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Tribal partner of the year

Pueblo of Acoma Housing Authority

X TITLE SLIDE Tribal Partner of the Year

Our next award in the Housing Development category is for the Tribal Partner of the Year.

We all know that developing housing in rural areas can be very difficult. But for **tribal** housing authorities, being in a rural location is only one of the challenges. Land use issues, restrictive federal regulations and a lack of funding are just some of the additional hurdles these authorities face. It takes time, experience, dedication and team of skilled individuals to create quality affordable housing on tribal land.

The Pueblo of Acoma Housing Authority X has built an outstanding team, and they developed a beautiful multifamily apartment community that opened this year. That is why they are our 2018 tribal partner of the year.

When the Acoma Housing Authority received a Low Income Housing Tax Credit award in 2016, there had not been any housing development done on the pueblo in 13 years. The stunning and culturally appropriate 30-unit facility that was built with those tax credits, X Cedar Hills Community, is an enormous accomplishment for the authority and for the pueblo. I'm going to tell you more about it while we show you photos that chronicle the birth and development of this amazing project.

X The pueblo of Acoma Reservation is in a remote rural area situated within roughly 5,000,000 acres of historical Acoma Pueblo land. X There are slightly fewer than 5,000 people who live there.

In 2014, two years before they submitted their LIHTC application, the X housing authority's executive director, Floyd Tortalita and his staff began meeting with the people of the pueblo to find out what kind of housing was needed and who needed it. For two years they met with everyone in the community from X tribal

elders to Sky City School children. They held lengthy housing forums. They even went door-to-door to talk to tribal members.

X To their surprise, they discovered that not everyone wanted to own a house. Some people didn't even want to live in a house. Some of them wanted to live in a multifamily complex not X unlike the one their ancestors lived in in nearby Sky City more than 1,000 years ago.

X In 2016, the Acoma Housing Authority applied for tax credits. In case you aren't aware, there are very few tribal housing authorities in the United States that submit LIHTC applications, and there are fewer still that are awarded them. X Receiving the LIHTC award was in-and-of-itself a significant achievement for the Acoma Housing Authority. But that was only the beginning.

X Raymond James, one of this year's summit sponsors, provided about \$7.2 million in tax credit equity. X The Cedar Hill project has a unique financing structure that includes no hard debt and no resulting debt service payments.

X In addition to securing funding, the authority was challenged with the task of creating a building design that would resemble the original Pueblo architecture and communal lifestyle. They found a perfect partner in X Travois Design and Construction Services, who also happens to be a summit sponsor. Travois worked diligently to design a state-of-the-art facility that was true to the cultural context and history of the pueblo.

What the team came up with surpassed all expectations. X Integrated into the side of a hill, Cedar Hill's buildings are designed to resemble the traditional Pueblo architecture and communal lifestyle. X The buildings are multi-story with rooftop access like pueblos were built hundreds of years ago. X The entire site is designed for universal access to the units and outdoor community areas. The stained concrete X floors inside the units are the color of the mud, which imitates a traditional mud floor.

X The first residents began moving into the Cedar Hills Community in April of this year. By July, it was 100 percent leased. The housing authority has taught X residents how to develop a budget and showed them how to make sure there's enough money left for rent every month. They've helped new X residents overcome their fears of moving into a new, different type of housing. They've also helped people work through the X challenges of being on their own or away from mom and dad for the first time.

X The beauty and uniqueness of the Cedar Hills Community has captured national attention and even some national awards. It is a model of how to provide X quality of life and self-sufficiency to tribal members while preserving a pueblo's culture and traditional heritage. And it is certainly deserving of X MFA's 2018 Tribal Partner of the Year Award.

Accepting the award is the Pueblo of Acoma Housing Authority Executive Director, Floyd Tortalita.