

Rebirth for Ephrata motel site

Cloister Heights provides county's newest housing for homeless



The Cloister Heights building occupies the former site of the Cloister Motor Court Motel in Ephrata.

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Nonprofit housing developer Community Basics Inc. announced Monday the opening of its newest housing community, Cloister Heights in Ephrata.

The former site of the decaying, vacant Cloister Motor Court Motel was extensively renovated and converted into a two-story dwelling for people experiencing homelessness.

At a total cost of \$2.1 million, the new building at 830 W. Main St. fea-

tures 12 one-bedroom apartments in the main building and three two-bedroom apartments in an adjacent 1948-era house that once served as a hotel office.

Ken Smith, executive director of Community Basics, said the apartments will not be for transient use.

"They may be permanent homes for people who are experiencing homelessness," Smith said.

The hotel, he said, had been vacant for about five years.

There already is a waiting list for the two-bedroom apartments, but two of the one-bedroom units

are still available.

The one-bedroom units rent for \$600 a month, while \$700 gets a tenant into a two-bedroom apartment. However, Smith said, the rent will be 30 percent of the residents' income, and utilities are included in the rental fees.

All the apartments include a living room, bedroom and bathroom.

Several groups provided the necessary funds for the conversion of the former motel. The project was funded by the state Depart-

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ment of Community Affairs, Urban Enhancement Redevelopment Fund, the Lancaster County Housing and Redevelopment Authority and the United Way of Lancaster County.

“There was also money available from the Environmental Protection Agency that was used separately for cleanup efforts,” Smith said.

Cloister Heights represents 10 percent of the 150 units that the Lancaster County Coalition to End Homelessness called for in 2008 when

it announced a 10-year plan to end homelessness in the county.

The coalition is a network of private organizations, government agencies, businesses and elected officials working to eradicate homelessness in Lancaster.

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Wreck

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appear to be life-threatening