

West Greenville housing complex to get facelift

32 of the 88 units at Mountain View Homes off Pendleton Street in West Greenville

By Cheryl Allen
STAFF WRITER

For months, Latonya Williams watched with concern as the paint peeled in her home — paint she knew was lead-based and that she worried her 6-year-old daughter, Laconia, could touch.

"As we stayed there, (the paint) started cracking," Williams said, referring to Mountain View Homes off Pendleton Street in West Greenville.

Even though she no longer lives there, Williams was glad when she heard about a \$2.5 million facelift for Mountain View Homes, a public housing community that is more than 53 years old and has been plagued with problems running the gamut from peeling paint to broken plumbing.

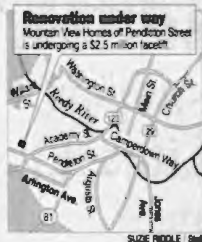
About 32 of the 88 housing units will be torn down to create a less crowded environment, said John Sutton, executive director of the Greenville Housing Authority.

Construction and renovation began in early July, and the project is scheduled to be completed within a year, said Mary Blackstone-Ross, deputy director for the Greenville Housing Authority.

The improvements are aimed at reducing crime and instilling pride in the community, housing officials said.

"It's time," said Williams, who lived in the community for four years but has temporarily relocated to Woodland-Pearce Homes, a public housing complex off Laurens Road.

Improvements at Mountain View include a new central laundry facility, removal of lead-based paint from inside and asbestos from tile floors, upgrading electrical wiring



Renovation under way
Mountain View Homes of Pendleton Street is undergoing a \$2.5 million facelift.

Officials also are working with architecture students from Clemson University on landscaping designs, Sutton said.

"There will be a complete reworking of everything," he said.

Also, a new computer lab is planned that will be connected to Greenville Technical College so residents can take courses, said Dorothy Lamkin, self-sufficiency program administrator for the Greenville Housing Authority.

The improvements are part of initiatives happening nationwide under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which wants to replace some of the worst public housing with less dense, more economically integrated developments to help revive communities, officials said.

"It's a new housing philosophy," Sutton said.

"Public housing should be indistinguishable and part of the greater community."

Also, HUD recently made available to all public housing agencies a grant traditionally given to housing agencies in larger cities like Chicago and New York.

Local officials for the first time have applied for the grant and requested \$21.7 million to help fund renovation of Woodland-Pearce Homes, according to Blackstone-Ross.

About 120 of the 340 units in



FRED ROLLISON / Staff

Working at Mountain View: Charlie Cruell of Certified Control Services cuts pipe at Mountain View Homes in West Greenville where about 32 of the 88 public housing units will be torn down to create a less crowded environment.

that community are slated for demolition.

They will be replaced with 60 new housing units, while the other half will be built elsewhere in the city, Sutton said.

Buildings also are coming down in larger cities like Newark, N.J. In the last four years, about 1,000 new townhomes have been built, said Harry Robinson, spokesman for the Newark Housing Authority.

"They can plant flowers now," he said.

"A lot of our high-rise buildings were concentrated in one area of the city."

He added, "It's better to build housing that's less dense and that gives residents a feeling of home as opposed to them feeling warehoused and being stacked."

The new homes also help eliminate the stigma that public housing communities sometimes carry, Robinson said.

"We can live a little better," said Brenda Abercrombie, who temporarily lives in Woodland Homes.

"It's not the community. It's the people — the people make the community."

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