



## King's Court Apartments: A Masterful Transformation Fit for a King

By Audrey Cielinski Kessler,  
Special to the Akron Beacon Journal

Old. Dark. Dingy. Unsafe. Antiquated breaker boxes. Fire hazards. Overgrown landscaping. . . . They're not exactly the kind of words you want to hear when you're looking for a place to call home. You probably wouldn't even give the place a second look. A mere six months ago, those very words could have been used to describe what then was known as Austin Lake Apartments in Barberton's Austin Estates. Today the picture is totally different for the 128 units built in 1958 on more than seven acres. After essentially being neglected by an out-of-state property owner, King's Court Apartments now lives up to its name—thanks to a nearly \$1 million renovation initiative by the property's new owner.

*Continued on page 5*



*Continued from page 4*

The transformation began when Ken "King Closer" Ippolito, owner of RLI Enterprises, purchased the property in mid-October of 2016. There was a lot to do, and the deficiencies identified at the property needed urgent attention. With 31 other successful property renovations under his belt, Ippolito wasted no time in getting the work under way. It was, says Ippolito, a matter of resident safety both inside and out. He points, for example, to the rusty and outdated electrical breaker boxes in each of the 32 four-unit apartment buildings. "The breaker boxes were a fire hazard," says Ippolito. "They posed a real risk where people could die. