income, mostly Latino residents.

Also included in the project are plans for improving area streets, providing landscaping, modifying traffic patterns, improving street lighting and building a tot lot.

The city also designed seven single-family homes adjacent to Reggie Rodriguez Park and provided loans to three property owners for the rehabilitation of 14 multi-family units. The Design Center Development Corporation is also implementing a rental rehabilitation program for the community.

Cuomo delivered the keynote address Monday in Los Angeles at a HUD-sponsored conference that provided dialog and solutions for community and faith-based organizations looking to become more involved in community development and housing. Cuomo concludes his visit today at *Closing the Gap: Investing in America's Communities*, an economic development conference focused on effective tools, strategies and resources for creating partnerships that address the needs of America's most distressed communities.

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