Knoxville’s Community Development Corporation (KCDC), the housing and redevelopment agency for Knoxville, TN, is a big proponent of bringing energy efficiency to affordable housing. They recently completed a $1.8 million renovation project at KCDC’s Valley Oaks Apartments.

Valley Oaks is part of the Enterprise Green Communities program, the first national green building program developed for affordable housing. The program’s green criteria address such aspects as location, site improvement, water conservation, energy efficiency, building materials and maintenance in creating a healthy living environment. “By working within Green Communities criteria, we ensure that our project is both environmentally friendly and cost-efficient,” said Alvin Nance, KCDC executive director and CEO.

KCDC financed the project with capital improvement funds provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and a $400,000 grant from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta through their member bank, SunTrust. Nance was particularly pleased to receive grant monies, saying, “It demonstrates that others believe in what we’re doing and are willing to financially support our initiatives.”

KCDC has years of involvement in “green” projects. In July 2006, KCDC, with the help of energy services company Ameresco Inc., secured a 20-year Energy Performance Contract issued by HUD. The contract allowed KCDC to invest approximately $9.5 million in energy-efficient upgrades in all 17 of its public housing developments and offices. Installation included energy-efficient upgrades to refrigerators, lighting, toilets, furnaces, HVAC systems, temperature controls, washers, windows, and other measures. The cost and energy savings are significant. Net savings for the first year after all debt payments and fees totaled more than $240,000.

The changes also offer significant cost and energy savings to tenants, meeting another of KCDC’s goals: promoting self-sufficiency. “We are working hard to change the face of public housing,” said Nance. “Improving the appearance of our properties and making them more energy efficient is a priority with us. The reduction in utility cost benefits our residents by putting more of their income back in their pockets, so they are better able to meet their financial obligations.”

KCDC’s exterior improvements made the family-style apartment complex both more energy-efficient and attractive. Inside the 48 two-bedroom units, KCDC installed energy-efficient HVAC and lighting, Energy Star appliances, and eco-friendly plumbing improvements.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

» Enviro Build Expo
  October 13-14, 2010 | Hartford, CT
  http://www.envirobuildexpo.com/

» Affordable Housing Summit
  (US Green Building Council)
  November 16-17, 2010 | Chicago, IL

» GreenBuild International Conference and Expo (US Green Building Council)
  November 17-19, 2010 | Chicago IL
  http://bit.ly/hCt0X

» Cities Alive: 8th Annual Green Roof and Wall Conference
  November 30-December 3, 2010 | Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
  http://www.greenroofs.org/

» National League of Cities Congress of Cities and Exposition
  Nov. 30, 2010-Dec. 4, 2010 | Denver, CO
Washington Green Communities

Retrofit Loan Fund Launched

A $2 million financing pool will be available to owners of multifamily housing properties in the State of Washington through the Enterprise Community Partners, Inc. (Enterprise) and Washington State Housing Finance Commission (WSHFC). Enterprise is a leading provider of development capital and expertise in the area of affordable housing and has introduced neighborhood solutions through public/private partnerships with financial institutions, governments, and community organizations.

According to M.A. Leonard, Vice President and Pacific Northwest impact market leader at Enterprise Community Partners, “Reducing carbon emissions, while increasing the health benefits and utility savings of a building is a win-win to the building owner, the resident, and the surrounding neighborhood. We are excited to enter this partnership with the Washington State Housing Finance Commission and look forward to working with the affordable housing developers who apply for loans.”

Retrofitting activities can reduce energy and water consumption and save multifamily affordable housing owners an estimated 15 to 20 percent off their average annual utility bill of over $700 per unit, according to Enterprise. Currently in the pilot stage, Enterprise and WSHFC estimate that approximately 20 loans averaging $100,000 will be made through the Washington Green Communities Retrofit Loan Fund. The Fund will enable developers to maintain affordability while they achieve sustainability.

The Fund will target properties in both rural and urban areas that were financed through the Federal low income housing tax credit program. As part of the loan, properties will undergo a full energy audit to determine any potential savings to be derived from the retrofit. Enterprise, through Green Communities, operates a number of retrofit pilot programs in large cities throughout the Nation.

Enterprise Community Partners provided the quotes and information used in the source articles:

June 16, 2010, Puget Sound Business Journal:
http://seattle.bizjournals.com/seattle/stories/2010/06/14/daily29.html

June 22, 2010, Multihousing News:
http://bit.ly/aNrOPC

To learn more about Enterprise’s Green Communities program, visit: www.enterprisecommunity.com or www.enterprisecommunity.org

To learn more about WSHFC, visit: http://www.wshfc.org

Bed Bug Treatment and Prevention

As cases of bed bug infestation continue to increase across the country, the Office of Public and Indian Housing, the Department of Extension Entomology at the University of Purdue, and Rutgers University have teamed up to make an informational video called Bed Bug Prevention and Control. The video contains information on treatments and methods that public housing agencies and residents of public housing can use in the treatment and prevention of a bed bug infestation. In addition to the video, the Center for Disease Control and the Environmental Protection Agency have issued a joint statement in response to the numerous bed bug outbreaks throughout the country. The video and a link to the statement (under Related Information) can be found on the following page:

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