

Tech Deal

Multifamily software provider DOMIN-8 has acquired American Computer Software of Madison, Wis. (Terms of the deal were not disclosed.) DOMIN-8 says it plans to support ACS' Management Plus property management software as well as creating a Web-based version of the program. —A.R.

Fewer Miles Traveled

Transit-based housing may be taking hold in Atlanta. At the very least, people aren't driving as far to work. As citizens of a city with one of the nation's worst commutes, Atlanta's residents now drive fewer miles daily, according to a report from the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority. In 1998, licensed drivers traveled 47.2 miles per day in the Atlanta area. In 2003, they traveled 38.3 miles per day. —L.S.

Virtual Lessons

It's easy being green—especially with the U.S. Green Building Council's first Web-based training course designed to help builders (multifamily and single-family) become LEED-accredited professionals. The three-hour

Program: Essentials of LEED Professional Accreditation

Cost: \$150 for USGBC members;
\$200 for non-members

Location: www.usgbc.org

course, developed in partnership with Turner Construction, includes selected case studies, interactive learning exercises, and a practice exam. —R.Z.A.

Crowded House

Connecticut housing faces age tensions.

You're 75, past retirement, and just want to get some sleep. But you can't, because next door, your 30-year-old neighbors are keeping you up until all hours of the night. Not the best way to spend your retirement, as senior citizens who live in Connecticut senior housing would tell you.

As the federal government has expanded the definition of disabled to include people with physical handicaps, mental disabilities, and even those with drug problems, these groups have become eligible to move into state-run projects for the elderly. "There is a federal regulation that says if any person is eligible and receives

Social Security in any way, shape, or form, we would have to make arrangements to house them and allow them on our waiting list," says Robert Counihan, president of the East Hartford Housing Authority in Connecticut.

While HUD has the ability to cap the number of non-seniors living in these housing developments, Connecticut's legislature never gave the state housing agency the same privileges—which led to more units going to the young disabled.

Kevin Nelson, executive director of the Stratford Housing Authority in Connecticut, is concerned that unless the state changes its housing policy, the younger residents—who could conceivably stay in their units 30 or more years—will take more and more spaces. This eventually will make those slots scarce for the elderly, whose spaces generally see quicker turnover because of death or a move to a nursing home. —Les Shaver

Lighten Your Load

Property owners lower laundry room utility costs.

It's all too easy for property owners to forget about common area laundry rooms. But these rooms are grabbing the attention of more property owners, as utility bills continue to soar this winter and owners look for ways to keep energy and water costs to a minimum.

"Every customer we talk to is very concerned about energy costs," says Neil MacLellan, chief operating officer of Mac-Gray Corp., a provider of multifamily laundry services. "Today, 70 percent of the product that we are installing in apartment buildings is Energy Star-rated front-load washers."

United Dominion Realty Trust got a head start on its strategic laundry room upgrade. About four years ago, the Richmond, Va.-based owner and developer began swapping traditional machines for energy-efficient, front-loading models. While these machines do have a significantly higher upfront

cost, they typically save about 40 percent in water and energy costs per load, says MacLellan.

In addition to upgrading to more energy-efficient equipment, owners are working with their route operator, who supplies and maintains laundry equipment, to increase the consumer cost for using the equipment. "We are going to see a steady increase in pricing for the next three to five years," says Dan Terheggen, president of the Multi-housing Laundry Association. So for your next resident giveaway, pass out those highly valuable quarters.

—Rachel Z. Azoff



Courtesy: Mac-Gray Corp.