

# Miami Herald

## **AFTER 20 YEARS, A DREAM IS MADE CONCRETE**

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A seed planted more than 20 years ago in South Dade is finally yielding a harvest. The last of 240 foundations for single-family homes has been poured at the Everglades Farmworkers Villages, formerly known as the Everglades Farmworker Center in unincorporated Dade. The first 69 homes will be ready for families at the end of January -- the result of a process that was first discussed in the early 1970s.

Construction of the 240-home project, which began in March, is only the first phase of this \$41 million project. Phase two will provide 290 homes and town houses at the trailer park next door, the Andrew Center. "It's our hope that phase two will end the use of temporary housing for migrant seasonal farmworkers in Dade County," said Steve Kirk, executive director of the Everglades Community Association, the organization overseeing the project.

Construction of the first phase at 19400 SW 376th St. is expected to be complete by next July, one month ahead of schedule. Immediately afterward, builders will begin the second phase, which is expected to be completed within 15 months. The entire project was funded through grants and loans from the Farmers Home Administration, a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Rents at the Everglades Farmworkers Villages will range from \$350 to \$400 a month. Along with the crop of homes, the neighborhood will have a convenience store, credit union, community health center, child care facilities and parks.

When construction began, more than 300 trailers and families were moved from the ECA site to the Royal Colonial site in Leisure City. The three-year relocation plan was opposed by residents of Princeton and Naranja. Their position has changed in the last year because residents have had input into the implementation of the plan, said Kim Stryker, president of the Princeton-Naranja Community Council. Residents of Naranja, Princeton and other neighboring areas are on the ECA board. "We are very impressed with how the ECA is keeping the place up," Stryker said. "They have worked very hard so that it doesn't have a negative impact on the surrounding neighborhoods."