

[Back](#)

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Seniors get new home in Conklin

Apartment complex allows older flood victims to remain in their hometown

By [Liz Hacken](#)
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CONKLIN -- June's flood took Lois Barlow on a boat ride down her street and on her first helicopter ride while she was being rescued from the rising water.

But no matter how far she was taken, 78-year-old Barlow knew she couldn't move away from her hometown of the past 50 years.

The opening of a new 24-unit senior citizen apartment complex on Conklin Road has made it possible for seniors like Barlow to stay in the town.

"It meant a lot for me to stay here," she said. Barlow has moved into her new apartment, but she's still waiting for some furniture to be delivered.

Barlow helped dedicate Conklin Senior Housing in a ribbon-cutting ceremony Thursday afternoon.

After her husband Elmer died, keeping up the house her husband helped build became a tough responsibility, Barlow said. But the June flood made it nearly impossible for her to stay there by herself.

Her children helped clean up after 8 feet of water poured into the house, and Barlow moved back in five weeks after the flood.

She soon realized she'd have to move into more manageable quarters and began apartment hunting.

Barlow has found many kindred spirits in the new apartment complex. Senior citizens displaced by June's flood were given priority when applying for apartments, said project developer Bruce L. Levine, president of the Amherst-based 3d Development Group, LLC.

Construction was well under way by the time June's flood hit, and the schedule was only set back slightly because of the disaster, he said.

"It quickly became more than just an opportunity for expanded senior housing," Levine said. "It became more about providing basic housing."

The complex is completely booked, Levine said. Rent starts at \$351 a month for a one-bedroom apartment, and there are some two-bedroom apartments with a slightly higher rent.

Part of the project was paid through a long-term, low-interest loan from the New York State Housing Trust Fund Corporation, Levine said.

Conklin Supervisor Debbie Preston said she campaigned four years ago to increase affordable housing options for senior citizens. After seeing the great demand for this most recent complex, she's already working to get another one in the town, she said.



Lois Barlow, 78, left her Conklin home after June's flooding. She is now a resident of the new 24-unit Conklin Senior Housing complex. Barlow cut the ceremonial ribbon during an open house Thursday afternoon.

Photos by WAYNE HANSEN / Press & Sun-Bulletin



The Conklin Senior Housing apartment complex is located on Conklin Road in the town.

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"I want to make sure they can stay here with us," she said.

With the region's growing senior citizen population, Conklin Senior Housing attracted residents from other areas, too.

Mary-Lou Galloway, 61, moved into the complex from Great Bend, Pa. While her former house did not get flooded, a sewage backup rendered her home unlivable and caused her to spend two months fighting a toxic bacterial infection.

She's now healthy and has moved to Conklin after briefly staying in an apartment in Hallstead, Pa. With the high demand for living quarters at the complex, she doubted she'd get an apartment there.

"It was a long shot just like winning the lottery to get in here," she said. "I'm not sure how long I will be here, but it is home for now."

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