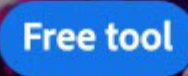



CONVERT VIDEO TO GIF  

Affordable housing complex in Baldwin can modernize nearly 40-year-old units; without ARPA aid, it would've taken another decade



photo by: Austin Hornbostel/Journal-World

Jersey Street Apartment Suites' home at 1119 Jersey St. in Baldwin City is pictured Monday, Sept. 19, 2022. The 24-unit affordable housing complex will be renovated for the first time in its nearly 40-year history, thanks to American Rescue Plan Act funding.

Baldwin Retirement Apartment Complex Inc. may sound like the name of a retirement home, but it was actually the first affordable housing agency to appear in Baldwin City, and it's the only one that's a nonprofit today.

Learn More!

Easter Services

Sunday April 9

7:00 am
Community Easter Sunrise Service
at South Park
(bring lawn chairs or blankets - at the gazebo)

9:30 am and 11:00 am
Traditional Services
Sanctuary at Trinity Lutheran
---nursery care provided---

BRAC was one of 14 county agencies to make *the final list of recipients* for Douglas County's American Rescue Plan Act funding in July, and it's the only agency on that list not based in Lawrence.

New District 3 Douglas County Commissioner Karen Willey is the nonprofit's board president. Willey wrote the grant application, but this was prior to her being selected for the commission seat to replace outgoing Commissioner Shannon Portillo.

BRAC received \$733,711, which will help the nonprofit modernize Jersey Street Apartment Suites, a 24-unit complex of one-bedroom apartments spread across four buildings. It will also allow for two of those units to be converted to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and it will allow a maintenance update that BRAC staff described to the Journal-World as crucial.

BRAC actually oversees two properties' worth of affordable housing units, said Jim Denney, the vice president of BRAC's board of directors. One of them is Orchard Lane Leisure Living, consisting entirely of units for senior residents, and the other is Jersey Street, which doesn't have any age requirements for its rentals.

The nonprofit came into being and continues to be subsidized through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development sector. It's what allowed Orchard Lane to be constructed in the first place, Denney said. BRAC officially became a 501(c)3 nonprofit in 2017.

Both properties are "fixed-rent," property manager Wendy Cherry said; their rent prices have to be approved by the USDA and don't tend to increase as much over time because of that. Cherry said the USDA also provides rent assistance for folks who need it, dependent on their income.

Orchard Lane is the older of the two properties, having been constructed when BRAC began operating in the late 1970s. But it has also been fully renovated since then, thanks to a USDA grant back in 2015.

"But that still left Jersey Street in 1984 status," Denney said, referring to the year that property was constructed. "It's in good condition. They're all clean; (the staff) does a wonderful job, but it's dated. It has older appliances in it, things like that. Cabinets, stoves. It's a maintenance headache."

That shows in some units on the property. BRAC staff showed the Journal-World one unit, which had the original carpet, closet doors and bathroom vanity from when it was first constructed. Another unit had updated carpet and kitchen tiling, but also the original kitchen cabinets and skinny Kenmore stove installed in 1984.



photo by: Austin Hornbostel/Journal-World

One unit at Jersey Street Apartment Suites has updated kitchen tiling and carpet, but its cabinets and one appliance — the stove — have not been updated since 1984.

The lack of large-scale renovations makes it difficult to address any maintenance issues, Denney said. To fix a plumbing issue, for example, water has to be turned off for the entire complex, not just one unit.

Another issue is the properties' maintenance building itself, which is currently more of a shed. The ARPA funding will pay for it to be torn down and replaced by a pre-fabricated building, partially to address a stormwater drainage issue due to a ditch running by the structure. It's also intended to give the properties' maintenance manager, Loyce Bell, more space to operate.



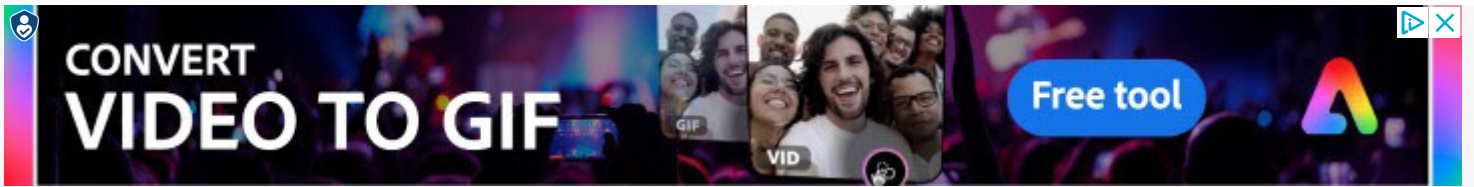
photo by: Austin Hornbostel/Journal-World

The maintenance building for Baldwin Retirement Apartment Complex Inc.'s properties is set to be replaced using American Rescue Plan Act funding.

There's no real timeline for the work quite yet, Denney said, but the nonprofit's leaders have been working on lining up potential contractors. They hope to begin the work this fall, starting with getting the new maintenance building on the property.

It's a project that definitely wouldn't be happening if not for ARPA aid. In fact, it would be a 10-year project without it, Denney said. But that would just lead to putting more "Band-Aids" on problems as they arise, rather than fixing them outright.

"This project is a multiple of our annual budget," Denney said. "What we'd planned on doing was just updating as you can."



CONVERT VIDEO TO GIF

Free tool

The advertisement features a vibrant, multi-colored background with a group of smiling people. On the left, the text 'CONVERT VIDEO TO GIF' is displayed in large, white, bold letters. To the right, a blue button with the text 'Free tool' is visible. In the top right corner, there is a small icon of a play button and a close button (X). The overall aesthetic is modern and social-media-oriented.