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AVESTA HOUSING CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING OF PORTER STATION

New development adds 60 affordable homes to downtown Portland

PORTLAND, Maine — Avesta Housing, the largest nonprofit affordable housing provider in northern New England, celebrated the opening of Porter Station, its latest affordable housing development in Portland, with a grand opening celebration on May 2.

Located at 200 Valley St., Porter Station cost \$22 million to build and provides 60 safe, quality, affordable homes in the historic St. John Valley neighborhood. Demand for apartments was extremely high: Avesta received more than 350 applications in three days' time, and the building was fully leased before opening to residents in November 2023. Residents range in age from newborn to 83 and include young professionals, blue-collar workers, retirees, recent immigrants, lifelong Maine residents and more.

"Porter Station is the culmination of years of dedication and perseverance of Avesta staff, partners, and supporters," said Avesta Housing President & CEO **Rebecca Hatfield**. "I am proud to commemorate its completion, and I am pleased that 60 diverse households now have a place to call home."

Featured speakers at the grand opening were **Andrea Dodge Patstone**, coastal region president for MaineHealth and chair of the Avesta Housing board of directors; **Portland Mayor Mark Dion**; **Kenneth Willis**, senior vice president and director of housing and community investment for Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston; and **Joseph**, a Marine Corps veteran and retired truck driver who is raising his two granddaughters at Porter Station.

"We need more places like Porter Station," Joseph said. "I love the place — the people are fantastic, and there are really nice people here. It's home."

Porter Station was built near the former site of Union Station, a train station that was a major transportation hub and employer from the late 19th century to mid-20th century. One train porter and St. John Valley resident, Moses Green, was a formerly enslaved person who founded a company that assisted Black residents with housing. Porter Station honors this legacy by providing affordable homes in downtown Portland and its dynamic mix of health care, arts, education, retail, finance, and more.

The five-story apartment building was designed by Ryan Senatore Architecture and built by Landry/French Construction. Homes range in size from efficiencies to three-bedroom units, and residents enjoy a community room, indoor bicycle storage, on-site laundry facilities, and a covered parking garage with electrical vehicle charging stations. Porter Station also utilizes the latest in sustainable design and construction to decrease the building's carbon footprint, maximize energy efficiency and improve indoor air quality. The rich history, affordable rents, and sustainable design create a combination that will contribute to the area's revitalization and benefit the Portland region for decades to come.

With the addition of Porter Station, Avesta Housing now operates 24 affordable rental properties with a combined total of 1,021 apartment homes in Portland, and 100 properties with a combined total of more than 3,000 apartment homes in Maine and New Hampshire. However, the high demand for homes at Porter Station is a reminder that there is still much work to be done. It is estimated that Maine will need at least 84,000 additional homes by 2030 — a 10% increase — to meet demand. Of that number, at least 20,000 to 30,000 needs to be affordable.

“The need for affordable housing continues to outpace the demand throughout the state,” Dodge Patstone said. “Although Avesta has more than 800 new affordable homes in the development pipeline, we need to increase our capacity to build more. To do that, we will need continued support at all levels.”

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About Avesta Housing

Avesta Housing is a nonprofit affordable housing provider with more than 50 years of experience as a leader in affordable housing development and property management in Maine and New Hampshire. The organization is headquartered in Portland, Maine, and operates 100 affordable properties, more than 3,000 apartments and two assisted living facilities, providing safe, affordable homes for more than 4,000 people every day. An additional 800 new homes are in the development pipeline. Avesta’s mission is to improve lives and strengthen communities by promoting and providing quality affordable homes for people in need. www.AvestaHousing.org

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