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Housing plans help broaden city economy

The housing crunch in Beaumont might be easing a bit. The new Stone Hearst apartments on East Lucas Drive provide affordable living for almost 250 people. The aging Magnolia Gardens complex also will be replaced with something bigger and better, thanks to a \$20 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

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Beaumont's economic progress can't be focused merely on expensive homes and high-paying jobs. The city's economy needs a broad base to thrive, and

that means jobs and housing for all people.

These projects provide housing to the people who need it most — those with low or moderate incomes. They make it possible for those who aren't wealthy to remain close to jobs and schools and improve their lives.

The Stone Hearst apartments were financed through federal tax credits designed to promote affordable housing. Similar developments are being built in Port Arthur, Orange and Vidor.

The 194 apartments in Magnolia Gardens were more than 50 years old and needed to be torn down. In their place, the Beaumont Housing Authority will oversee the construction of more than 370 apartments and homes on a 28-acre site in North Beaumont that was part of the old South Texas State Fairgrounds.

Public officials should support these efforts. Instead of warehousing the poor, they are designed to move people toward self-sufficiency and home ownership. That helps them and all members of a community.