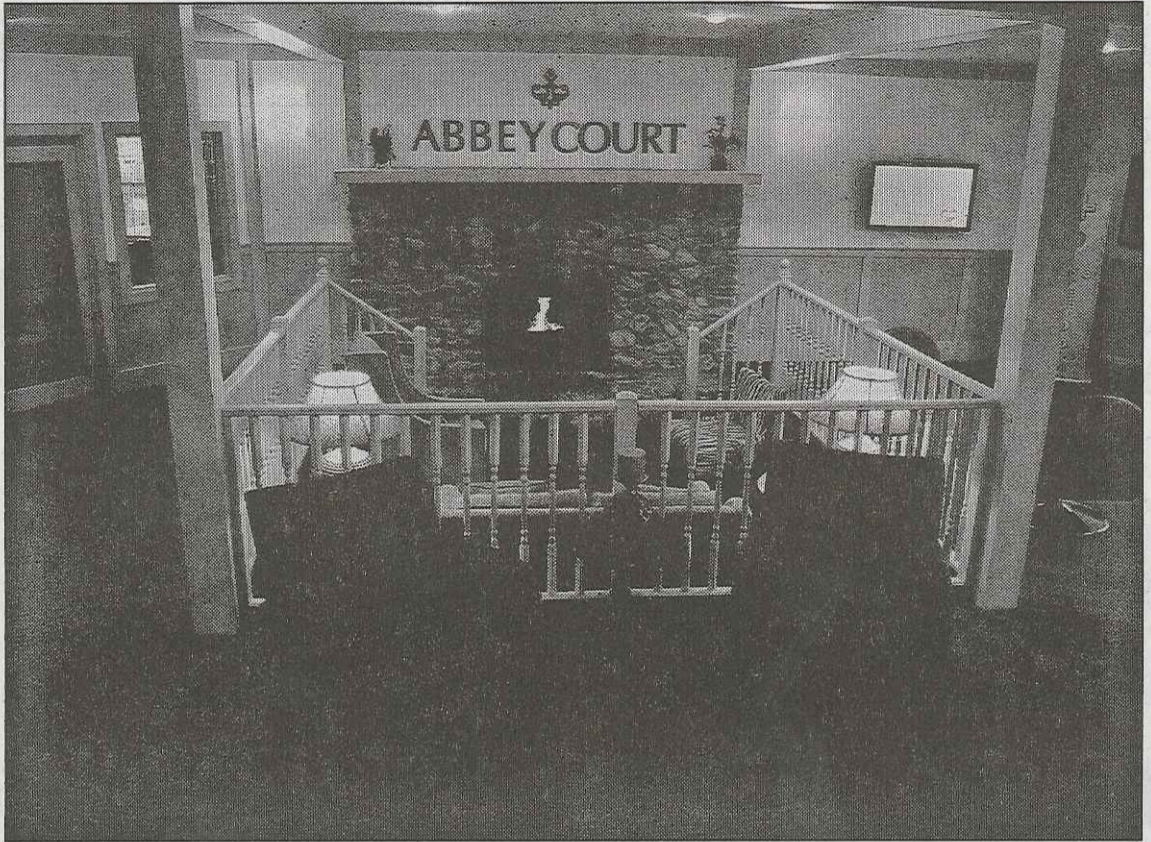


## Complex owners complete \$2.7 million renovations



DARRYL SMITH / Courier & Press

Abbey Court Apartments, formerly Stonehedge Apartments, has remodeled its property. The welcome center now includes a fitness center, a coffee bar, a business center and a Nintendo Wii gaming area.

# Abbey Court unveiled

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Less than a year ago, Ethel and Patrick Thornton, residents of Stonehedge Apartments on Evansville's East Side, were skeptical of the complex's new owners' long list of proposed improvements.

"Oh, whatever. We've heard that all before," Ethel Thornton sighed.

