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## **Merchants Capital secures \$56.5m for 152-unit affordable housing development - developed by The BLVD Group**

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Woonsocket, RI Leading financial services provider Merchants Capital secured \$56.5 million in debt and tax credit equity financing for the acquisition of Rock Ridge Apartments, a 152-unit multifamily housing development developed by The BLVD Group (BLVD).

Merchants Capital provided \$23.8 million in Fannie Mae Immediate Tax-Exempt Bond Collateral (MTEB) permanent financing and \$18.7 million in 4% low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) equity as the syndicator. It also secured a \$14 million equity bridge loan from Merchants Bank for the development.

“By pairing the bridge and permanent financing in-house, we were able to streamline these components of the capital stack and expedite the delivery for Rock Ridge Apartments on behalf of

BLVD,” said JW Demaree, assistant vice president of originations at Merchants Capital.

“Through the renovation of these 152 affordable homes in Woonsocket, BLVD is committing to the improvement of the community and lives of the residents,” said Matt Kaercher, senior vice president of originations at Merchants Capital. “We are proud to support their dedication to affordable housing development and preservation.”

Substantial external and in-unit renovations for Rock Ridge Apartments will be facilitated via tax exempt bonds issued by Rhode Island Housing (RIH) and equity from the sale of 4% LIHTCs and Renewable Energy Tax Credits (RETCs). Replacement of the roof, water heaters and windows are planned, in addition to new appliances, flooring, lighting and painting. The development will also benefit from the Fannie Mae Green Rewards Program. High efficiency electrical and water solutions and a 666-kW solar energy generation system will be installed that will produce the bulk of the building’s power needs.

“Tax credit programs at the state and federal level are not just successfully enabling the creation of additional affordable homes nationwide, they are also facilitating energy efficient improvements that lower the cost burden,” said Laurie DiBona, vice president of equity acquisitions at Merchants Capital.

“This collaboration with Merchants Capital preserves vital community housing in Woonsocket and advances our mission to deliver sustainable, high-quality homes – complete with energy-efficient design and solar power – for families in need,” said Rob Budman, managing principal at BLVD.

National multifamily investment and development firm The BLVD Group, which specializes in family and senior restricted properties, owns and operates more than 5,500 units in 17 states and has served more than 13,000 families.

Rock Ridge Apartments includes 14 two-story apartment buildings with one to three-bedroom units and a community building, leasing center, business center, playground and basketball court. Upon completion, all units will be available to families earning up to 50% or 60% of the area median income (AMI).

Construction began in April 2025 and is expected to be completed in 18 months.

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