

Apartments scarce as the demand grows

By Dave Varga
staff writer

Area apartments generally have no vacancies and potential renters must wait an average of 3-4 months on a waiting list.

Unlike the situation three years ago when apartment owners were even negotiating somewhat lenient lease provisions with tenants to help fill vacancies, the pendulum has swung back in favor of the owners.

Some apartment managers speculate that the influx of potential renters on the market is a result of the area's improved economy. But others say the instability of the economy is proven by the numbers who want to rent, rather than take a chance on the housing market.

Either way, it's a boon for local apartments.

In West Bloomfield, the 280-unit Al-

dingbrook facility, on Drake between Walnut Lake and Maple roads, offers "terrace home rentals" at \$600-1,200 a month, according to manager Christine Kelly.

ALTHOUGH THEY do not keep a waiting list, Kelly said the units are filled as they become available.

In fact, the four-year-old development has responded to the housing need by starting construction of 270 more two- and three-bedroom units, Kelly said. Those new facilities are expected to be finished in March 1985.

The waiting list at the Village Green of Troy apartments, 2869 Troy Center Drive, is between three and six months long, according to management there.

The 188-unit apartment building features one-bedroom, two-bedroom and two-bedroom-with den apartments at \$470-\$590 a month.

Cherie Maslowe, manager of the

Bloomfield West Apartments on Orchard Lake Road, said she has seen the market slim down in recent months. Right now, she said her waiting list is up, three to five pages long.

THE 73 UNITS, featuring two- and three-bedroom apartments, range in price from \$625 to \$690, with the highest demand coming for the two-bedroom units, Maslowe said.

While many apartments still require a one-year lease, Bloomfield West offers a maximum six-month lease, in addition to a month-to-month basis, which helps make the apartment building more attractive and increases the market of potential renters.

"It used to be a yearly lease," she said. "(The month-to-month option) makes it more flexible as to who rents the apartments."

But that doesn't mean it is a high-turnover building. "We've had some

tenants 8-10 years here," Maslowe said.

Elon Square Apartments and Townhouses, 1997 Villa in Birmingham, has 48 apartments and 110 townhouses that are filled. The one- and two-bedroom apartments cost \$500-\$550, while the two- and three-bedroom townhouses run \$550-\$650 a month. The waiting list there is also about three to four pages long, according to manager Maryann Barger.

THE HIGH INTEREST rates and economic uncertainty that accompanies the presidential election is keeping some people from buying houses, Barger noted. She also said she heard that some companies were bringing into the area out-of-town workers who need temporary housing.

A spokesman at Robinson Brothers Realty, which manages the Foxcroft and Wetherfield apartments in Bloomfield Township and Carlyle Tow-

er in Southfield, said those buildings were "99 percent full," with people waiting six months to get into the less expensive Wetherfield.

Georgella Muirhead, community relations director for Southfield, said the city had more than 300 people pick up a periodical publication listing the 49 apartment buildings in the city and their rental prices.

Although the city's list does not include vacancy information, Muirhead said she is aware that "vacancies are very low and apartments are hard to find compared to two years ago." Back then, she said, apartment owners would call the city frequently to find out how many people were obtaining the listings.

SANDRA PITMAN, manager of Bloomfield on the Green Apartments, 2510 Woodrow Wilson in West Bloomfield, said it would take four months of

waiting to rent especially the larger of the 136 units at the complex. Bloomfield on the Green offers standard and luxury one- and two-bedroom apartments ranging from \$355-\$450.

Pitman said the past year has brought in more renters, which she speculated was caused by corporations hiring from out of state and very few new apartment buildings.

"I still can't pinpoint it," she said. "Maybe people don't want to be involved in a house anymore, as far as utility bills and upkeep."

Birmingham's high-rise 555 Apartments, on Woodward in Birmingham, features 99 apartments ranging from a studio for \$450 a month to three-bedroom units that cost \$1,000 a month.

Manager Gerald Bohnet said the wait would be a minimum of six to eight months per unit.

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