



Rochester Management selects RCG to renovate 516 city apartments

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Affordable housing originally built to help World War II veterans save money in order to purchase their first home is now being completely renovated to serve a new generation. Rochester Management, Inc., Rochester's Cornerstone Group (RCG) and the city have come together to upgrade a total of 516 city apartments across three different apartment communities in the city's northeast and northwest quadrants.

In 1946, as thousands of local World War II servicemen returned home to overcrowded and substandard housing, the need for solution to this growing housing problem became clear. With the same "can-do" attitude that America demonstrated throughout the war years, eight local banks joined together and formed a nonprofit that collaborated with the city to quickly address the needs. Their solution was called, "The Rochester Plan," and it was a unique effort to create affordable rental housing for the veterans and their families. The city donated the land at a nominal cost and provided a low tax assessment. The participating banks formed Rochester Management, a non-profit corporation that built the rental units and manages them, to this day, on a non-profit basis. The banks then received an insured mortgage from the Fair Housing Administration (FHA) at a low interest rate. Construction began in the spring of 1946 at the first community, and the latter two were built shortly thereafter.

As construction progressed, nearly 3,500 applications poured in from servicemen for only 516 units. To assure fairness, tenants were chosen by lottery. The original tenants were able to move into a new two-bedroom apartment for about \$50 per month, which was over 30% below the market rate. The plan's goal of enabling the young families to save money toward purchasing a home was a resounding success: by 1956, nearly 900 families had purchased their own homes in the area. The Rochester Plan was recognized as a national model to address the national housing shortage. To this day, returning veterans still receive preference at each these three communities. As the three complexes had not been renovated in years, a major renovation was in order.

Rochester Management selected RCG, an affordable housing developer, to oversee the renovations. LeCesse Construction and Konopka Architecture were also selected for site work, design and construction.

A thorough review of the projects revealed the need to replace a majority of the roofs, windows, rear porches, landscaping, and all mechanicals. It became clear that some buildings needed to become handicap accessible, and as the communities lacked any community space, community centers are being built at all three projects.

A groundbreaking ceremony was held May 14, where attendees had the opportunity to see a newly renovated apartment. RCG's primary goal as developer has been to maintain the affordable nature of this project. Roger Brandt, president of RCG said, "We are honored to be able to make a

difference in the lives of so many people by providing the quality of their housing. It is wonderful that these projects that were built to assist returning veterans can be completely refurbished to serve a new generation of families."

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