

Monday July 20, 2015
[The Buffalo News.com \(/\)](http://www.buffalonews.com/)

Business



Aaron Siegel, along with Brett Fitzpatrick, is redeveloping the Red Jacket Building at Main and Allen streets in Buffalo. John Hickey/Buffalo News

Work proceeds on Red Jacket Building in Allentown 13 buildings in city include Red Jacket

BY: [Jonathan D. Epstein \(mailto:jepstein@buffnews.com\)](mailto:jepstein@buffnews.com)

Published: July 13, 2015, 02:35 PM

Updated: July 14, 2015, 12:28 AM

Real estate investors Aaron Siegel and Brett Fitzpatrick are more than halfway done with renovations and improvements to 295 affordable housing units around the city that they purchased last year from an out-of-town landlord.

Siegel, son of longtime Buffalo attorney Herb Siegel, said Friday that the duo are moving forward quickly with nearly \$13.5 million in upgrades, which must be completed by year-end in order to obtain federal affordable housing tax credits that are a critical piece of financing the project.

Crews just started work a few weeks ago on the flagship Red Jacket Building, which is located at 12 Allen St., at the corner of Main Street across from the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. Windows have already been replaced and the facade touched up, while the rest of the work is being done on the inside of the building, Siegel said.

"We've done the most difficult work so far," he said. "Most of the improvements you can't see on the outside yet."

In all, each unit will get about \$50,000 in improvements, with tenants shifted to either other vacant apartments or even temporarily to hotel rooms while the work is being done. "We're getting rave reviews from the tenants on the ones that have been done," he said.

He said the buildings have remained almost fully occupied, aside from "a little vacancy because of folks that really needed to get evicted" because "they weren't following the rules."

The tax credits and related financing only affect the residential apartments and building facade, so work will shift later to the commercial and retail space, primarily in the Red Jacket and another building at Grant and West Ferry streets. "That's next on our list," Siegel said.

The longtime friends teamed up to buy 13 buildings from a former Buffalo resident who bought them in the 1970s but later moved to Florida and neglected them.

The complex \$16.5 million deal, which took two years to negotiate and finalize because it involved federally subsidized housing and tax credits, includes a total of 246,787 square feet, on 10 sites. The buildings feature a range of apartment styles from studios to four bedrooms, plus about 10,000 square feet of commercial or retail space in the two properties.

Besides the Red Jacket, the transaction includes the Buckingham at 87 Mariner St., which has been remodeled, and affordable senior housing at 333 Linwood Ave. at Utica Street. "Mariner was really tough," Siegel said.

email: jepstein@buffnews.com

Jonathan D. Epstein

Copyright 1999 - 2015 - The Buffalo News copyright-protected material.