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**NEW SEASONS TO BREAK GROUND FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING
FACILITY OCT. 14**

A groundbreaking ceremony to begin construction of an independent living facility for people with mental health disabilities has been set for Thursday, Oct. 14, 12:30 p.m., in Tahlequah.

The apartment complex, "New Seasons," is located at 1021 Campbell Rd.

Associated Centers for Therapy, Inc. (ACT) and Bill Willis Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Center are constructing the facility, which will provide permanent housing for 14 people with mental health disabilities, said Connie Schlittler, executive director of Bill Willis CMHSAC.

Funding for the complex was provided by the office of Housing and Urban Development. New Seasons will consist of 14 one-bedroom units and one two-bedroom manager's unit.

ACT and Bill Willis CMHSAC collaborated to form a separate non-profit corporation known as WILL-ACT, Inc. Residents of the facility will be clients of Bill Willis CMHSAC, and ACT will manage the property.

Occupancy is scheduled for the spring of 2005, Schlittler said.

“There is a need for both safe and affordable housing for people with mental

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health disabilities,” she said. “With permanent housing for these people, and programs to help them re-integrate into the community, Will-ACT is looking forward to making this venture a promising one for those who live with serious disabilities.”

ACT has a long history of providing housing for people with mental health disabilities. In 1989, the agency began addressing the need for housing for seriously mentally ill adults when it purchased a 12 unit apartment complex in Tulsa. ACT then submitted a HUD application for construction of a 25-unit complex in Broken Arrow, which was completed and occupied in 1997. Then, in conjunction with CREOKS Mental Health Services, Inc. in Okmulgee, ACT co-sponsored a HUD application for an 18-unit complex in Sapulpa. Consumers from the CREOKS agency began to move into the project in June 2001. Management activities for all housing units are provided by ACT. An application also is currently under consideration by HUD for a 15-unit complex in Okmulgee.

Bill Willis CMHSAC is owned and operated by the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, and serves citizens of Adair, Cherokee, Sequoyah and Wagoner counties.

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