In an interview Monday, she said she and her husband considered moving, after experiencing unkept promises by a number of former Stonehedge owners and managers over the years.

Now that the wraps are off the new owners' renovations, which have cost them \$2.7 million, Ethel Thornton has a different story to tell.

"They have just done a remarkable job," she said. "It's really nice. They have fixed everything, including providing every unit, which has washer-and-dryer hookups, with venting systems: something we never had before.

"We love it here and won't go anywhere else."

Ben Stewart, another resident, agreed.

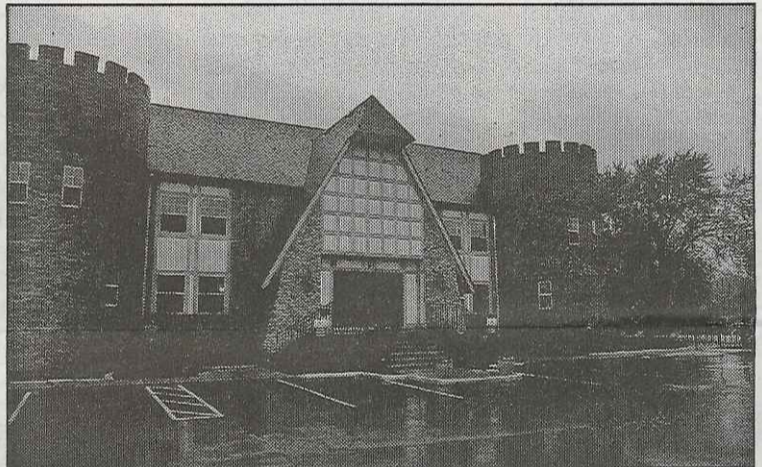
"It's perfect. They did a great job. I didn't think they would really do as much as they did or make it as nice as it is."

The complex, renamed Abbey Court Apartments, is off Monroe Avenue, behind Washington Square Mall.

The improvements and upgrades also include all new windows, doors, siding, shutters and signage.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony with reception is set for 4 p.m. today.

Carmel, Ind.-based Hearthview Residential, doing business as Abbey Court LLC, bought the 250-unit Stonehedge Apartments on June 11 for about \$4.25 million,



The newly remodeled welcome center at Abbey Court Apartments.

according to the Vanderburgh County Assessor's Office.

Representatives of AMH Abbey Court, an affiliate of Indianapolis nonprofit Affordable Midwest Housing, proposed buying the complex, using tax-exempt bonds, and leasing units there to people with low- or moderate-incomes.

The proposals raised the ire of some residents and neighbors.

After meeting with a group of residents and neighbors who were unreceptive, Michael Petrie, president of Affordable Midwest Housing, withdrew the request for the tax-exempt bonds.

Instead, it was decided the complex owners would foot the renovations expense, and the complex would remain open to residents of all income levels.

Kelli Lawrence of Indianapolis, one of the owners, said she was pleased that Hearthview Residential was able to keep its promises to the community.

"We've done everything we told them we'd do when we made the purchase."

She said it's been nice to have the residents stay there through the renovations, and for the neighbors to enjoy the improvements as well.

"We wanted to do everything as quickly as we could to bring the apartments community up to speed."

Some units will be renovated over the next five years as tenants move out and new ones move in.

Hearthview Residential owns CRG Residential, the general contractor for the local project, with assistance from some local subcontractors, Lawrence said.

"Our workers understand the work that renovations of this size require. Because of that, they were able to work fast."

Pamela Lovell, community manager for Abbey Court Apartments, said with the improvements come a few changes for residents. The apartment complex no longer will furnish utilities, she said.

Those expenses will be the responsibility of the tenants. Holders of long-term leases may receive some considerations initially to help offset the expense.

New tenants will pay higher rent, based on the current market value, Lovell said.

Abbey Court Apartments is 96 percent occupied. It's expected to be 98 percent occupied soon, she said.