

# UPDate



A Project Update from  
The Douglas Company

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## Hope VI, Phase II

Benton Harbor, Michigan

Owner	Benton Harbor Hope VI Phase II, Limited Dividend Housing Association
Project Type	70 Single Family Homes
Architect	I-F Design
Completion Date	June 2007
Contract Amount	\$11.5 million
Challenges	A strong emphasis was placed on using local subcontractors in an area that has seen little new residential construction in recent years. A promise to build 70 new homes in ten months meant no lost time for weather in an area that saw over 60 inches of snow. The city's poor sewer infrastructure made it necessary to install all new sanitary sewer hook ups. Construction training was provided to local minorities to assist them in developing new skills to help build this project.



In about 100 cities across the United States, the federal government has developed a program called HOPE VI. The goal is to replace isolated islands of poverty in cities that have been crumbling or simply never had the type of public housing needed. Many of these cities have public housing that is often crime ridden, but by replacing it with thriving, mixed-income communities many of these cities are given a new HOPE.

Benton Harbor, Michigan is such a city. It has seen good times and bad, with more tough times of late. Its moderate income housing stock has been reduced over the years and an impetus on newer, family oriented housing was about to come into focus. The



Benton Harbor Hope VI Phase II, Limited Dividend Housing Association took the bull by the horns to help provide the type of housing everyone deserves to live in.

Building 70 new homes in an area that hasn't seen this type of construction for a long time comes with unique challenges. Local subcontractors needed to be used, but in most cases they needed to be trained on the job for the tasks that were being undertaken. The Douglas

Company agreed with the financing agencies to support local minority subcontractors with \$2.1 million worth of contracts for the project, which in actuality became \$2.7 million. Upon completion of the project, six new homes were completely built by local subcontractors and they all satisfied the rigid Hope VI requirements!

The rebirth of a city also comes with its own set of daunting tasks. Poor sewer infrastructure

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resulted in the need for all new sanitary sewer taps throughout the redeveloped area. Areas that typically never saw a snow plow now needed to be cleared and cleaned in a winter that saw over 60 inches of snow. The city of Benton Harbor welcomed and worked closely with The Douglas Company to ensure streets were well maintained and that the normal permitting process was expedited because of the city's eagerness for the new homes.



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At the end of the venture, the winners were all around. Families moved into beautiful new homes. A city was given a chance to show that it could, with a little help, turn an exciting new corner and start its residents on the road to prosperity. Skilled and unskilled craftsmen gained accountability for their collective efforts and became

better businesses. The Benton Harbor Hope VI Phase II, Limited Dividend Housing Association and The Douglas Company were rewarded with the opportunity to step back and be proud of what was accomplished – something many people said would never work – a new chance for a city and its families.

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