High energy costs are one of the primary challenges faced by owners of affordable rental housing. The Preservation Compact’s Energy Savers Program was set up to help owners control this important cost variable.

A tidy, immaculate 11-unit building at 12602 S. Artesian, located in the southern Cook County suburb of Blue Island and owned by the nonprofit Core Associates, Inc., is a good example of how energy cost savings can keep homes affordable. The Artesian building includes two units that provide housing for mentally and developmentally disabled individuals served by Core’s sister social service agency, Blue Cap. The other nine units are affordable and targeted to private market renters who are hard working, but do not earn a lot of money.

Monthly rents range from the low $400s to $600. Catherine Nottingham, 88, has lived in the building for 30 years. Her rent—$500 per month—has not increased since she moved to her current one-bedroom unit 18 years ago. Carol Carpenter, who works as a special education aide at Paul Revere Primary School, says her rent has not increased in the seven years she has lived in the building.

Core executive director Ron Blouin says that any excess income Core buildings earn is used to support Blue Cap programs and to keep rents low at buildings owned and managed by Core Associates.

“Our priority is quality housing,” says Blouin. “But in order to keep rents reasonable, we have to control costs.”

Last year, a free energy audit provided by the Energy Savers Program revealed a cracked boiler, and a subsequent citation from the Village of Blue Island made replacement a necessity.

A low-interest loan from the Energy Savers Program for $8,000 helped with the $16,000 replacement cost. Blouin says he is glad he did the work. His energy savings were considerable—from $2,800 and 3,146 therms in February 2008 to $1,500 and 1,700 therms in the same month in 2009.

Ron Blouin, Executive Director, Core Associates

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**REDUCING ENERGY COSTS**

“We look for quiet neighborhoods where there is a bad building. You’re fixing up a building and making the neighborhood better.”

RON BLOUIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CORE ASSOCIATES

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**THE PRESERVATION COMPACT KEYSTONE INITIATIVES**

- **Preservation Fund**
  Financing to help buyers acquire and improve at-risk housing

- **Interagency Coordinating Council**
  Local, state and federal agencies collaborate to save properties

- **Energy Savers Program**
  Financing and technical assistance for energy saving improvements

- **Rental Housing Data Clearinghouse**
  Data on the region’s affordable rental stock

- **Rental Housing Alliance**
  Tools to help residents preserve their affordable buildings

- **Lower Property Taxes**
  Strategies for reducing property taxes

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