



This 12-unit apartment building at 506-510 Center St. is being renovated by Indelible Housing, Inc. Grinnell College 1976 alumnus Dick Knapp is president of the new owner, Indelible Housing, Inc., which plans

to complete renovations by June of 2022, including upgrades to landscaping, the playground, entrances and common areas.

KNAPP AND LOCAL TEAM IMPLEMENTING RENOVATIONS

Center St. Apartment getting interior, exterior upgrades

Indelible Housing Inc. closed Sept. 30 on the acquisition of the 12-unit Center St. Apartments complex at 506-510 Center St. The property was transferred to Indelible by previous owner, the Mayflower Community, which collaborated closely with Indelible to ensure the preservation of this 12-unit USDA-financed workforce housing complex occupied by moderate income families. Grinnell College 1976 alumnus Dick Knapp is president of Indelible.

Center St. Apartments was built in 1980 by Ramsey Weeks interests and has been owned by Mayflower since 2004. The apartments sit on a 31,493-square-foot land parcel once owned by City of Grinnell founder J.B. Grinnell. In 1854, J.B. Grinnell sold land including the parcel where the

apartments are located to Iowa College of Davenport as part of a plan to move that academic institution to the City of Grinnell and re-name it Grinnell College.

Steve Langerud, executive director of the Mayflower Community, explains that the Mayflower became the apartments' owner at a time when USDA rules allowed owners to manage such properties. After 2004, USDA changed those rules, no longer allowing owners to do management. Since property management is inherent in Mayflower operations, the change requiring an outside manager was difficult for Mayflower whose core mission is managing senior housing.

For 17 years, Mayflower owned the important workforce housing resource on the west side of Grinnell near Arbor

Lake. In recent years the aging of the property's roofs, windows, heating and cooling systems, kitchens and baths prompted Mayflower to seek a new owner with expertise in affordable housing rehab and preservation.

Langerud discovered that Knapp, a property developer based in the Washington, D.C., area, was interested in acquiring Center St. Apartments for Indelible Housing Inc.

"We were able to transfer the property that is not part of our core business to someone who wants it," Langerud observes. "We all want to keep this kind of affordable and subsidized housing in Grinnell. Dick Knapp is very interested in doing that as part of his core business. And he's done so much other development work here already. This is a nice addition to the other things he's done for Grinnell in developing property."

Knapp, as a side note to his D.C. activities, has been buying and re-positioning properties around Grinnell's historic central square, creating loft apartments, the Prairie Canary restaurant, downtown college office space and various boutique stores.

In 2018 he formed Indelible Housing Inc., a 501 (c)(3) non-profit that buys, renovates, and owns threatened HUD and USDA multi-family communi-

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ties. Center Street Apartments is part of Indelible's \$75 million portfolio of affordable communities concentrated in Iowa, Missouri and Pennsylvania. Other properties include an 80-unit senior housing complex in Waterloo and buildings in a suburb of Kansas City and in Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

Before the Sept. 30 closing at which Indelible became the owner, Langerud worked out a deal with USDA and Indelible to allow Indelible to invest a \$175,000 loan in Center Street to renovate five of the 12 Center Street units in order to ensure they could remain marketable. That "early start" renovation has already remodeled nearly half of the apartments.

"We're out. He's in, so people can continue to live there at a very reasonable rate and with an exceptional manager in Karen McNaul," Langerud says.

Knapp says Indelible will complete a \$54,000 per unit modernization of the property. The renovation scope includes new kitchen appliances, countertops, cabinets and flooring; completely new bathrooms; new windows and siding; new entrances and lighting; landscape and play area improvements; refurbished common areas and laundry rooms; heating and cooling system replacements; and eventually a roof replacement.

Indelible also voluntarily agreed to an \$80,000 renovation to convert one unit to a fully accessible dwelling unit, along with wheelchair accessible routes, in compliance with the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards and Americans with Disabilities Act.

To finance the acquisition and renovation, Indelible stitched together financing from various public and non-profit sources, including assump-

tion of the remaining \$152,000 debt Mayflower owed to USDA; an additional \$448,000 loan to Indelible from USDA; a generous contribution from the Brownell Family Foundation; and Indelible Housing Inc. equity. Knapp says the entire deal is worth around \$900,000.

Indelible has put together a local team to accomplish the Center St. re-positioning. The general contractor for the renovation is Craig Cooper's Cooper Construction Services, the property manager is Karen McNaul Real Estate, the project architect is Robert H. Warner of Cedar Rapids and the real estate attorney is Tom Lacina, assisted by USDAspecial counsel Tyler Ramsey of Dexter, Mo.

Completion of the renovation is scheduled for June 1, 2022. One of the 12 apartment units is already vacant due to a rare move-out, so that unit will be the first to be renovated. No disruptive relocation of tenants during renovation will be necessary. The plan is to move residents from their current, unrenovated unit to a newly renovated unit sequentially over the eight-month rehab project.

Rents for the two-bedroom units and the accessible one-bedroom unit will be on average \$344 per month, which includes tenant-paid electric bills for heating/AC, hot water, and plug-ins. The market rent for these Center St. families would otherwise be \$700 per month, based on market-comparable rents for 40-year-old, renovated properties in the City of Grinnell similar to Center St. Apartments.

