

Residents affected by Sandy invited to affordable housing open house in EHT

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As part of the state's efforts to help create affordable housing in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy and inform people of these new housing opportunities, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs and New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency will join local officials and representatives from Rukenstein and Associates, LLC on Thursday, Feb. 11, for an open house of Atrium Apartments at Egg Harbor, an 84-unit development in Egg Harbor Township that received Sandy recovery funds.

The open house will be held from 12 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Atrium Apartments, 6821 Black Horse Pike, Egg Harbor Township to provide individuals, including Sandy survivors, with information about the development, apartment tours, and applications. Attendees will be able to meet the project's development team of Ron Rukenstein and John Bibeau, as well as current residents and ask questions about the development's community features, apartment amenities and pricing, according to press release.

Individuals who were displaced by and/or experienced major or severe damage from Superstorm Sandy are being given priority during the lease up of Atrium Apartments.

"Superstorm Sandy impacted New Jerseyans of all socioeconomic levels, including low-to-moderate income working families who are often living paycheck to paycheck," stated DCA Commissioner Charles A. Richman, whose Department administers many of the State's Sandy housing recovery initiatives. "Atrium Apartments is providing these storm-affected families – and people of limited financial means in general – with much needed affordable housing options in a county that was hit hard by the storm."

"HMFA is so pleased to have provided Atrium Apartments with the funding needed to take the project from concept to near completion," said HMFA Executive Director Anthony L. Marchetta. "This project represents HMFA's mission of providing safe, decent, and affordable housing that is accessible to important resources, such as public transportation, employment opportunities, stores and recreation."

The HMFA, an affiliate of the DCA, awarded the project approximately \$5.5 million in federal Sandy recovery funds through the Fund for Restoration of Multifamily Housing program, which enables developers to secure zero-interest and low-interest loans to finance affordable housing developments in the nine counties the federal government determined were most affected by the storm in Atlantic, Bergen, Cape May, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean and Union counties. HMFA also provided approximately \$822,000 in financing, and awarded the project federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits, which generated approximately \$14.5 million in private equity.

The project is revitalizing a former Clarion Hotel & Convention Center that was damaged by Sandy and abandoned. Construction of Atrium Apartments at Egg Harbor is 75 percent finished and the adaptive reuse completed to LEED Gold energy efficiency standards. It features a community room, fitness center, grand lobby, laundry facility and ample parking. The building also includes one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments that have



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kitchen appliances, air conditioning and carpeting. It is located on a major thoroughfare and is easily accessible to schools, parks, public transit and stores.

“We wanted to hold this open house before we completed construction so that we could promote this affordable opportunity for people displaced by Sandy,” said Ron Rukenstein. “John and I are pleased to have this opportunity to work with our partners to create housing that is not only affordable, but that provides a high quality of living.”

Sandy-impacted residents can learn more about other affordable housing projects funded with Sandy recovery dollars by visiting the New Jersey Housing Resource Center at www.njhrc.gov. The database is free and easy to use. On the homepage, individuals can click on “Priority Housing for Sandy-Impacted Residents.”

The page that opens will display a list of available housing opportunities throughout the nine most impacted counties. The list includes such information as where projects are located, total number of housing units, contact information for the leasing office, website/phone number for people to submit applications, and date applications are being accepted. New information is being added as it becomes available.

Sandy survivors can also sign up to receive updates via text message and email about new housing units available through the Fund for Restoration of Multifamily Housing, a Sandy recovery program. People can visit www.renewjerseystronger.org for instructions about how to register for the updates.

For more information on HMFA programs, please call 1-800-NJHOUSE or (609) 278-7400, or visit www.njhousing.gov.