

# Grant to Fund Housing for Seniors; Common area, 11 new living units expected to be built within the next year

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WOODSTOCK -- Senior citizens will have another alternative for affordable housing thanks to a \$1.3 million grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Earlier this week, the Shenandoah Area Agency on Aging learned from Rep. Bob Goodlatte that it would be receiving the grant to build 11 housing units and a common area in the next year.

"The addition of the senior housing and the renovation of the old Woodstock High School building is good news for the community. Both of these projects will go a long way to ensuring that the needs of our area seniors and disabled individuals are met," Goodlatte says in a news release.

This is the first grant of its kind that the SAAA has received since its inception in 1975, according to its president, Helen Cockrell.

The 11 units will be one-bedroom, fully functional living spaces surrounding a commons area where residents will be able to meet. It is the location close to downtown Woodstock that Cockrell says will make it a unique place to live.

"So many other communities are way out in the middle of a cornfield somewhere and this will be right in town," Cockrell said.

There will also be transportation included with the new building to take residents anywhere they would want or need to go in Woodstock.

While the transportation and location aspects of the housing are important, Cockrell says this is just one facet in meeting the needs of seniors in the Shenandoah Valley.

"There is plenty of housing going up for seniors with resources, but for seniors with mid- to low-income in our community there just is not enough," she said. "Seniors are the fastest growing group in the nation, not to mention the valley, so this need isn't going to go away."

Though the renovation of the old Woodstock High School will not be included in the grant, once it is restored it will serve as the central offices for SAAA, according to Cockrell.

The apartment complex and commons area should be finished in nine months to a year after construction begins in September, and could not have been conceivable without the cooperation of the town of Woodstock and the Shenandoah County Board of Supervisors, which Cockrell says donated the land to the SAAA.

"Shenandoah County and Woodstock have been big partners in this, and when Shenandoah County gave us the land it helped give us the leverage we needed to get this funding," she said.