

SPRINGFIELD NEWS-SUN

Shawnee nearing completion

By Samantha Sommer, Staff Writer

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SPRINGFIELD — Sharon Walls loves her view of downtown from her apartment at the Shawnee Place Apartments.

She now loves the view inside, too, as the historic building has gotten a \$14.1 million overhaul.

“They’ve been fantastic,” said Walls, who has lived at Shawnee for nine years. “Beautiful, just beautiful.”

The Model Group of Cincinnati is nearing completion of the top-to-bottom renovations of the apartments for senior or disabled residents.

Work started in July and most of it should wrap up in the next 45 days. About 20 percent of the 85 units are available for rent now. Applicants must meet income qualifications. Potential applicants can call (937) 523-0676 for more information.

The project includes a new roof, expanded and resurfaced parking, as well as lots of new items — kitchens, bathrooms, appliances, lighting, carpeting, heating and cooling systems, elevators, exterior trim and more.

“It’s pretty extensive ... It’s pretty much been a total gut and rehab,” said Robert Maly, vice president of The Model Group.

The apartment building, once the historic Shawnee Hotel, hadn’t had any major capital improvements since the mid-1980s, Maly said.

The senior housing market remains strong in Springfield, he said, and the renovations complement other large investments downtown.

The city of Springfield invested about \$125,000 in federal HOME dollars in the project.

The Shawnee is an important structure to the city, said Ed Leinasars, the city’s housing rehabilitation coordinator.

“It’s a classic building,” he said. “You don’t find many buildings like the Shawnee.”

The Model Group is following National Park Service historic renovation guidelines, a higher standard than they needed to use, Leinasars said.

“I’m really optimistic about how this is going to look,” he said. “It’s really going to help with the facade of the building and the street.”

The Model Group will continue to own and operate the Shawnee, which Maly said is why it’s going above and beyond on the project.

“Anytime we do a project of this scale, we only have one chance to do it right,” he said.

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