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## Apt. complex for seniors completed in Avondale

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AVONDALE - Developers and community leaders are slated to gather Friday to celebrate the completion of a \$4.1 million apartment community for seniors - a project considered vital to revitalizing Avondale's Burnet Avenue district.

Named Forest Square, the 21-unit community at the corner of Harvey and Rockdale avenues was developed by Walnut Hills-based The Model Group. Apartments in the community are being made affordable to low-income seniors who earn 60 percent of the region's median income or below, officials have said.

Developers and community leaders are slated to host a grand opening for Forest Square at 10 a.m. Friday.

Burnet Avenue has been a focal point for revitalization in recent years, with efforts being led by the Avondale Community Council and the Uptown Consortium non-profit community developer.

"This is a key piece to our overall plan for Burnet Avenue," said Beth Robinson, president of the Uptown Consortium, a non-profit community developer. "The neighborhood has a vision for a mixed-use district that has retail, office, new housing and green space. The Model Group is really helping us address the housing component of our plan."

In recent years, the consortium has purchased vacant and deteriorating properties along and near Burnet Avenue to help better position them for a variety of redevelopment projects.

In 2007, the consortium sold the Forest Square site to The Model Group along with other nearby properties in the 3000 block of Burnet Avenue.

Earlier this year the Model Group completed a \$12.6 million project on Burnet, named Burnet Place, that included renovation of seven buildings into 62 units of affordable housing and 7,000 square feet of retail space.

Model and the consortium are also working a plan that calls for the construction of 35,000 building in the 3500 block of Burnet that will include 12 market rate apartments and street level commercial space. Among the tenants would be the U.S. Postal Service, which would move from its location at 410 Erkenbrecher Ave. The two groups are working to land financing for the plan, and hope to begin construction by next summer, Robinson said.

In 2008, the consortium helped lead the roughly \$100 million development of a new office building for Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and the Cincinnati Herald in the 3400 block of Burnet.

At Forest Square, developers built the community to Leadership and Energy and Environmental Design standards, a US Green Building Council program that promotes environmentally friendly and efficient building practices. Green features include high efficiency furnaces and air conditioning, Energy Star appliances, recycled carpeting, and low-flow water fixtures. The units will also include energy efficient mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems, officials have said.

Forest Square financing partners included the city of Cincinnati, KeyBank, Ohio Capital Corp. for Housing, Ohio Housing Finance Agency, and the Local Initiatives Support Corp.