

# LUCIO: Affordable Housing Program Created by the Texas Legislature Brings New Construction to Harlingen Subdivision

---

**AUSTIN, TX** – Senator Eddie Lucio (D-Brownsville), along with Harlingen Mayor Chris Boswell and members of the Harlingen community, celebrated the sale of a new home through the Texas State Affordable Housing Corp., (TSAHC) program.

**“Housing has been a major influence throughout my life, both while growing up and in my public service.”\***

**HARLINGEN, RGV** - After 12 years, the Park Meadows Subdivision and the city are finally putting the financial crisis behind them.

State and city officials gathered Wednesday to celebrate an affordable housing milestone with the recognition of the near-completion of the construction of one of the last homes in the 34-lot subdivision.

Development here shut down due to the nationwide financial crisis, and the Texas State Affordable Housing Corp., a nonprofit created at the direction of the Texas Legislature to serve the housing needs of low-income Texans, acquired the subdivision in 2012.

TSAHC partnered with the Harlingen Community Development Corp. and Texas Community Bank to revitalize Park Meadows by building homes for working families.

“The home that we are standing in front of today is one of the last homes under construction and will be ready to sell later this month. As I understand, we already have a buyer for this beautiful home,” said Valerie Cardenas, vice-chair of the TSAHC board.

“The project was also made possible with the support of Texas Community Bank, which provided critical construction financing for the Park Meadows homes,” she added

State Sen. Eddie Lucio Jr., D-Brownsville, spoke of his years of backing for affordable housing in South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley, including numerous bills addressing the issue he has sponsored.

For Lucio’s part, he said his interest always has been personal.

“Housing has been a major influence throughout my life, both while growing up and in my public service,” he said. “As a boy I was one of 10 kids and it was the hardest thing for us to find housing.

“I remember driving around with my mom and dad trying to find a rental home,” he added. “When they found out we were a big family, six boys and four girls ... people thought we were destructive, and we weren’t.”

Since TSAHC took over the Park Meadows subdivision, 30 homes have been built which have sold from between \$84,450 and \$120,000. Targeted buyers of these homes are households earning up to 80 percent of the Area Median Family Income, which today stands at around \$35,200.

“Places need to be not only safe but they need to be attractive, they need to be someplace where you want to live,” said Mayor Chris Boswell. “And certainly this Park Meadows Subdivision is a

place where you would want to live. It is a beautiful, attractive neighborhood with good housing. A home like this is one that anyone would be proud to live in.”

The mayor described the continuing drive to improve housing in the city as not just a task of building new homes but removing unwanted ones as well.

“We’ve done a lot of other things in our community to further those goals, like tearing down dilapidated housing throughout the city,” he said, also noting the rehabilitation of the Baxter Building downtown, where he said 28 families are now living.

“We recognize the importance of (affordable housing), and we are so grateful to TSAHC,” Boswell added, noting the agency is referred to informally as “T-Shack.” “I think there’s something wrong with that acronym, because these aren’t shacks, these are castles,” he said. “It ought to be called T-Castle.”

Texas Community Bank provided a \$500,000 equity equivalent for construction financing.

“It’s been a transformative experience putting affordable housing units on the ground, and Texas Community Bank understands housing affordability is one of the state’s top challenges,” said Jonathan Coody, a vice president with Texas Community Bank.

“And we’re proudly committed to investing in organizations like TSAHC and Harlingen CDC, which have demonstrated a proven track record of helping the great State of Texas encourage affordable housing initiatives to solve the affordable housing challenge,” he added.

