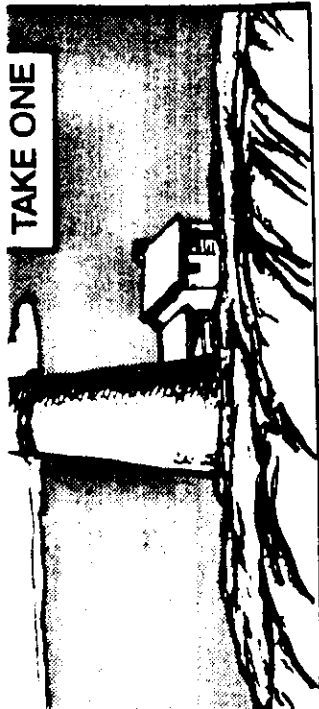


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All is not well at Mariner's Cove

by: Dorette Jackson

A highly controversial development of prime tideland in our community for "much needed" low-income housing, which not only has greatly contributed to an already congested traffic flow, has just recently been uncovered as an example of irresponsible fiscal disbursement of HUD funds. Mariner's Cove housing development, known in the trade as "The Sandcastle" (Pueblo Lot 212, Site 17) subsidized by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, is regulated by a federal labor law, known as the Davis-Bacon Act, which requires developers and contractors to pay "prevailing" wages for work on the project.

Job scarcity being what it is, a 500-unit project seemed to be a heaven-sent opportunity for skilled and unskilled construction workers alike. Prevailing wages for jobs such as a finish carpenter are \$20.99 per hour.

For almost a year, word has been bruited about that all was not well at Mariner's Cove. Workers were hired and fired almost continuously. Worker's wages, offered verbally, did not match wages received. HUD (the San Diego office) inspectors, requested to investigate alleged discrepancies in hiring practices, perfunctorily went on site to investigate the situation. Workers interviewed, with their job on the line, had

Thanks partly to the courage and integrity of two carpenters Alan Samson and Mark Unterberg, of the Rainbow Construction Company, HUD was contacted again in September of 1983, told of the violations and requested to send another inspector.

In March of this year, Alan who had contacted the L.A. Times, told the Beacon, "I'm tired of not getting results and I'm running out of patience and money to pay the bills. It's been rough, I'm feeling very much alone. I have no support, I'm stuck, they really let us down."

Rainbow Construction Company of Hemet, is now under investigation by the U.S. Attorney's office, the FBI and HUD's Inspector General's office.

At this printing, Fred Stillions from the HUD Los Angeles office, stated in a telephone interview, that over 50 complaints have been received, but only one third or so have been formal written statements. There seems to be a willingness on the part of PBMC, general contractor of the project, to pay up. HUD is anxious to pursue the claims and to proceed with payments to the workers, but HUD needs to present the bottom line to PBMC. Until all claims are filed, HUD is withholding the funds. Attorneys on both sides are hoping for a speedy and expeditious solution, reaching an equitable solution.

★ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Victims of the two contractors need to come forth, so as not to penalize the ones who already have, by delaying overdue payment. If any local residents, (and there are many), have questions on how to proceed with a valid deposition, they are urged to call Alan Samson at 229-0712. If necessary a meeting can be called to clarify positions or violations incurred. David Walker, from All Souls Episcopal Church, expressed concern and offered assistance.

Sufficient evidence has been uncovered to enable U.S. Attorney Nunez to hand down indictments on 12 counts to the Iriescape Construction Inc., who not only submitted a false and fraudulent payroll, but also hired illegal aliens, who had been told to run from the construction site if any "snoopers" showed up. U.S. Attorney Nunez stated that Iriescape did not comply and did not intend to comply.