

# SPRINGFIELD NEWS-SUN

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## Former downtown hotel hosts \$14 mil open house

By Andrew McGinn, Staff Writer

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SPRINGFIELD — Howard Hughes and the Marx Brothers once stayed there.

Kathryn Elliott now lives there.

But for perhaps the first time in decades, Shawnee Place has all the grandeur of the Shawnee Hotel.

The senior apartment complex — once a luxurious hotel in Springfield's bustling center — played host to an open house Friday, Sept. 11, to show off a \$14 million renovation.

"To come and get a chance to live in it, as a historical place, I like that," Elliott said.

A year in the making, the renovation brought the building's 85 apartments into the 21st century with new amenities.

"It's nice," said Dorothy Robinson, a Shawnee Place resident for 12 years. "It's great compared to what it was."

But the project also was a restoration of sorts, spit-shining one of the city's 20th century jewels.

Among other things, the brick was tuck-pointed and the entrance awnings were restored to their original construction.

"We wouldn't have invested the money if we didn't have confidence in the things the city of Springfield was doing around us," said Robert Maly, vice president of development for Cincinnati-based Model Group, which purchased Shawnee Place eight years ago.

Maly called the building, which opened as a hotel on Jan. 31, 1917, a "real piece of Springfield's history."

"You've anchored this corner of the city," Assistant Mayor Karen Duncan said at a dedication in the foyer. "You're part of the first wave of the Springfield renaissance."

For Elliott, who moved in four years ago, the project had its ups and downs — but mostly ups.

"Parking was a disaster," she said. "It was worth it."

Contact this reporter at (937) 328-0352 or [amcginn@coxohio.com](mailto:amcginn@coxohio.com).

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