

## Ribbon cutting held at Chautauqua Park West

by Brenda Ruggiero  
STAFF WRITER

OAKLAND — Dignitaries and members of the community gathered Tuesday afternoon at a ribbon cutting to celebrate the grand opening of Chautauqua Park West in Oakland.

The event at 500 Liberty Hill Drive was hosted by the Garrett County Community Action Committee Inc., the developer and owner of more than 400 rental housing units.

The Chautauqua Park West project is a rural, scattered-site mixed-income family development located in Oakland, Mountain Lake Park and Loch Lynn Heights.

"We closed on Chautauqua Park on Christmas Eve in December of 2019," said Duane Yoder, Community Action president, during his welcome. "Essentially two years and here we are and we're ba-



Staff photo by Brenda Ruggiero

The ribbon was cut during Tuesday's ceremony at Chautauqua Park West. Pictured in the front row, from left, are Lori Maraldo, Kimberly Leaf, Jessica Briggs, Duane Yoder, Matthew Heckles, Beverly Beard, Dick Devlin, Doug Devlin, Commissioner Paul Edwards, Senator George Edwards and Commissioner Jim Hinebaugh; back row, Oakland Mayor Jay Moyer, Robin Summerfield, Cassie Conklin, Nan Mann, Blake Walker, Scott Winters, Craig Pancake, Delegate Wendell Beitzel and Commissioner Larry Tichnell.

sically finished."

He introduced Beverly Beard, chairwoman of the board of directors, who has been with the organization for 33 years.

"It takes a lot of people and a lot of agencies to make a project like this possible," she said. "Government agencies who have helped us. Duane has done an amazing job on build-

ing housing for our public assistance and low income people."

Oakland Mayor Jay Moyer noted he's been indirectly involved with the project for a long time, remembering a council meeting where he saw the rough drawings and ideas for the concept.

"This work was done in my neighborhood," Moyer

said. "I spent a lot of time on this property as a kid. In 1963, my parents moved us right next to the golf course down here and I grew up playing cops and robbers and cowboys and Indians on this property ... Words can't describe how great this is and how well it's going to be received."

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# RIBBON

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County Commissioner Paul Edwards also congratulated the group for its efforts.

"Tip of the cap to Community Action and thank you for recognizing this need throughout the county," he said. "We look forward to doing more things like this throughout the county and with Community Action."

Sen. George Edwards particularly thanked the Devlin Group, noting that when the organization is involved, a quality product is produced and local people are involved in the construction, which is good for the economy.

"I'm serving under the sixth governor of the state of Maryland since I've been there and I'll tell you that Governor Hogan — of the

six — has supported rural areas of the state more than any other governor we've had," he said. "We've had some that have helped us out a lot, and he's really pushed for rural parts of the state and I want to thank him for that."

Del. Wendell Beitzel was also recognized for being in attendance.

Yoder spoke again about the group effort involved in the project.

"People use my name, and I wish they wouldn't, because this is obviously not the kind of thing that any one individual does," he said. "Sometimes you're in a position where you end up being the face on a lot of this, but these projects only happen because of a lot of people and a lot of great support. Everyone of these projects that we've done has involved the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Develop-

ment in lots and lots of ways."

He then introduced Matthew Heckles, assistant secretary at the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development.

"Congratulations," Heckles said. "This is a great day whenever we are able to come out and see the results of months — probably years — of what takes a lot of hard work from a lot of people to come to this point where we start welcoming families into rental housing. It is always a great day."

A Senate proclamation was presented by Nan Mann of U.S. Sen. Chris Van Hollen's office, Robin Cardin's office and Cassie Conklin of U.S. Rep. David Trone's office. It was accepted by Jessica Briggs and Beverly Beard.

"We would like to say on behalf of our bosses, thank

you to the Garrett County community for creating and building such a fabulous development," Mann said.

She noted that it will improve the lives of many and also boost the economy.

"So we thank you very, very much for your vision and the fruition of this beautiful property," Mann said.

GCCAC works with communities and public, private and nonprofit entities to finance and build housing to improve Garrett County residents' quality of life and economic opportunities.

In 2019, GCCAC was awarded \$1.5 million in low-income housing tax credits from the Maryland Department of Housing & Community Development to develop 77 rental housing units, known as Chautauqua Park West.

The total development

cost exceeds \$20 million and is financed in part using funds from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta, Maryland Community Development Block Grant, HOME, USDA Rural Development and equity generated from Enterprise Community Partners, predevelopment financing from Rural IISC and construction lending from First United Bank & Trust. GCCAC is Chautauqua Park West's developer, sponsor and guarantor. Garrett Cooperative Ministry Inc. is a general partner with GCCAC. These non-profits will deliver tenant services designed to promote the economic stability and growth of those residing at Chautauqua Park West.

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