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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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Council President Pro Tem Jim Madaffer and Councilmember Ben Hueso  
Sal Salas, Chair, San Diego Housing Commission

### **New President & CEO selected to lead San Diego Housing Commission**

SAN DIEGO - Rick Gentry of Chicago, Ill., has been selected as the new President & Chief Executive Officer of the San Diego Housing Commission, a public agency responsible for providing affordable housing opportunities to more than 80,000 low-income individuals each year. The position was previously held by Elizabeth C. Morris, who retired on January 15, 2008, after 29 years of service to the agency.

The position reports to the San Diego City Council, which sits as the Housing Authority. The Authority will vote on Gentry's employment contract on Tuesday, July 29, 2008. If approved, Gentry will start on October 1, 2008.

A cross-functional selection committee comprised of Councilmembers, Housing Commissioners and the Mayor's office participated in the nationwide search for the agency's next leader.

"I'm pleased the Council's selection process brought us a nationally respected professional to lead the Housing Commission and our affordable housing initiatives," said Mayor Jerry Sanders. "I look forward to working closely with Rick and think he'll bring fresh and innovative ideas to help San Diego address its affordable housing issues."

Gentry has 36 years of experience in the affordable housing and community redevelopment field, including executive leadership positions at three housing authorities -- Richmond Redevelopment & Housing Authority, Austin Housing Authority, and Greensboro Housing Authority. Currently, he is Senior Vice President of Asset Management for the National Equity Fund in Chicago, Ill., the nation's largest non-profit Low Income Housing Tax Credit syndicator. He has also served as Vice President for Public Housing Initiatives at the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) in Washington, D.C., and worked for several years in the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development.

"Rick is joining the Housing Commission at a pivotal time, on the heels of the agency's groundbreaking transition out of the federal public housing program and brings a unique perspective having worked in affordable housing organizations that span the non-profit, private and public sectors," said Jim Madaffer, Council President Pro Tem and Chair of the Selection Committee.

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Gentry's accomplishments include restoring the Austin and Richmond Housing Authorities to sound financial footing; participating in the development of Standard & Poor's rating system for housing authorities, now in use nationally; forging significant federal contacts; and providing testimony at congressional hearings on affordable housing issues.

"I have great respect for the unique approach that San Diego has taken historically to its affordable housing needs," said Gentry. "San Diego appears never to have fallen for the uniform one-size-fits-all approach, and has always looked to define itself uniquely, as it should, and to look for unique San Diego-based solutions to deal with its affordable housing needs. I am looking forward to becoming not just an employee of the San Diego Housing Commission but also an integral part of the fabric of the San Diego community."

Councilmember Ben Hueso, who also served on the Selection Committee, said, "To have someone of Rick's caliber with his federal contacts both at the congressional level and at HUD will raise the profile of the Housing Commission as well as highlight the challenges facing San Diego's low-income communities."

A nationwide executive search was conducted for the agency's President & CEO. Selection committee members included Council President Pro Tem Jim Madaffer and Councilmember Ben Hueso; Housing Commission Chair Sal Salas and Housing Commissioner Jennifer Adams-Brooks; and Mayoral Representative Phil Rath. Final interviews with the Committee, the full Council and Commission Board were held on July 17 and 18, 2008, resulting in the selection of Gentry. More information about the search process is available at: [www.sdhc.org/CEOsearch.shtml](http://www.sdhc.org/CEOsearch.shtml)

"We conducted a comprehensive executive search that has resulted in bringing one of the best minds in affordable housing to San Diego. We look forward to benefitting from Rick's experience and expertise," said Sal Salas, Chair of the Housing Commission Board.

Gentry is a member of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, where he served as President from 1995-1997; the Public Housing Authorities Directors' Association; National Housing Conference; and the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities.

Gentry holds a master of arts in religion from Florida State University and a bachelor of arts in religion from Wake Forest University. Born in Elkin, N.C., he currently resides in Chicago with his wife.

The Housing Authority report on Gentry's employment is available at the Housing Commission's website at [www.sdhc.org/AuthorityAgenMinRpts.shtml](http://www.sdhc.org/AuthorityAgenMinRpts.shtml).

*The San Diego Housing Commission is a public agency working to expand affordable housing opportunities in the City of San Diego. Each year, the agency helps more than 80,000 low-income individuals with affordable housing through award-winning programs that benefit the city's economy and revitalize neighborhoods. The agency also finances affordable housing development and advises the San Diego City Council on housing policy matters.*

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