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## Press Release –

### City, County, and Nonprofit Partnerships are Key



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An established partnership between the City of Oakdale and Two Rivers Community Land Trust (CLT) has utilized a unique provision in State law to remedy a long-term, problem property across the street from Tartan High School. “The City of Oakdale has a history of creating partnerships to meet the needs of its City and its residents,” notes Dan Hartman, Assistant City Administrator. Over the past three years, Two Rivers CLT has worked with the City of Oakdale to create affordable housing through redevelopment projects and rehabilitation of existing homes. When completed, the homes are sold to low-to-moderate income, first-time homebuyers. As Dan Hartman explains “This type of partnership is key to the City’s commitment to quality, affordable ownership in Oakdale.”

It was this partnership with Two Rivers CLT that the City trusted to fix the problem property on Greenway Ave. The City had received numerous complaints. Many neighbors considered the house an eye sore because of its’ poor condition. When it appeared on the tax-forfeit roles, the City responded by passing a resolution to support conveyance of Greenway to the Washington County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) and eventually to Two Rivers CLT for redevelopment as affordable housing.

Barbara Dacy, Executive Director of the Washington County HRA, explains, “State law allows jurisdictions to retain tax-forfeited property for public uses and affordable housing is considered a public use. The Board of Commissioners for the Washington County HRA determined that it was a proper role to act as facilitator in this project.” The HRA became the conduit between the county and Two Rivers Community Land Trust. “Other counties have used the procedure to create affordable housing units and from a housing affordability standpoint, Two Rivers CLT

provided the best model to stretch public funds and guarantee permanent affordability of the home from one homeowner to the next,” notes Ms. Dacy.

In addition, the property is placed back on the tax roles. As Kevin Corbid, Director of the Washington County Tax Department, sees it, “827/829 Greenway was an unfortunate situation. The house was not maintained at a standard most people would find reasonable. Renewal of the property fits with the County’s affordable housing mission and will get the house back onto the tax roles. It meets the State’s test of moving properties into a tax-paying status.”

“By rehabilitating and selling the property to an eligible household,” Barbara Dacy points out, “the Authority provides a ‘remedy’ to the shortage of housing available to low-to-moderate income persons in Washington County.” Dan Hartman credits, “the Washington County Commissioners leadership in creating long term affordability through a public use.”

Kathryn Paulson, the Housing Development Director for Two Rivers Community Land Trust, is quick to point out, “it took all of the partners working together on this project. As partners we have created a process to repair tax-forfeited properties and return them to their communities. The City of Oakdale, the Housing Authority, the Washington County Tax Department staff, and County Commissioners continue to provide leadership in the creation of homeownership for first time, low-to-moderate income households.”