

Jan 26, 2012

Related Begins Renovation of N.J. Affordable Housing Property



By Dees Stribling, Contributing Editor

Woodbury, N.J.—Related Affordable, a division of Related Cos., is undertaking the renovation and preservation of 96 units of affordable housing in New Jersey. All together, the company will oversee \$1.8 million in renovations and upgrades to Lakeside Apartments in Woodbury, and preserve the property's affordability for an additional 30 years.

The New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (HMFA) provided \$4.55 million in tax-exempt bond financing to facilitate the preservation, while Centerline Capital Group provided about \$2 million in low-income housing tax credit equity. Wells Fargo acted as Delegated Underwriter and Servicer for Fannie Mae to provide credit enhancement. All of the apartments are set aside for tenants whose incomes are at or below 60 percent of the area median income and benefit from project-based Section 8.

Lakeside Apartments was built in 1980 and consists of six two-story walk-up buildings on four acres. The renovations, which cost about \$19,000 per unit, include the installation of new bathroom cabinets and fixtures, new kitchen cabinets, counters and fixtures, as well as Energy Star lighting and appliances. Capital renovations will include new windows, façade improvements, management office upgrades, electrical upgrades, exterior lighting, signage, landscaping and parking lot upgrades. These improvements are expected to be complete in October 2012.

"We don't believe affordable housing will become more difficult in the immediate future, despite looming budget cuts," Mark E. Carbone, president of Related Affordable, tells

MHN. “The provision of safe, clean and affordable housing for eligible Americans has been and always will be, one of the highest priorities of American government.”

Carbone adds that besides being a social good, support for affordable housing is good for local economies. “Ensuring that families can remain in their homes has a significant impact on the quality of their lives, but also stabilizes neighborhoods,” he says. “We look forward to working with HMFA to preserve even more affordable units in upcoming months and years.”

Other recent Related projects include the renovation and long-term preservation of 412 units of affordable housing at Westminster Village Arms in Lowell, Mass., and the acquisition and preservation of Parkway Gardens, a 694-unit affordable housing apartment property on the South Side of Chicago. The company is also renovating 258 affordable apartments at three Manhattan sites as well as the renovation of 298 affordable apartments at three upstate New York sites.

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