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RAD Renovations

Evansville Housing Authority preparing for refurbishment of public housing

BY SEAN ADAMS / PHOTOS BY PROVIDED BY AXIOM

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Evansville Housing Authority's public housing is getting a much-needed facelift thanks to its acceptance into U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) newest assistance program.



Evansville Housing Authority Executive Director and CEO Rick Moore attends the groundbreaking on Evansville's public housing.

HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program combines assistance through low-income tax credits and privately sourced funding. Historically, public housing receives funding from Congress. However, in recent years the federal government body has not allocated enough money to fully fund operations and upkeep.

According to EHA Executive Director and CEO Rick Moore, this \$32-million, two-phase project made possible by RAD will help fix structural, infrastructural, and cosmetic damage to public housing across Evansville. Phase I — which includes improvements to 559 units in Buckner Tower (Downtown), Kennedy Tower (Downtown), Schnute Apartments (West Franklin St.), White Oak Manor (St. Joseph Avenue), and Caldwell Homes (Southeast side) — is expected to be complete by June 30, 2017. Soon thereafter, Phase II will include two waves of improvements — 230 units in Fulton Square Apartments and about 100 scattered-site units.

"We get about \$1 million a year for capital improvements, so we have been able to patch the buildings over time. We needed more money to fix the structural and infrastructural needs of the apartments, though. They were not falling apart, but we didn't want that to happen either," says Moore.

Not only has EHA acquired more funding to create better homes for their residents because of RAD, but the program also allows EHA to perform long-term planning.

"With RAD, we have a 15-to-20-year contract which is automatically renewed in 20 years. We have, in essence, stabilized our funding for the next 40 years," says Moore. "The plan for our future is to not only sustain what we have, but also garner capital to build more affordable housing units in this area."

While construction is ongoing, families have the option to transition to temporary housing within their building at no additional cost.

The program also provides hope to people who rely on public housing.

"It means transformation. We can repair, improve our facilities, provide safer places to live, and a better quality of life for our residents," says Moore. "Low-income people will have a better opportunity to reach self-sufficiency."

For more information about EHA, call 812-428-8500 or visit evansvillehousing.org.

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