

## The Big Picture with Erin Brereton: **Energy-Efficiency's Vitalizing Effect on** Affordable and Low-Income Housing Green design has become a popular way to

market new homes. Now, it's catching on in a new segment of the housing market: Affordable and low-income housing building renovations. With benefits that include savings and a better overall residential experience, it's a trend that's likely to continue. Increasing Energy Efficiency and Oct 30, 2008

Green design has become a popular way to market new homes.

f Subscribe to MHN

Now, it's catching on in a new segment of the housing market: Affordable and low-income housing building renovations. With

experience, it's a trend that's likely to continue. Increasing Energy Efficiency and Savings LINC Housing Corp. is currently renovating the Terracina Apartments in San Jacinto, Calif., for general maintenance improvements. To offer residents energy savings, LINC also is making several green upgrades and renovations to the property,

benefits that include savings and a better overall residential

Hunter L. Johnson, LINC Housing president and CEO, tells MHN.

The alterations-which should offer a 25 percent improvement in eneray efficiency-include: Adding cool-roof radiant shingles Installing CFL lighting And adding energy-efficient water heaters, heating and cooling systems and appliances.

In market price properties, over-time energy savings may offer a huge draw for residents. With energy costs soaring, renters are

If a property has been recently outfitted with extra insulation and

looking to reduce their gas and electric bills.

energy-saving appliances that will allow

companies.

Improving Resident Life

help improve resident life.

linked to asthma.

them to, the units will have an advantage over other area rentals that aren't energy efficient—which the affordable housing industry is also starting to recognize.

Making Affordable More Reasonable In affordable housing, energy efficiency can be even more of an issue. It's clear rising energy costs have become a concern for

economically challenged residents and the states they live in. Illinois, for example, expects costs to be so high that it has added an additional \$118 million to help low-income families with winter heating costs, according to Chicago's ABC affiliate. The Metropolitan Housing Coalition, a Louisville, Ky.-based

nonprofit housing group, released a study this week showing families are spending more of their income on utility bills due to

rising energy costs. The group is recommending new incentives and public funds be allotted to raise the energy efficiency of rental units and older homes, according to the Louisville Courier-Journal.

But residents aren't the only ones who can benefit from

increased energy efficiency. It can help management companies control their costs, as well. Use of additional insulation and low-energy lighting can reduce the expense of lighting and heating of common areas-and improve the bottom line for management

Consider Wheeler Terrace, a development located in Washington, D.C.'s Anacostia, neighborhood. The 118-unit complex is about to undergo a renovation with green materials

Using environmentally- and health-conscious materials can be a particularly important component of low-income housing, according to David Bowers, the Local Office Director for

such as carpets that won't attract dirt and paints that aren't

In addition to offering residents savings, going green can also

Enterprise Community Partners, which is overseeing the renovation. "What often gets lost in the discussion about living green is that often, low-income folks and persons of color are disproportionately impacted by respiratory illness," Bowers told the Washington Post. "Many times that's related to the fact that

they're living in substandard housing."

obtain due to tightened credit conditions.

many areas, the need for affordable housing appears to be on That's true in areas like California, where the housing market was particularly hard hit during the slump. In troubled markets, the need for rental housing is likely to be strong as single-family home foreclosures increase and home loans become harder to

We're already seeing a need for more affordable housing in some parts of California. In San Mateo, Calif., for example, the city council last week approved a five percentage point increase

in the number of mandatory affordable units in new

In many ways, adding energy efficient touches and green materials makes more sense than ever-partially because in

## developments, according to the Palo Alto Daily News. And, in addition to the need for more housing, the recent U.S.

A new report by McKinsey Global Institute called "Fueling Sustainable Development: The Energy Productivity Solution" suggests that the current rocky economy and recent oil price spikes could urge governments and businesses to invest heavily

in energy efficiency, according to the New York Times. That could mean more funding for adding energy-saving features during building remodeling—which could prompt more

builders and developers to go green.

Tell us what you think.

financial stumbles may actually help green renovation practices

With today's tight credit and budgets, increasing a development's renovation costs can be a tricky propositionespecially for low-income and affordable housing remodeling jobs. Could the extra cost have a deterring effect? Or will the eventual savings green design can offer residents and building owners outweigh the extra expense?

Green materials and design do add a slight additional cost to a project. (About 5 percent or less, according to the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.)

Student Housing

National Outlook Wednesday, Sept. 29 10 a.m. PDT

Yardi Matrix

Regions Bank Closes \$126M LIHTC Fund

ODL Inc. Debuts Slimmer Blink Blinds

**RELATED POSTS** 

Timeless Structures Finding New Life as Affordable Senior Housing Why Las Vegas Multifamily Is On a Roll Standing Out in a Sea of Sameness With Cortland

**REGIONS Northeast** 

West

South

**Midwest** 

Mid-Atlantic

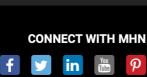
International

**National** 

Cities...

☑ SUBSCRIBE TO MHN





DIGITAL EDITIONS

About Us Contact Advertising **Editorial Guidelines** Industry Links **Archive** Tags Authors

**Cookies Settings** 

**5** 

×

easy and meaningful and to better understand how they are used. You can find out more about which cookies we are using and update your preferences in Cookies Settings. By clicking "Accept All Cookies," you are agreeing to our use of cookies. Cookie Notice

**Accept All Cookies** 

We use cookies to make interactions with our