

LULAC sponsors condos for elderly

by Ann Ramsbottom
Battalion Reporter

Nestled discreetly among apartments on Anderson Street lies a complex where the stereotypes don't blare, gardens flourish and a certain sense of permanency prevails. A neatly primped poodle lies relaxed on the porch of one unit.

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) sponsors the LULAC Oak Hill apartments for the elderly which has successfully housed residents, 62 and older, for one year.

"The condominiums are made up of 50 one- and two-tenant units and they're all full," said Pete Ramirez, president of

LULAC Oak Hill apartments. "There's even a waiting list."

Concha Quintana, one of Oak Hill's tenants, smiled as she told about the festivities during the apartment's first anniversary celebration August 29.

Quintana and her sister, Lupe Mendez were sitting in the pleasant, nicely furnished apartment lounge as they explained their experience at the complex.

"It's very different from home," Quintana said. "We're very comfortable and we have each other if we become ill or need someone to talk with."

Ramirez said the tenants are not bed-ridden, but there is a 24-hour watch available. Quintana spoke fondly of Ramirez,

former state chaplain for LULAC.

"Pete takes such good care of us," she said. "He's really interested. Pete sends people door to door to check on us sometimes."

"There are many elderly people in rest homes that shouldn't be there," Ramirez said. "Some of our tenants would be in homes if LULAC didn't exist," Ramirez said.

LULAC has a statewide housing program for the aged, but LULAC Oak Hill housing is the only one of its kind in the Bryan-College Station area. Plans have been made to build another local complex soon.

Border towns may get help

United Press International
BROWNSVILLE — The House Committee on Small Business may soon have legislation offering low-interest loans to border town businesses crushed by the peso devaluation but the committee's General Counsel, Tom Powers, cautioned against over-optimism.

Assigned by the House committee to gather information about the possible legislation, Powers said Wednesday reduced-rate loans may be available.

But he warned about 50 business leaders against waiting for the lower rate.

The Small Business Administration has \$200 million available at 14 percent for small businesses on the border, Powers said, but funds are available

only through Sept. 30.

President Reagan's budget for the upcoming fiscal year has no funds allotted for SBA loans, Powers said, and businessmen could lose out waiting to see if there'll be a special program.

Congress should adjourn in early October and unless lawmakers take emergency action, it will be February before new legislation would be considered.

Businessmen voiced concern over the glut of pesos in Brownsville, saying local banks are not exchanging the Mexican currency.

"Border trade is dependent on the ability of businessmen to exchange the pesos," Steve Bosio, manager of the Brownsville Chamber of Commerce, said.



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Elderly

(continued from page 1)

Ramirez said he felt an alternative was needed for the elderly in Brazos County and funds were available through the LULAC organization.

"Once you set them in nursing homes, they think you're putting them in there just to get rid of them," Ramirez said.

The Oak Hill apartments are unfurnished, one-story, dark-wood structures with carpet and central heat and air-conditioning.

Money for the project was subsidized federally by the Department of Housing and Urban Development through Section 8 of the rental assistance program.

Because of the subsidy, payments are relatively inexpensive for Oak Hill tenants, who pay 25 percent of their monthly income in addition to being granted a \$35 utility allowance.

Residents have to be at least 62 years old to qualify for housing — unless a tenant is disabled. Then younger tenants may qualify.

Another complex for the elderly, Westminster Terrace, in Louisville, Ky., is now in its 16th year of operation. Westminster is a combination of 93 retirement apartments and 112 nursing-beds.

Robert Elliott, executive director of Westminster, said the facility is called "congregate care," which means meals, transportation and laundry services are provided.

The cost for retirement apartments at Westminster is a \$8,500 refundable declining deposit

and \$560 monthly rent. Residents receive 30 free days in the nursing home if the need arises, Elliott said.

"There are about 200 like this model in the country," Elliott said.

Approximately 3 to 4 million specialized elderly units of apartment living are subsidized or developed by the government, said Larry Lane, director for public policy for the American Association of Homes for the Aging.

"They (the elderly) are usually dependent upon other shelter environments," he said.

Lane said Section 8 of the rental housing assistance of new construction provides housing assistance to about 3.2 million people.

"Shelter is separate from the social and medical need," Lane said. "An over-attentiveness to the medical need may mean sending a person to a nursing home prematurely."

Virginia Woods, daughter of 69-year-old Oak Hill tenant, Julia Gray, said: "Originally, she came down to live with us, but I found out about this place (Oak Hill) and thought, boy would that be great for my mother."

"One of the best things for my mother is that she can meet friends her own age. We don't feel like she's alone there."

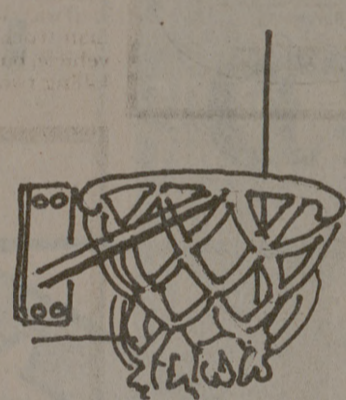
Elliott and Lane said they think living alternatives for the elderly will continue to be built. "I see it as a real trend to continue at least 20 years because of the upsurging of the elderly," Elliott said.

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