

The Lane Report: Construction Begins on Cumberland River RHOAR Center in Eastern Kentucky

MIDDLESBORO, KENTUCKY (October 18, 2022) — Women beset by addiction in Bell County will soon have a place to recover, grow and reunite with their loved ones. The Cumberland River RHOAR (Recovery, Hope, Opportunity, and Resiliency) Center, a 52-unit affordable housing substance abuse recovery facility in Middlesboro, is scheduled to open in late 2023 or early 2024.

Former Governor Ernie Fletcher, Lieutenant Governor Jacqueline Coleman and U.S. Rep. Hal Rogers, along with other national, state and local officials, assembled at the building site Wednesday, October 12, to formally inaugurate construction with a groundbreaking ceremony.

When finished, the RHOAR Center will accommodate 112 women in 30 one-bedroom, 12 two-bedroom and 10 efficiency units as well as 18 shelter beds. Based on the highly successful Recovery Kentucky model, the center's recovery ecosystem can help residents "from crisis to career" with everything from drug withdrawal support to counseling, education and employment. The ultimate goal is community reintegration.

"We're coming up on the jackpot," said Rogers after recounting the years-long journey to fully fund the center. "An actual physical place where we can administer treatment for people with addiction who can't help themselves. This is the best example of being your brother's and sister's keeper that I can think of at the moment."

Coleman spoke of the trauma that accompanies addiction.

"There is not a family in Kentucky that hasn't felt that pain," she said. "I'm just so grateful that we are here today to celebrate something that is going to make a difference not just in one person's life but in the future and the trajectory of their family's life. That is absolutely game-changing."

Funding for the \$14-million project came from several sources, including the Kentucky Housing Corporation, which provided over \$900,000 in Low Income Housing Tax Credits and allocated four million of Federal Housing Trust Fund dollars. The Federal Home Loan Bank of Cincinnati, Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing and Bell County Economic Development also provided significant development funds to the project.

The RHOAR Center will be developed and operated by Cumberland River Behavioral Health, a nonprofit community health center serving eight southeastern Kentucky counties.

This project grew out of the Fletcher Group's RHOAR Initiative, which was funded in part by the Appalachian Regional Commission to assist the hardest-hit coal economies of eastern Kentucky.