

Want to be a West Side landlord?

◆ **Here's how:** Neighborhood Housing Services hopes tenants will buy the buildings they live in.

By **MARK HAYWARD**
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MANCHESTER — There are 60 multi-unit apartment buildings for sale on the

West Side, and in the coming weeks, every tenant in those buildings will be getting a letter from Manchester Neighborhood Housing Services.

The letter will encourage

the tenant to become the building's next landlord.

The letters are part of a push under way by Neighborhood Housing Services to put as many West Side apartment buildings into the hands of resident landlords, hoping owner-occupied properties will cure emerging problems of crime and neighborhood

blight.

"Anybody on the West Side that's interested in starting the process to take back their neighborhood, this is an initiative to get involved in," said Robert Tourigny, executive director of Neighborhood Housing Services.

Neighborhood Housing programs include low down

payments, low mortgage rates and underwriting practices that enhance financing possibilities for multiple-unit properties, he said.

Neighborhood Housing Services came to Manchester in the early 1990s, when the center city was blighted with drugs, crime, even drive-

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by shootings. It encouraged home ownership but also acquired large multi-unit buildings, rehabilitated them and leased them to low and moderate-income tenants.

The nature of the West Side, which is mostly three-story tenements, makes it difficult for Neighborhood Housing Services to redevelop a lot of property into rental units, Tourigny said.

The organization owns only one West Side rental property — a 10-unit building on Notre Dame Avenue.

Tourigny said Neighborhood Housing Services will help qualified buyers purchase any property on the West Side.

He hopes local leaders will identify neighborhoods to concentrate on the most. Neighborhood Housing Services programs are geared toward families with an income of \$40,000 to \$60,000 a year, he

said.

Citizens, refugees and immigrants with proper papers are eligible for programs and financing.

Terms include:

- 30-year mortgages with an interest rate between 5 and 6 percent for the initial five years, then converting to an adjustable rate.

- A 1 percent downpayment, with the ability to finance closing costs through the mortgage.

- Eligibility calculations that earmark rental income to directly reduce mortgage payments, a practice that substantially increases the purchasing power of applicants.

- Workshops on home ownership and how to be a land-



TOURIGNY

lord. Tourigny said no one who purchased property through Neighborhood Housing Services has ever defaulted on a loan.

Mike Lopez, an alderman who lives on the West Side and a Neighborhood Housing Services board member, welcomed the effort.

"I think it works out anywhere for this simple reason: the area is cleaned up, and it enhances the neighborhood," Lopez said.

Lopez wants Neighborhood Housing Services to do "something big" on the West Side, similar to the recent rehabilitation of the Straw Mansion and Uptown Motel north of downtown into rental units.

He said the right location has to be found, and it takes a long time to complete a large redevelopment project.

Tourigny said Neighborhood Housing Services is

always looking for an opportunity to do a large redevelopment. In the meantime, it will promote the home ownership and landlord programs.

Tourigny said buildings with two to four units can be purchased with homeowner financing. Anything beyond four units is a commercial purchase, in which Neighborhood Housing does not get involved.

The 60 West Side multi-units for sale range from \$189,900 for a two-family to a high of \$485,900 for a four-family building, he said. On average, prices work out to about \$100,000 per unit, he said.

Tourigny said a community services committee will get involved and work on matters such as crime, what neighborhood to focus on the most and infrastructure such as sidewalks and parks.