Indelible Housing is a non-profit engaged in acquiring government-assisted housing (USDA and HUD) and re-positioning it financially and physically for long term ownership and preservation. More information is available at <http://indeliblehousing.org/>.

Senate votes down re-districting map, re-drawing underway

In Iowa's decennial re-districting process, later than normal because census figures were delayed by the pandemic, Iowa's legislature has rejected the first proposed re-districting plan, and the Legislative Services Agency (LSA) will now draw up a new proposed plan. Re-districting by the Iowa House and Senate must be completed before Dec. 1 or re-districting becomes the duty of the Iowa Supreme Court. After rejection of the first plan, LSA announced that it would issue new maps by Oct. 21 and that the legislature could act on those maps, approving or rejecting them, as early as Oct. 28.

Sponsors and representatives were called to the state capital for a special session on Oct. 5 to consider adoption of the first LSA plan. The plan proposed new boundaries for Congressional, Senate and House districts.

Iowa law requires that the districts

be as compact as possible and that the population of each district be no more than one percent larger or smaller than the ideal population. For example, with 100 Iowa House districts, the total state population is divided by 100 to define the population of ideal House districts. Both the House and Senate went into session at 10 a.m. on Oct. 5. The Senate referred the bill defining new districts to account for population shifts, S.F. 620, to its state government committee. The bill contains over 20,000 words and states in words the exact boundaries of each proposed new district.

At the same time the Senate's rules and administration committee took up S.R. 9, a resolution rejecting the first proposed plan and giving LSA the reasons why the plan was rejected.

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COVID-19 new case totals slowly ebbing in county, state

New weekly COVID-19 case figures in Iowa and Poweshiek County have leveled out, no longer rising sharply over the previous week but not decisively falling either. Poweshiek County Public Health Director Shama Callaway says the virus in Iowa has "plateaued," dropping but only slightly in each of the past two weeks. Booster shots for those vaccinated with Pfizer are now available, and both Moderna and Johnson & Johnson have petitioned for approval of boosters.

Poweshiek County in the past four weeks has recorded new weekly case figures of 65, 78, 62 and 76 — all dramatically higher than weekly totals of less than ten from mid-March to mid-August. Poweshiek has now confirmed more than 2,000 cases, with 2,026 recorded as of Oct. 6.

The county recorded only one case in June and 18 in July as vaccinations spread and before the delta variant spread widely. August saw 108 cases and September 270. In the week ending Oct. 6, 14 cases were confirmed, a slower rate so far than in the past two months. Fourteen-day positivity rate percentages in those four weeks were 11, 13, 6, 12.8 and 13.2.

In Grinnell schools in the 7.5 weeks since opening day on Aug. 23, 26 students have reported positive tests, only 16 of those in the past week and none since Oct. 1. A total of 14 staff members have tested positive, three in the past week.

At Grinnell College, nine students

have tested positive for COVID-19 since Aug. 1, one in the past week. The college has administered 1,658 COVID-19 tests to date. Fourteen staff members have tested positive, two in the past week.

UnityPoint Health-Grinnell Regional Medical Center (GRMC) on Oct. 6 was providing care for five COVID-19 in-patients, one more than the count a week ago. GRMC provided in-patient care for a total of 12 COVID-19 in-patients in the two-week period from Sept. 19 to Oct. 2, up from eight during the previous two-week period. Some hospitals elsewhere are suspending elective procedures until the pandemic surge is over, though GRMC has no such suspension in effect and continuously monitors circumstances to determine if changes are needed.

Poweshiek County went from 50.2 percent fully vaccinated a month ago to 51.6 fully vaccinated as of Oct. 6, going from 9,292 to 9,551 fully vaccinated residents, an increase of 259 people, nearly 65 each week. Another 586 people have received the first of the two-shot series. In the past month, Grinnell added 12.2 fully vaccinated people for a total of 6001. Brocklyn added 57 fully vaccinated in the past month for a total of 1,311.

Montezuma in the past month added 36 fully vaccinated people for a total of 1,190. Malcom added 21 for a total

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FOUR DANCING STORYTIME SESSIONS AT LIBRARY SET

This fall, Grinnell College Dance Ensemble will lead Dancing Storytime, four free storytime sessions, at the public library. This participatory and interactive creative movement experience is open to all ages. Grinnell College dancers will guide participants to use creative movement to dance their way through a new picture book for each of the four Saturday sessions. No previous dance experience necessary. "Dancing Storytime is for everyone," organizers say.

Professor Celeste Miller, director of Dance Ensemble, says, "On Oct. 9 we will make our world more beautiful on the Drake Library lawn with 'The Curious Garden' by Peter Brown. On Nov. 6, we will learn how to tell our story with 'I Talk Like a River' by Jordan Scott. On Nov. 13, we will move with the landscapes that made us with 'Where Are You From?' by Yamil Saied Mendez. And on Dec. 4, we will celebrate our beauty within with 'Sulwe' by Lupita Nyong'o."

All sessions begin at 10:30 a.m. at Drake Community Library, 930 Park St., Grinnell.

Sessions are currently planned to be in person, outdoors by the library if weather permits and otherwise inside. Class is limited to the first 25 people to register. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/dancing-storytime-tickets-182840770667>.

Masks are strongly encouraged, and social distancing will be in place. All Grinnell College students and faculty are fully vaccinated.