

**HFA:** Illinois Housing Development Authority  
**Name of Entry:** Making Green a Priority – Wingate Manor  
**Category:** Rental Housing  
**Subcategory:** Encouraging New Production

## **NCSHA 2010 Annual Awards for Program Excellence**

### **Background**

When Wingate Manor opened its doors in downstate Illinois on May 25, 2010, it was a special moment for the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA). This 48-unit independent living facility epitomized what IHDA wanted to achieve in the area of green affordable housing development. At IHDA, we don't just believe in increasing affordable housing options for people of low means, we believe in doing so responsibly. IHDA has always been committed to green production, yet understands that it's not always an attractive option for developers because of the high costs.

Recognizing that the Authority's achievements in green production are very much shaped by the applications that come in, IHDA took matters into its own hands. In 2008, IHDA set "green production" as a new priority for the agency and for the first time ever, introduced green points into the Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) for tax credit applications. The results were overwhelming. By doing so, IHDA has encouraged green production across Illinois.

Among the first to be awarded tax credits under the revised QAP was Wingate Manor, developed by St. Louis-based Gundaker Commercial Group. Wingate Manor is an excellent model for green affordable housing development – not only did the development help the Authority get the ball rolling on a new priority, but the new incentives inspired the developer to literally take the ball and run with it. The outcome was Wingate Manor.

### **Wingate Manor Goes Green**

Located in Shiloh, Illinois, Wingate Manor is a 48-unit development that provides affordable, safe and decent housing options for the area's growing elderly population, allowing them to remain living in the area. It offers residents one- and two-bedroom apartments at approximately \$255 to \$660 a month. Tenants must be at or below 60 percent of the area median income.

Gundaker Commercial Group applied to IHDA for Low-Income Housing Tax Credit financing under Round II of 2008. This was the same year the Authority first incorporated environmentally friendly incentives into the guidelines for awarding federal tax credits. IHDA invested more than \$586,000 in federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits to build Wingate Manor. The tax credits helped leverage an additional \$4.9 million in private equity for the \$7.1 million development. IHDA also invested \$1.8 million in HOME Investment Partnership funds. Additional funding came from the Bank of America and St. Clair County.

### **Green Features**

In addition to the more standard requirement of installing Energy Star qualified appliances, Gundaker Commercial incorporated numerous environmental considerations into the building's design and landscaping:

- Solar heating
- Solar lighting
- Wind turbines
- Rain gardens to reduce storm water runoff
- Bamboo flooring (Bamboo is a sustainable resource)
- Two hydraulic elevators using biodegradable fluids
- Recycled content for foundation, roof, flooring, cabinets, shelves, countertops etc.
- Irrigation system with efficiency devices such as a soil moisture or rain sensor
- Protection of trees and natural features during construction

### **National Recognition**

IHDA was not the only one to notice Gundaker Commercial Group's efforts. In May 2010, the National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB) named Wingate Manor *Multifamily Project of the Year* under its Green Certification program. Consequently, the development became the country's first Multi-Family Rental Development and the first federal Tax Credit Development to be certified "green" by the NAHB (see supporting materials).

### **A Mixed-Use Community**

Wingate Manor is also unique in that it is part of a two-phase, master-planned 172 acre development that provides a cost-effective, mixed-use approach to assisted living for seniors. The development's residents will share many local amenities with the residents of the 25 single family homes adjacent to the development that are currently under construction. A new elementary school is scheduled to break ground next year will include a walking path leading directly to Wingate Manor, providing seniors with easy access to the school's gym facilities; the local St. Elizabeth's Hospital will provide health screenings, education programs, physician services and exercise programs; and the community college located less than a mile away will offer a targeted seniors program. Retail boutiques and a bank are also planned. As a result, Wingate Manor provides the perfect balance between independence and care for its residents.

### **The Need for Wingate Manor**

Wingate Manor fulfills a great need for affordable senior housing located within an affluent suburban area of St. Louis. Its 48 units add to the area's scarce affordable housing stock. The development increases affordable housing options for local seniors who, in the past, have had very little choices. Wingate Manor allows the community's low-income seniors to continue to afford living close to family members in an area where they raised their children, and in a community that has become their family and home.

Wingate Manor has also helped to preserve affordable units for seniors in the Village of Shiloh following the recent closure of Meredith Memorial Home, which placed many of its senior residents at risk of becoming homeless. A number of former Meredith Home residents have since made Wingate Manor their new home.

Wingate Manor is helping keep families together affordably. Many nearby homeowners are grateful for the opportunity to have elderly relatives live independently and close by, yet remain active through the services provided.

## Results

Since the green components were included in the 2008 QAP, a staggering 91 percent of developments funded with Low Income Housing Tax Credits have integrated environmentally friendly features into their projects. The green features increase affordability, helping seniors to save on energy bills.

Wingate Manor received the full allowable points under the QAP green development components. In fact, they far exceeded requirements and have since become IHDA's model for green affordable housing development.

"We have always been a very environmentally conscious company but what the 2008 QAP did was inspire us to do more," said Greg Lee, Gundaker Commercial Group Senior Vice President.

There is more encouraging news. Wingate Manor incorporates the greenest features of all of Gundaker Commercial's 10 affordable housing developments across the St. Louis Metropolitan area and Illinois. Lee says the development has set a new standard for green development in his company and it is a direction they intend to maintain.

"By formalizing the green features into the QAP, IHDA created a system and provided a standard by which we could measure ourselves," adds Lee.

## IHDA's Continued Commitment to Green

### Moving Forward with the 2010 QAP

Continuing our diligence in promoting environmental initiatives, IHDA once again revised guidelines for this year's QAP to create stronger incentives for green features, including a new scoring system.

For the first time in the history of the QAP, IHDA is mandating a number of green features:

- Low-flow faucets, shower heads and toilets
- Native vegetation — which are more water absorbent
- Energy Star appliances
- Must provide a manual to property owners to give them information on how to properly maintain green features

Under the new scoring program, points will be awarded to projects committed to obtaining a sustainable building certification from one of the following entities:

- NAHB Model Green Home Building Guidelines
- Enterprise Green Communities
- U.S. Green Building Council's LEED certification
- National Green Building Standard

IHDA recognizes that getting the affordable housing industry to adopt green practices is not something that can be achieved overnight. However, we have learned that what we can do is use the QAP as the vehicle to drive projects in a greener direction.