

Eagle Rock Spruced Up With Stimulus Cash

BY MICHELLE ASCHWALD

New soundproof, energy-efficient sliding-glass doors and windows enhance Kurt Allsman's studio apartment at Kruger Pines, the 40-year-old, three-story, 45-unit public rental complex for seniors and the disabled, located in the Eagle Rock neighborhood near Strawberry.

"I am happy with the new improvements," Allsman, 56, a Tiburon native and four-year tenant of Kruger Pines, told *The Ark*. "When I shut the window at night, I don't hear the freeway noise."

In addition to the new windows and sliding glass doors, the low-income apartments have been renovated with a new roof, exterior paint, siding, sprinklers and fire alarm upgrades, retaining walls, drainage, an expanded parking lot and landscaping in front of the building as a result of the Marin Housing Authority's \$1.1 million repair and restoration project, provided by the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

"We feel fortunate that, after aggressively applying for competitive funds, we were able to secure a record amount of funding" — likely the largest percentage of any Housing Authority in California, housing authority Executive Director Dan Nackerman told *The Ark*. "This accomplishes the three E's: enhancing the living environment for our wonderful residents; energy savings and green elements galore; and employment for construction workers and construction trainees at a critical time in American history when jobs are disappearing."

The Kruger Pines project took one year to complete and employed 26 local construction and trades people, he added. The facility offers public housing in which tenants pay 30 percent of their income toward rent, and the rest is subsidized up to the complex's cost to break even.

A major policy goal of President Barack Obama, the recovery act grants are provided by Congress to help stimulate local economies, generate green tech jobs and improve energy efficiency.

"Funding from the recovery act is making a positive difference in our communities during these turbulent economic times, and the Kruger Pines project is the perfect example," U.S. Rep. Lynn Woolsey, D-Petaluma, stated in a press release.

An additional \$2.5 million in recovery act grants will be spent for remodeling projects at 10 affordable Marin Housing Authority communities throughout Marin.

There are 7,000 families waitlisted at the authority, due to an overwhelming demand for low-income or moderate housing in the county, according to Nackerman.

Allsman, who was raised in a family of nine children and lived in a Paradise Drive home in Tiburon, said he enjoys living at the senior and disabled apartments on 2.5 wooded acres.

"I like the natural setting. Many of my family members live locally," Allsman said. "It is great they can easily visit me, now that there are new parking spaces."

Sarah Iqbal, a resident of an upscale, single-family-homes neighborhood on the street above Kruger Pines, told *The Ark* that the parking lot is vastly improved.

"For the longest time, there were cars jamming the narrow roadway in front of the complex because there was nowhere else to park," she said. "The Kruger Pines complex looks much more attractive. Seniors deserve to live in dignity."

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Kruger Pines, an affordable-housing community in Strawberry's Eagle Rock neighborhood, has just been renovated with a \$1.1 million grant from federal economic stimulus funding. Photo: Elliot Karlan