

TIMES HERALD-RECORD

HUDSON EDITION

MONDAY, MAY 17, 2004

www.recordonline.com

50 CENTS

Rentals are hard to come by

Influx of jobs leaves housing shortages

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Monticello – Hey, Sullivan County, got a room for rent?

An apartment building boom could bring more than 1,300 new rental units to the county next year.

But that's still going to leave renters begging for more, housing experts say.

"The need is tremendous," said the county's housing planning expert, Joe Czajka, noting that the Mighty M's Racino and Crystal Run Health Care will bring 700 jobs alone.

"Where will they live?"

Right now, shoddy apartments are being rented for "Orange County prices" of \$600 and up; and decent three-bedroom houses are impossible to find for under \$1,200, said Andrea Baez, the Section 8 program administrator for Sullivan County's Rural Housing Opportunities.

Section 8 recipients – folks under the federal poverty guidelines who qualify for federal housing assistance – are living in 1960s-era Garden Apartments, fleabag hotels or tiny rooms in single-family homes that were sectioned off into apartments, Baez said.

Monticello Housing Authority



Times Herald-Record/JED EGAN

Two of the seven apartment buildings in a new 56-unit, low-income housing development in Monticello are seen through the window of a third. The construction on the project on Dollard Drive will most likely be completed by the end of the year, with four of the houses ready by August.

David Kaufman says 50 of his 455 clients with Section 8 vouchers can't find anything in the \$695 to \$968 range.

But Czajka said it's not just lower income apartments that are needed.

"We need it on every side of the spectrum."

Still, it's not all bad news. Several projects are before the town and village planning boards.

They include:

► 117 units overlooking Kiamesha Lake, which is pending final site plan approval in the Town of Thompson. Likely for professionals.

► A 170 unit senior housing complex on Colonial Hill in Monticello. The developer says the project is still in the conceptual stage, but will be designed for folks on a modest budget.

► A seven-building complex called Horizons is already going

up on Dollard Drive off West Broadway – Monticello's first new apartment for working families in years. The two and three-bedroom apartments will rent for \$384 to \$680 monthly, but folks have to meet federal poverty guidelines to apply.

Horizons Owner Ken Regan says he has had 100 applications for the first 32 units, which will be ready for occupancy Aug. 1.

"We could fill 10 times that

Apartment units on the table:

Monticello: 532 units

- 238 higher-end apartments on High Street (preliminary planning)
- 170 affordable rental units for seniors on Colonial (conceptual stage)
- 68 units on Hillcrest Avenue (planning board)
- Horizons: 56, two- and three-bedroom, affordable apartments off West Broadway (under construction)

Town of Thompson: 541 units

- Thompson Lake Apartments (planning board): 424, one- and two-bedroom upscale rental town houses on 66 acres behind Home Depot
- Fairways at Kiamesha Lake (planning board): 117 units, two- and three-bedrooms on 16 acres across from the Concord

Fallsburg: 288 units

- Laurels of Fallsburg, South Fallsburg (planning board): 288 units Elm Drive.

amount without even blinking," Regan said.

JoAnn McLeod, who lives in a town house next to Horizons, knows all about the rental shortage. McLeod's 24-year-old daughter and her husband couldn't find a place in Monticello.

But they also earn too much to apply at Horizons. They had to move to an apartment in Woodbourne.