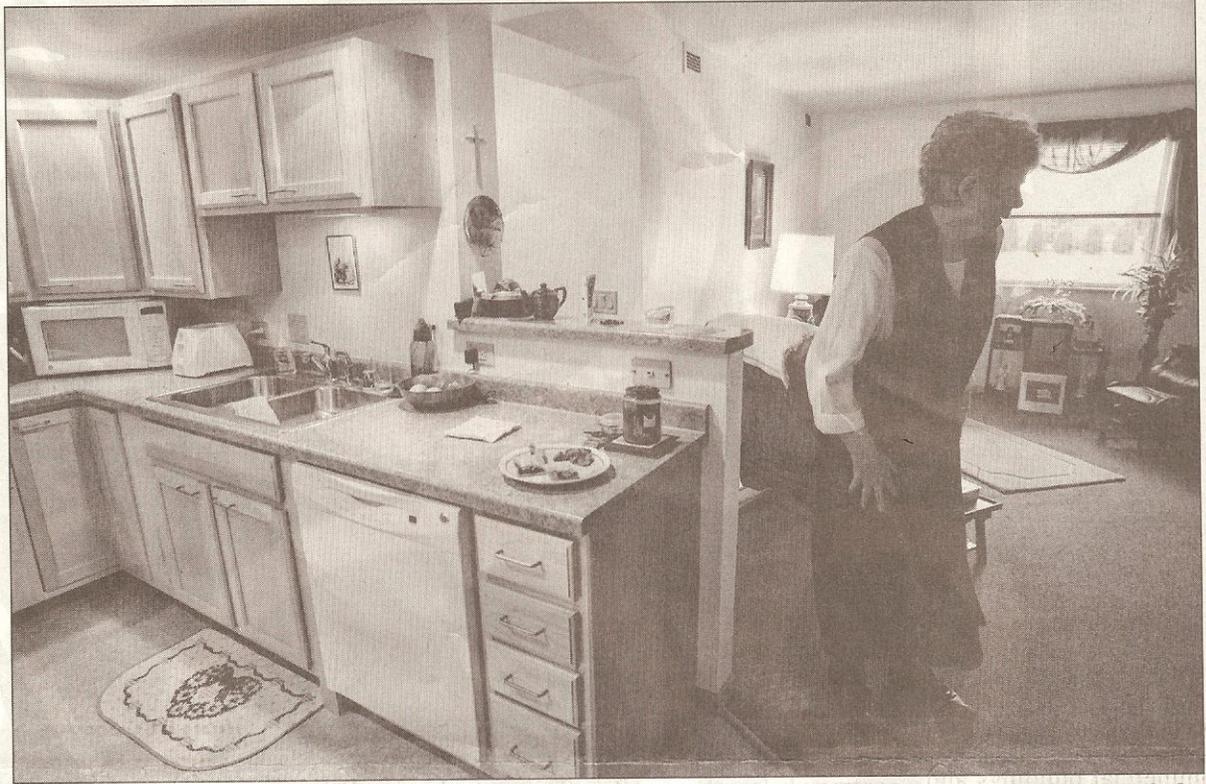


# Brillion seniors show off 'new' apartments



Post-Crescent photos by Ron Page

**SISTER MARGARET MARY HALBACH** shows off her refurbished apartment Sunday during an open house at Heritage Apartments in Brillion.

## \$2.5M in stimulus funds used to renovate facility

**By Maureen Wallenfang**  
Post-Crescent staff writer

**BRILLION** – Imagine being an elderly person alone after the death of a spouse and having to leave your home because of stairs and the rigors of upkeep. Then think about affording an apartment using Social Security benefits.

For low-income seniors in the Brillion area, the renovation of an existing senior apartment building made one part of that scenario a little easier to manage.

The Heritage Apartments were shown to the public Sunday in an afternoon open house. The senior apartment facility built in the early 1980s benefitted from \$2.5 million in Tax Credit Exchange Program (TCEP) government stimulus funds administered by the Treasury Department.

The upgrade made the building energy-efficient, brought it up to handicap accessibility codes and



**PUNCH IS SERVED** Sunday during an open house at Heritage Apartments in Brillion. The apartment building was renovated using federal stimulus money.

created a more pleasant environment for its elderly residents. In addition, it now has a geo-thermal heating/cooling system and photovoltaic panels on the roof that will help bring down utility costs.

"It's like moving into a brand new facility," said

Bernice Reidy, 83, a resident here since 2005. "I've never been fortunate enough to be in a new home. I've never had a home this beautiful. It's the nearest thing to heaven."

The building has 23 apartments. Of its 20 cur-

rent residents, 17 are female.

Eight apartments were held vacant during refurbishing in order to move residents around as their units were remodeled. Six of those apartments re-

See **BRILLION**, A-5



Post-Crescent photo by Ron Page

**MARK AND CAROLE RAJKOVICH** and their daughter Erin get a tour of Heritage Apartments in Brillion by resident Dorothy Biedenbender during an open house on Sunday.

## BRILLION: Residents pay rent on sliding scale

From A-3

### At a glance

main available, and applicants signed up for two of them during Sunday's open house.

**What:** Heritage Apartments, housing for senior citizens  
**Where:** 108 W. National Ave., Brillion

**Contact:** Marlis Trochta, 920-756-3041

"We expect the building to be filled very soon after the open house," said Gaylord Unbehaun, chairman of the Brillion Housing Authority, which operates three senior facilities in Brillion, including Heritage Apartments, Parkview Homes (apartments) and Garrow Villa (assisted living).

"I think I can safely say the need is significant," he said. "In our two apartment units, we serve about 50 people and seldom have an empty apartment. We usually have a waiting list."

Federal funding for the Heritage renovation project was originally approved in 2008.

"We were ready to go in 2009 when the tax credit program fell apart. We were on hold until January 2010," said Marlis Trochta, BHA's executive director.

Besides the \$2.5 million in stimulus funds, the nearly \$3 million renovation benefitted from a \$160,000 grant from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago and a \$200,000 loan — at 1 percent interest for 50 years — from the U.S. Department

of Agriculture's rural development program, said Tom Landgraf, a principal in Dimension Development, a Madison firm that put together the project's funding.

Trochta said residents pay rent on a sliding scale pegged at 30 percent of adjusted gross income. With many living on \$1,200-a-month Social Security checks, she said a typical resident pays \$408 for a single or \$643 for a double, plus utilities.

Fifteen of the 23 apartments are designated for those receiving low-income government subsidies. Their rent can be as low as \$200 to \$350 per month.

"Most residents here are in the 30 to 40 percent range of the median county income," said Landgraf.

According to the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority site, that would put those seniors in the \$15,000 to \$20,000 annual income range.

Maureen Wallenfang: 920-993-1000, ext. 287, or [mwallenfang@postcrescent.com](mailto:mwallenfang@postcrescent.com)