

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Northern Communities Land Trust (NCLT) in partnership with Minnesota Assistance Council of Veterans (MACV) unveiled their plans today for the **Duluth Veterans Housing** development which will provide 13 affordable, supportive housing units to single, homeless, veterans.

NCLT will be acquiring and rehabilitating 2 buildings in the West Duluth Ramsey neighborhood where the Spirit Valley Citizens Neighborhood Development Association and the At Home in Duluth Collaborative have been working in recent years to revitalize the neighborhood by conducting major renovations to blighted properties (over 300 since 1990), new homes, and creating a neo-traditional new development. The MACV development will create eight units of permanent affordable housing with supportive services and five units of transitional housing with direct services in addition to MACV office space. MACV will be the eventual owner, manager and supportive service provider.

The development is a direct response to the current plight of many veterans today. The MACV 2006 Annual Report findings state that “On a single night in October 2006, Wilder Research found 624 military veterans in Minnesota experiencing homelessness, 17 of who served in Iraq and/or Afghanistan.” Durbin M. Keeney, Regional Director of MACV-Duluth discussed the new trend in homeless veterans in conjunction with the Gulf War, Afghanistan and Iraq and the active duty combat situations service members are faced with. This new dynamic indicates that the homeless veteran issue is not going to be getting better, and [MACV] is already seeing an increase in the numbers they are serving.

Keeney said, “We as soldiers believed that we will not leave a wounded soldier on the battlefield. Likewise, we at MACV will do all we can not to leave a wounded soldier on the battlefield of life. This project will take us one step closer to achieving that goal.”

NCLT was encouraged by the City of Duluth Development Office to participate as the developer for the MACV site and plans to close on acquisition of the property later in May. “We see this as a new opportunity to serve the community by providing much needed housing services for veterans and to help continue revitalization of the Ramsey neighborhood.” said Jeff Corey, NCLT Executive Director. “In 2001, NCLT constructed

the first new owner-occupied homes in the neighborhood in over 50 years. It is exciting to see all of the positive changes that have occurred in the neighborhood since then and to again be participating in housing development in Ramsey.”

NCLT and MACV have begun fund-raising for the development and have secured funding from the City of Duluth HOME Program, Duluth LISC, the Corporation for Supportive Housing, and St. Louis County. The partners are hopeful that contributions will come from local community organizations and individuals and encourage interested parties to contact the MACV-Duluth office at 722-8763 or NCLT at 727-5372. Construction is planned to begin in the spring of 2009, pending completion of fundraising.

Northern Communities Land Trust is a local non-profit that is dedicated to creating permanently affordable housing in Duluth. In nearly 20 years of service to the community, NCLT has assisted 180 households in becoming homeowners.

MACV-Duluth is a regional office of Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans, the only statewide non-profit of its kind in the nation. MACV provides free services to veterans in crisis throughout Minnesota. They’ve assisted over 385,000 veterans and their families over the past 16 years and receive more than 500 contacts per month for service assistance. This is the first housing development for veterans north of St. Cloud.