

# Fresh Air

BY KERRY A. SULLIVAN

Two Chicago apartment companies know what many non-smoking residents want.

**M**anagement at two Chicago-area apartment communities are finding that prohibiting smoking indoors not only helps them achieve LEED certification, but also caters to a growing and underserved segment of the rental market: people who don't smoke and who don't want smoke in their apartments.

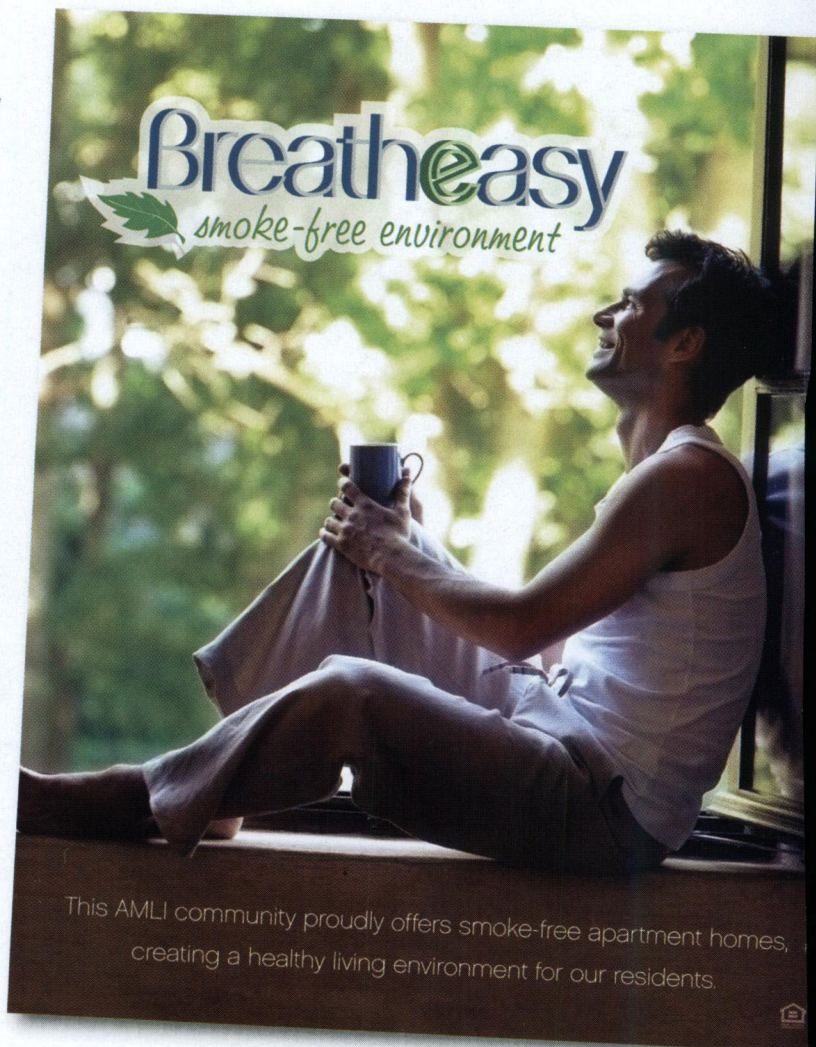
McCaffery Interests, a property management and development firm in Chicago, bans smoking for residents and guests in the 152 apartments in the Morgan at Loyola Station in Rogers Park, Ill. The policy suggestion came from the community's General Manager, Amanda Kopko, who came to manage the Rogers Park community when it opened in May 2009.

To achieve LEED certification, Kopko and her team chose to adhere to the program's high standards for indoor air quality by eliminating smoke inside the Morgan and also within a 25-foot radius of the building. The community rule is noted in a lease addendum and, rarely, \$500 fines are imposed on violators—mostly guests of residents, Kopko says, although even that seldom happens.

"This is the third McCaffery property I've managed, and at other communities, I've consistently observed residents' concerns about their neighbors smoking and that smoke was seeping into their units," Kopko says. "There's definitely a market actively seeking out smoke-free housing."

Overall, prospective and current residents have voiced little resistance to the smoking ban. McCaffery Interests' Project Manager of Development Pamela Austin says, "It would have been a shocking move many years back, but because states and cities have set a precedent with smoking bans, it's no big deal."

Says Vidal Cruz, a resident at the Morgan at Loyola, "Moving into a smoke-free environment has been great. The policy we have at the Morgan more greatly ensures that I am breathing fresh air. Having smoked cigarettes in the past, the policy rein-



forces my non-smoking. I can walk to the elevator or anywhere in the building and have fresh air. Living at the Morgan is a different and healthier way to live."

Illinois went smoke-free in virtually all public places and work places Jan. 1, 2008.

## Feedback: 99 Percent Positive

One other Chicago community embracing the no-smoking policy is AMLI 900, in Chicago's South Loop. The AMLI Residential-managed community also implemented a smoking ban to

improve indoor air quality, to attract residents seeking that particular feature in their housing and to qualify for LEED certification, says Senior Vice President of Development Jennifer Wolf. Not all communities that choose to implement no-smoking policies do so for LEED-certification purposes.

“Ninety-nine percent of the feedback is positive,” Wolf says. “By communicating a smoke-free policy in our print and Web advertising, we enable prospective residents to come to AMLI 900 already armed with that information. People who want to smoke in their apartments know early in the apartment search process that they don’t want to lease with us.”

Although a competitive market has prohibited AMLI from using the no-smoking policy as a leveraging point to increase rent, says Wolf, the rule, also noted in a lease addendum, has reduced turnover time and expenses. Apartments formerly

occupied by smokers often require carpet replacement and wall re-painting.

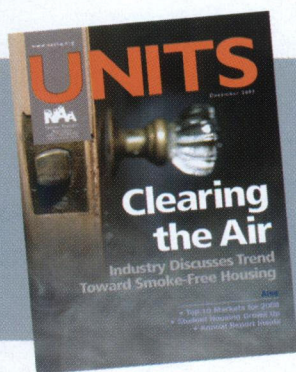
The policy is largely self-policing, says Wolf, but as at the Morgan, AMLI 900 charges fines to offenders—\$250 for a first violation, \$500 for a second violation and eviction plus a restoration fee for the apartment for a third violation. The community donates fines collected to the Chicago chapter of the American Lung Association.

“We think it’s a good cause, given our intent to keep our community healthy, safe and smoke-free,” Wolf says.

AMLI operates other no-smoking communities in Atlanta, Denver and Seattle. **NAA**

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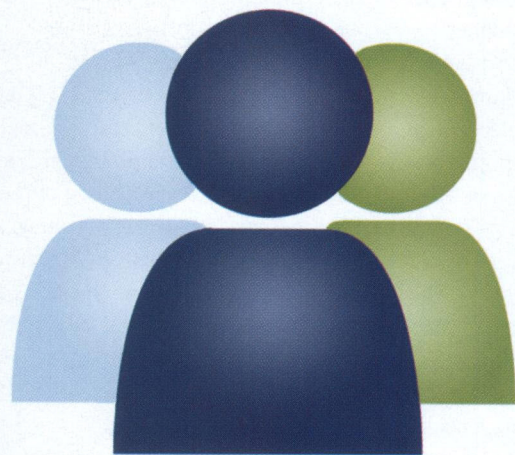
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## Smoke-Free Policy Information

**Units magazine** published a comprehensive report on smoke-free apartment policy in its December 2007 issue. For a copy, visit [www.naahq.org/units](http://www.naahq.org/units) or contact NAA's Paul R. Bergeron III at [paul@naahq.org](mailto:paul@naahq.org).

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