

Baxi makes low-income housing more affordable

BY PAT KAHNERT

Special to THE WHOLESALER

Seattle Housing Authority's investment in greener and more affordable housing options has reaped a dividend of 37% savings in fuel consumption for High Point, its celebrated mixed-income, master-plan community in West Seattle.

Seattle Housing Authority provides shelter for 26,500 low-income

"We want a reliable product that works well and is easy to maintain. The Baxi Luna system has held up, producing great results for us."

citizens a year. An independent public corporation, it serves as the developer and property manager of 5,200 conventional public housing units it owns, helping 12,000 low-income families. Seattle Housing is subsidized by property revenues, private contributions, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and its Hope VI program, as well as the Seattle Senior Housing Program covering 1,000 additional units for

seniors and people with disabilities.

Seattle Housing is a leader in the development of low-impact, sustainable mixed-income communities in a dense urban setting, such as High Point, which is the city's largest housing site. The first step in redeveloping High Point was the demolition of 716 homes built in 1940 as temporary housing. The new community will be completed in 2010, and will feature 1,700 homes — a mix of low-income and market-rate properties.

"This is a dream job to be able to create a master-plan community within the city of Seattle," said Tom Phillips, Seattle Housing Authority's senior development manager. He joined the Authority in 2001, after advising developers of large, master-plan communities throughout the nation. "Our work is never finished with thousands more families on a waiting list."

A model of sustainability

High Point is a living laboratory for the study of green, mixed-use community redevelopment work. Seattle Housing Authority officials constantly welcome public housing specialists from around the world who seek to glean insights from High Point, winner of the Urban Land Institute's Global Award of Excellence for ideas.

"We were one of five developers throughout the world to win the Global Award of Excellence in 2007," Phillips said. "I see it as the most gratifying of the 20 awards that High Point has been given over the past few years. The Urban Land Institute sent a team of experts, including some of the leading development experts in the country, to examine thoroughly what we've built."

The High Point redevelopment has clearly set a new standard in sustainable green building for housing authorities, going well beyond Seattle's code requirements. It is a pedestrian-friendly community with ample park space, a senior's village, neighborhood center, a new medical/dental clinic and public library. High Point incorporates the principle of "new urbanism," and the latest in green build-

ing techniques.

The design team includes firms that are among the region's leaders in sustainable development, and who share Seattle Housing's passion for building a greener, more affordable and more livable community. The community features an innovative natural drainage system, and a host of energy efficient and water conservation solutions, such as Baxi Luna, a combination heating and domestic hot water wall-hung boiler.

Compact heating solution produces significant savings

"Mithun, our architect firm, is a leader in creating specifications for reduced energy use," said Phillips. "We relied on them to recommend the right heating and domestic hot



water solution for our rental units at High Point. We took their advice, and it was great." "I am impressed that our maintenance mechanics are very excited about the Baxi Luna," Phillips said. "They understand the appliance and

its residents in mind, a dedicated team of maintenance mechanics serves the ongoing needs of High Point. Each mechanic has earned Baxi certification, keeping in touch with technicians at Marathon International, the exclusive distributor of Baxi products in North America, to optimize performance of all Baxi boilers installed on the site.



Matt Sullivan (left) of Mithun architects, reviews plans with Tom Phillips, senior development manager of Seattle Housing Authority.

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Matt Sullivan, Mithun project manager, explained, "We recommended the Baxi Luna wall-hung boiler because it supported all of our green goals. It is an elegant, all-in-one, backpack-sized boiler with tankless hot water capabilities. It generates fuel use savings while helping us make the most of space limitations. Clearly, the Baxi Luna heating solution frees up valuable living space, allowing us to fit a stackable washer and dryer in the same closet as the combination central heating and domestic hot water boiler."

Gensco, the exclusive Baxi distributor in Washington and other markets, supplied 256 Baxi Luna boilers for Phase 2 of High Point. Intensive Baxi training and certification at Gensco's Seattle branch advanced all installations, resulting in zero mechanical problems for the installations.

Housing authorities are obliged to fix any mechanical problem within 24 hours. With that requirement and, above all, the safety and comfort of

are committed to fixing any issue in a prompt and conclusive fashion. We want a reliable product that works well and is easy to maintain. The Baxi Luna system has held up, producing great results for us."

Marathon also arranged a 10-year extended parts and labor warranty on all Baxi boilers at Phase 2 of High Point — providing further protection of the housing authority's investment.

Solid return on investment

Seattle Housing commissioned a comprehensive independent study to examine the costs and benefits associated with High Point redevelopment. The 97-page report, *Sharing The Benefits of Building Green: A Study of The High Point Community*, showed that homes with Baxi units in Phase 1 of the High Point community enjoyed total fuel consumption savings of 37% over the results for another Seattle Housing redevelopment that is using a different hydronic heating solution. Moreover, total utility costs for High Point were 56% below the Seattle average.

The High Point study showed that (Turn to Low-income... page 79.)



The Baxi Luna wall-hung boiler is an elegant, all-in-one, compact boiler that also features tankless hot water capabilities.

from his brother. The “good deal” that you are getting might be a good deal for the company or a good deal for the brother.

You probably cannot eliminate all conflicts of interest but you *can* insist that they are all disclosed and above board. Other, more subtle, conflicts can exist when a relative works for a competitor, a customer or a supplier. You cannot control these, but your employees should make you aware of them. All conflicts of interest should be reviewed by the president.

Moonlighting

I think that salaried people owe their first energies to the company and that any other jobs should be dis-

**Never wrestle with a pig.
You both get dirty
but the pig enjoys it.**

closed to the company. Many hourly people are being forced to work multiple jobs in this economy but those other jobs should also be disclosed to the company.

Industry groups and associations should

Low-income housing development a good choice for efficient heating

(Continued from page 62.)

the inclusion of conservation technology, including the Baxi hydronic heating system, was a sound investment decision. The report also noted that as utility rates increase, and utilities and government agencies add new financial incentives for conservation, the return on investment can be expected to grow even larger.

Phillips says Seattle Housing will continue to measure return on its green building investments: “We expect to achieve even greater savings from Baxi heating solutions, as we gain more knowledge about how to get the most out of Baxi systems.”

Sampling an even greener future

Based on the savings produced by the Baxi energy efficient, eco-friendly heating and domestic hot water solution for 575 rental units at High Point, Seattle Housing Authority decided to put an integrated Baxi solar water

heating system to the test at one of its High Point homes in April 2009. Northwest Mechanical of Seattle installed the state-of-the-art system, which includes two Baxi flat plate panels (with a 95% absorption rate), the Baxi dual coil storage tank, as well as the solar-compatible Baxi Luna 3 Comfort combination heating and domestic hot water wallhung boiler that is capable of accepting pre-heated water from the solar storage tank. Seattle Housing fully expects that this green building initiative will generate additional fuel and cost savings.

At a public celebration of the completion of rental units at High Point

on April 21, 2009, Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels and Seattle Housing executive director Tom Tierney thanked Baxi, Marathon International and Gensco for helping to enhance energy conservation management throughout the new community.

“With energy use being some 37% less than another similar-sized Seattle Housing community, the improvements in energy efficiency and sustainability here are really remarkable,” Mayor Nickles said. ■

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