

New LVHA executive promotes business approach

By Damon Hodge
Sentinel-Voice

The deputy executive director of the Las Vegas Housing Authority believes implementing preventative maintenance programs can make the Authority a national model.

"If you change the filter on your air conditioner every three months, the air conditioner is cleaner and runs better," said Betty Turner. "If you change the filter once a year, the air conditioner will begin to stumble."

Turner brings that fix-it-don't-force-it approach to her job. Turner, the first African-American female to hold the LVHA's second highest position. Turner manages a staff of 260 and operates a \$20 million annual budget. In August, she replaced the

outgoing Tom Gholson who moved to New Orleans to pursue other opportunities.

"In the long run, preventative maintenance can be more cost effective than modernization," the 49-year-old executive said.

With ever-increasing federal cutbacks and an income-rent ratio that tops resident rent at 30 percent of their income, Turner said it is important all housing authorities carefully examine revenue sources and expenses and make good business decisions.

Elgin Simpson, chairman of the LVHA's Board of Commissioners, applauded Turner's experience, knowledge and management skill.

Said Simpson: "Turner is doing an excellent job for the



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Betty Turner has impressed both staff and residents during her tenure as Las Vegas Housing Authority deputy director.

LVHA."

Turner said the LVHA is now working to tailor programs

to fit its 15 sites in which there are more than 5,000 residents.

"Each site needs a

maintenance, management and community service program because each site is unique," she said. "Elderly complexes have different concerns than family complexes."

Turner, a Pine Bluff, Ark.-native who was reared in Los Angeles, holds a business administration degree from the University of Redlands in Redlands, Calif.

However, weather and location lured Turner from Los Angeles where she worked as a housing authority consultant.

Her other housing experience includes stints at the Los Angeles City Housing Authority, 1972-1983; Los Angeles County Housing Authority, 1983-1989; Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, 1989-1994; Detroit Housing Commission, 1994-1996.

"My first day in Detroit, I

took a taxi from the airport to the hotel," she said. "When I stepped outside it was 40 degrees below zero."

"I didn't want to return to the Midwest or East to work," she said. "It's too cold."

It was last summer that an executive search firm contacted her and inquired about her interest in the deputy executive director position in Las Vegas. She jumped on the opportunity, beating a national pool of applicants.

Turner said she brings a keen sense of awareness to the LVHA.

"Housing authorities tend to want to be social service agencies. We're not," she said. "We're landlords and property managers first. Though our clients happen to be low-income people, they deserve the same level of service that I get in the apartment I live in."

Rouge

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Outside, painters scurry about the property, repainting everything gleaming white with gray trim. Workers rip up the black wrought-iron fence; plans call for brick fencing to take its place. Old trees lie prostrate, having been uprooted to make way for more decorative plants. And the parking lot is being readied for repaving.

The Canadian-born Maybie is a grandfatherly-type whose sleepy demeanor is interrupted occasionally by an bout of excitement.

The developer came to Las Vegas from California in 1989 and is president and chief

executive officer of CBC Financial Corporation.

A 28-year real estate veteran, he has an affinity for massive makeovers and specializes in renovating low-income areas.

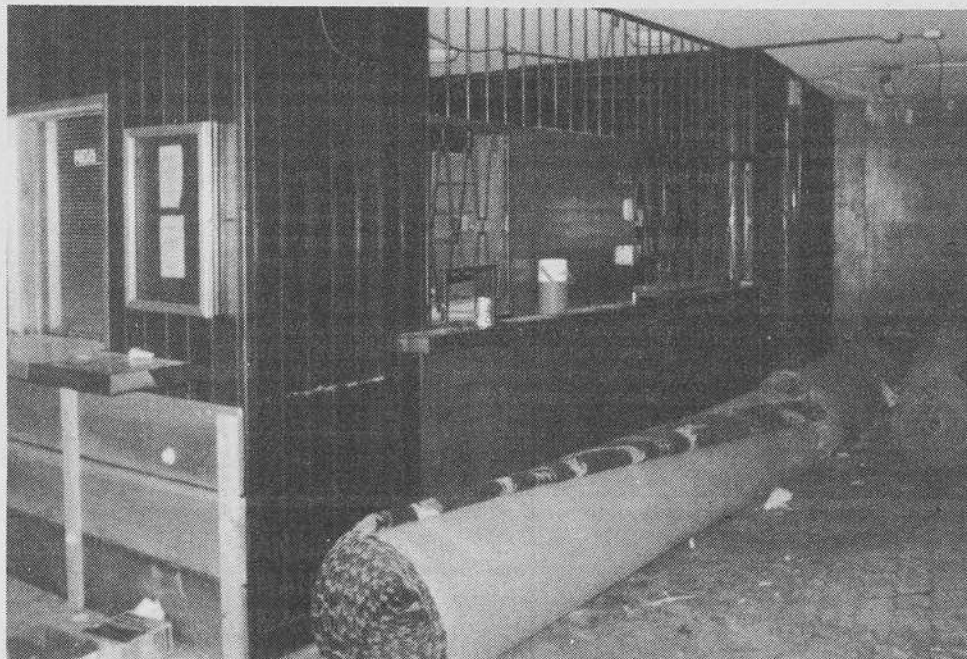
In Las Vegas, his work includes renovations to the Rosewood Apartments, an 8-acre complex at 1700 Bonanza Road; the residential repairs of 86 homes in the neighborhood surrounding Gerson Park West Las Vegas; and the Cheyenne Shopping Center on Cheyenne Avenue and Interstate 15.

Maybie said the success of the Moulin Rouge shopping center, east of the casino, is key. The 20,000-square-foot

facility houses 10 vendors including a beauty salon and five churches, an auto repair shop and a home health care business. The remaining space has already been preleased.

TLC Health Center owners Clara Colbert and Debra Toney are thrilled to be able to provide quality home health care to area residents.

In addition to the renovation of its 109 units, Momart Apartments, now a county subsidized housing complex on the property's west end, will be renamed Desert Breeze, Maybie said. He said he will replace roof air conditioners with wall-based units, improve roofing, add new carpeting, as



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

New carpeting will adorn the Moulin Rouge casino. Maybie plans \$3 million in upgrades.

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well install bar-type kitchenettes and provide armed 24-hour patrols.

The 111 Rouge hotel rooms will get similar upgrades, he said. After the shopping center, apartments and hotel, thrive as expected, the casino will begin operating, Maybie said.

He plans to lease space in what will be a refurbished casino, ballroom and lounge area.

Formerly the hotel bakery, Maybie will transform the

12,000 square-foot building behind the casino, into an office complex which will be available for lease space.

For more than a year, the hotel's former owners unsuccessfully petitioned several public and private sources for financial support to renovate the hotel.

The property's owner, Leo Fyre, had reportedly considered demolishing the West Las Vegas landmark if a buyer had not been found.

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