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Private group has several advantages over public housing

(Continued from page 1)

Authority which owns two apartment complexes in Snohomish.

"We've got a pretty good sized brain trust and it's not costing a nickel," Robinett said.

The group has formed three committees, including two for land acquisition and financing. The first housing development will be a 10-30 unit complex for seniors, Robinett said.

"But this won't only be for seniors," he said. "We envision a continuing process, not a one-shot deal. We want to take care of some of the single mothers with children down the road, too."

Holt said a private group has two main advantages over a public agency: it has more opportunities for community involvement and is free of many requirements for contracting and paying for a development.

"It's really a grass-roots effort," he said. "The potential for groups of people spending time working on a project, donating labor and supplies is a lot stronger. I think

there's more pride in the product."

A private group can identify a contractor without having to draw up bid specifications, Holt said. It is not bound by the Davis-Bacon wage rate rules, Copeland labor standards and other regula-

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tions that would apply if the government were doing the same thing.

The group plans to develop one apartment complex a year in the city or near its perimeter, Robinett said. Economic requirements of potential tenants are still being worked out, though they will probably be similar to those used by the government.

"We can do it better and cheaper and involve the citizens and have fun doing it," Robinett said.

Nonprofit group forms to address housing shortage

By Tony de Garate

With nearly 3,000 households seeking public housing and sometimes waiting years for assistance, a private nonprofit group has formed in Snohomish to take a crack at providing for its own.

The Snohomish Affordable Housing Group incorporated this month with the goal of building affordable housing faster, cheaper and better than the government while creating a groundswell of community support.

The idea originated at a

Snohomish Lions meeting about two years ago, said Hank Robinett, president of the group. Interest in forming the group flared up again last January when seniors living in Woodlake Manor were threatened by an attempt to remove them from a subsidy program.

Several members of the corporation are Lions, and the group also includes bankers, developers, a lawyer, county executive Willis Tucker and Steve Holt, director of the Snohomish County Housing

(Continued on page 2)