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## Connecticut's Augustana Homes Preserved as Affordable

*By Jeffrey Steele, Contributing Writer*

Bridgeport, Ct.—Augustana Homes, a 186-unit affordable senior apartment community in Bridgeport, Ct., will receive \$4 million in improvements and renovations, and will be preserved as affordable for an additional 30 years.

The announcement was made by Related Affordable, a division of Related Companies, which recently acquired the property from Augustana Homes of Bridgeport Inc., of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Related will partner with the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, the Bridgeport Housing Authority and the City of Bridgeport's Office of Planning and Economic Development in the renovation initiative.

"Preserving and restoring affordable housing is a cornerstone of Related's 40-year real estate legacy," Matthew Finkle, president of Related Affordable, tells *MHN*. "The purchase of Augustana Homes is an extension of that commitment. We were thrilled to work with our city partners in Bridgeport, who shared our goal of preserving these units as affordable . . . Related Affordable has renovated tens of thousands of apartments without displacing residents. We are currently working on a comprehensive plan that will enable our management team to do the same at Augustana."

Located on just over three acres of land, Augustana Homes is a 10-story building constructed in 1982 and last rehabilitated in 1990.

Planned renovations will bring about new kitchens, bathrooms and windows. Capital improvements will include new boilers, roof and lighting. The entire building will receive new carpet and paint, and there will be a comprehensive renovation of the 4,500-square-foot community room.

A DVR security monitoring system will be installed, and all elevators will be given substantial upgrades. Significant masonry repairs are also to be part of the work expected complete in May 2014, without any need for resident displacement.

One hundred eighty of the 186 units are part of the Section 8 Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) program, which in the case of Augustana Homes delivers affordable housing for older adults in Bridgeport. Related secured a 20-year renewal and extension of the Section 8 HAP contract as part of the financing. In addition, most of the units are further set aside for residents with incomes at or below 60 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI).

The Bridgeport Housing Authority provided \$13.75 million in tax-exempt bond financing to make possible the preservation of the apartments. The tax-exempt bonds are credit enhanced by Fannie Mae via Oak Grove Capital.

The City of Bridgeport's Office of Planning and Economic Development provided a long-term PILOT agreement. Wells Fargo served as the tax-credit investor, providing \$5.8 million in equity through the purchase of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits issued by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority.

"Everyone, regardless of income level, deserves to have a beautiful and safe place to call home," Finkle says. "The renovations we have planned for Augustana Homes will provide all of its residents a better quality of life, both in their homes and in the common areas."