

# \*\*\* NEWS RELEASE \*\*\*



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Contact: Jeff Oberdorfer  
(408) 291-8650 x19

## **Governor Names Casa Feliz Studios Winner of 2010 Top Environmental Leadership Award**

SACRAMENTO – Governor Schwarzenegger announced that First Community Housing’s Casa Feliz Studios of San Jose has won the 2010 Governor’s Environmental and Economic Leadership Award (GEELA) for its Sustainable Facilities Program.

GEELA is the California's highest and most prestigious environmental honor. The award program recognizes individuals, organizations and businesses that have demonstrated exceptional leadership for voluntary achievements in conserving California’s resources, protecting and enhancing the environment, and building public-private partnerships.

“This honor recognizes First Community Housing’s commitment to developing socially responsible and environmentally friendly practices that promote environmental protection and economic growth,” said Gary Schoennauer, FCH Board Chairman. “FCH has shown a strong commitment to protect our community’s natural resources and environment for generations to come.”

Casa Feliz Studios replaced an aging SRO near downtown San Jose with 60 new SRO apartments. The project serves extremely low income tenants (20 to 35% AMI) with 21 units set aside for residents with developmental disabilities. On-site tenant support services are provided and amenities include a group activity room, lounge, common kitchen, computer stations, on-site laundry and communal porches and decks. FCH’s commitment to producing a sustainable building was recognized with a LEED NC 2.2 Gold certification.

Award recipients are chosen in ten different categories based on their strength in eight specific areas including results, transferability, environmental impact, resource conservation, economic progress, innovation and uniqueness, pollution prevention, and environmental justice. Casa Feliz Studios won an award for Sustainable Practices or Facilities, pioneering efforts to integrate environmental values and conservation of natural resources into comprehensive, long-term decision making and management of businesses and facilities.

Casa Feliz Studios is one of only 13 other recipients that accepted awards at last night’s

Governors' Global Climate Summit 3 in Davis, CA.

Since 1986, First Community Housing has developed 1,212 units of affordable housing for low-income residents of the San Francisco Bay Area and has another 400+ units under development. FCH is noted for its commitment to using sustainable, energy-efficient materials and systems in their developments, which help tenants to save money on their energy bills. FCH locates all of its developments near transit and offers free annual transit passes to its Santa Clara County tenants. FCH also provides quality property management including offering resident services that encourage educational achievement, job-skill enhancement and home ownership. FCH is a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO), a private nonprofit, community-based service organization whose primary purpose is to provide and develop decent, affordable housing for our community.

Casa Feliz Studios was financed using Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC). In an October 2009 study, Enterprise Community Partners, Inc. found that 116 jobs are created or saved for every 100 apartments constructed (through construction, development, and property management) using LIHTC.

The Governor's Environmental and Economic Leadership Awards program was established in 1993. The award program is administered by the California Environmental Protection Agency and the California Natural Resources Agency in collaboration with the State and Consumer Services Agency, the California Department of Food and Agriculture, California Labor and Workforce Development Agency and the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency.

Go to [www.firsthousing.org](http://www.firsthousing.org) for more information about First Community Housing or to [www.casafelizapartments.org](http://www.casafelizapartments.org) for Casa Feliz Studios. For more information on GEELA and this year's award recipients, visit the Cal/EPA Web site: <http://www.calepa.ca.gov/Awards/GEELA/>.

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