



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**January 28, 2022**

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Hailey Leeming  
(702) 355-7770  
haileyl@gallatinpa.com

**THE JACKSON GRAND OPENING PROVIDES NEW, AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTION FOR WILDFIRE SURVIVORS**

*Celebration of the community partnership providing Jackson County housing solutions*

MEDFORD – Survivors of the devastating 2020 wildfires will have a new place to call home when The Jackson opens its doors to new tenants on Monday, January 31, 2022. Community partners will come together to celebrate with a grand opening ribbon-cutting ceremony for the newly renovated property that will provide a much-needed option for affordable housing.

After wildfires destroyed thousands of homes throughout the state, Fortify Holdings partnered with the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS), Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS), Rogue Community Health and ACCESS to support disaster housing efforts in Medford.

“Hundreds of families displaced by the Almeda Fire and the pandemic are finding themselves in safe, temporary homes thanks to a creative partnership between Fortify Holdings, Oregon Department of Housing and Human Services, Rogue Community Health and other community organizations,” said Representative Pam Marsh, D-District 5.

**WHAT:** Grand opening ribbon-cutting ceremony

**WHEN:** Monday, January 31, 2022, 2:45 – 4:00 PM

**WHERE:** The Jackson, 518 N Riverside Ave, Medford, OR 97501

**SPEAKERS:** Representative Pam Marsh, (D) District 5 – Southern Jackson County  
Sean Keys, Founder and Investor, Fortify Holdings  
Ziad Elshahili, President, Fortify Holdings  
William North, CEO, Rogue Community Health  
Edwin Flick, Director, Office of Resilience and Emergency Management, Oregon Department of Human Services  
Caleb Yant, Deputy Director, Oregon Housing and Community Services  
Carrie Borgen, ACCESS Executive Director

In 2020, the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) stepped in to provide shelter and meals to survivors of the 2020 Labor Day wildfires. ODHS’ shelter support was intended to be short-term, but the severe lack of affordable housing meant a quick resolution for the wildfire survivors was not possible. That’s when ODHS approached Fortify Holdings to explore the option of converting hotels into short-term shelters and then, eventually, into rental apartments. Fortify accepted the challenge.

“We are thrilled to be part of the solution here in Medford, particularly to be helping those impacted by wildfires,” said Ziad Elsahili, President of Fortify Holdings “We invested in Southern Oregon and purchased this hotel with the long-term vision for creating an apartment community and we’re excited about our public/private partnerships across the region that have enabled us to do just that.”

In February 2021, Fortify Holdings entered into a master lease agreement with Rogue Community Health, and together they partnered with ODHS, OHCS, and ACCESS. Fortify purchased the former Americas Best Value Inn/OYO, and, in less than a year, fully converted 84 units into apartments. Through this public/private partnership, the entire building has been reborn as The Jackson, and the new homes will be prioritized for wildfire survivors over the next month.

“Helping people recover from disasters requires more than just providing shelter and meals,” said ODHS Director Fariborz Pakseresht. “It takes our communities coming together to collaborate and work together to focus on the needs of the survivors to address the barriers they are experiencing to recovery. The public/private partnership is a model for other communities hard hit by disasters.”

“The struggles that many families in this county have faced over the last two years cannot be understated. It has become a necessity that community organizations come together to offer support. As we open this property, our goal is to provide stability, comfort, and hope for those recovering from these devastating losses,” said William North, CEO Rogue Community Health.

“We are excited this project is providing new housing options to wildfire survivors in Jackson County,” said Caleb Yant, Deputy Director, at OHCS. “While we understand it’s been a long road and more still needs to be done, this opening represents another steppingstone to providing intermediate and long-term housing for those recovering from a natural disaster. We are proud to stand with our local partners as we welcome residents into The Jackson.”

Additionally, OHCS has committed rental assistance through the ACCESS Center for Community Resilience through June 30, 2023, for tenants who cannot afford the market rents.

ACCESS, and its wildfire recovery-focused Center for Community Resilience (CCR), is working alongside state and local partners to provide housing case management, rental and utility assistance, educational opportunities, food assistance, and inter-agency referrals to fire-impacted households.

“We are grateful for partnerships that help us to best serve our community,” said ACCESS Executive Director Carrie Borgen. “This statewide collaborative effort ensures that assistance for wildfire-impacted households is comprehensive and operates with long-term recovery goals in mind.”

“What happened in Medford is so unique, it’s truly been a highlight in my career,” said Sean Keys, Founder of Fortify Holdings. “Helping families in their crucial time of need has been incredibly satisfying to see. One of our missions is to transform lives, and this project will bring much-needed, high quality housing and medical services to hundreds of Medford residents.”

Wildfire survivors still in need of assistance may call the survivor phone line toll-free at 1-833-669-0554, visit ODHS’ web page for wildfire survivors or learn about other options at the state’s website at [wildfire.oregon.gov](http://wildfire.oregon.gov).