

Luxury rentals go smoke-free

Christine Gritmon, cgritmon@lohud.com 6:17 p.m. EDT April 28, 2015

'The time has come for this. People have become very sensitive to smoking, even secondary smoking.'



(Photo: Ricky Flores/The Journal News)

Ginsburg Development Companies, one of the largest residential developers in the Hudson Valley, has announced that all of its upcoming rental properties will be entirely smoke-free. Even inside the apartments.

With four new buildings in development — River Tides in Yonkers, Harbor Square in Ossining, Riverside in Haverstraw and one in Hastings — this policy will affect nearly 700 units.

"I think it's just time, from a health point of view," said GDC founder and principal Martin Ginsburg. "It just makes good sense, particularly since we're developing high quality residences and apartments and I think these people are much more conscious of health."

This ban also applies to common areas and most outdoor areas.

Leasing for Riverside in Haverstraw has already begun, and Ginsburg says the group has not encountered any resistance to the policy.

"We found that even a lot of people who smoke don't want smoke in their own apartments and they object to other people smoking next door to them," Ginsburg said. "We have had some complaints where people did smoke and one or two people can really make other people very uncomfortable."

GDC isn't alone in going smoke-free. Vibe Living, a residential real estate management firm based in New York City, already has four smoke-free luxury rental developments in White Plains: La Gianna, The Dylan, The Reed and Apuovia.

Many colleges also have smoke-free campuses, including SUNY Rockland Community College, SUNY Westchester Community College, Nyack College and Pace University. Sarah Lawrence College will institute its own campuswide smoking ban in August. The City of Yonkers Municipal Housing Authority adopted a smoke-free policy for all 12 of its buildings last year, encompassing more than 2,000 units as well as indoor and outdoor common areas.

"This is fantastic because this is not a housing authority; these are units that will be market housing," said Maureen Kenney, director of POW'R Against Tobacco, an anti-smoking organization in Putnam, Orange, Westchester and Rockland.

"Your home is where you go to relax, to live; you want to be healthy there," Kenney added. "You don't want to be put in a situation where you're going home at the end of the day, or you're living in a home with children, and you're exposed to toxins that are dangerous."

Kenney notes that Rockland County in particular has some of the lowest smoking rates in the entire state — possibly the entire country — which makes it a smart market decision as well.

GDC does not control residential policies for the condominiums, townhouses and single-family housing developments it has already constructed — those are all managed by their own boards. Ginsburg said they may phase the policy into existing rental communities in the future.

"The time has come for this," Ginsburg said. "People have become very sensitive to smoking, even secondary smoking. Why subject people to it when we can provide them with a clean air environment?"

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