

Sunrise Villa and Paul Revere Cooperatives: Taking Pride in Shaping Their Future



Members of the Paul Revere Cooperative in front of their new sign.

The residents of Minnesota's two manufactured housing cooperatives no longer need to worry about the future of their communities--they're in control of it. With help from Northcountry Cooperative Development Fund (NCDF), the Paul Revere Cooperative (Lexington, MN) and the Sunrise Villa Cooperative (Cannon Falls, MN) were able to purchase the land underneath their homes and help ensure peace of mind for over 200 resident families.

Benefits of 'Going Cooperative' Are Concrete

On October 3, 2005, the Paul Revere Community--an almost 16-acre property that includes 153 manufactured home sites, private streets, and a well--became the second resident-owned manufactured home park in the state. The Paul Revere Cooperative (made up of Paul Revere's residents) bought the park as part of a settlement agreement that resolved a class-action lawsuit that residents brought against the Community's former owners. The first resident-owned manufactured home park, Sunrise Villa Cooperative, purchased their 47-unit park on September 28, 2004, from a willing seller.

Just days after the Paul Revere Cooperative purchased their community; resident-owners invested in a new park sign and redecorated the community room/storm shelter. These minor improvements are only the initial bubblings of a wellspring of future community investment--the cooperative has set aside \$315,000 from the closing for the first phase of a long-term capital improvement schedule, in which the Cooperative expects to invest another \$1.2 million in a new, code-compliant water system, street re-pavement, and new play equipment to reestablish Paul Revere's "tot lot" for small children.

Sunrise Villa Cooperative used their capital improvement funds to replace broken playground equipment, spread wood chips for a safer play area, buy new locking mailboxes for more secure mail delivery, replace the community sign, and remove tree branches that were threatening critical electrical equipment--all improvements that residents had wanted for years, but not forthcoming until they owned the park.

Best of all, when the Sunrise Villa and Paul Revere Cooperatives bought their parks, the risk of park closure or redevelopment all but disappeared. Kevin Walker, project manager for the development of Sunrise Villa and Paul Revere, observes that the cooperative model offers unique benefits to park residents. "Park residents in investor-owned parks can live under the threat of failing infrastructure, ever-rising monthly rents, and risk of displacement," said Walker. "All are related to [residents'] lack of land ownership and control. Cooperative ownership addresses all three issues. The path from tenant to owner can be long and difficult, but the benefits are clear."

Contact Us!

If you are a manufactured home park owner interested in selling your park, or a park resident interested in learning how to work with NCDF to achieve resident ownership, please contact Warren Kramer, Director of Housing Development at 612-767-2116 or warren@ncdf.coop.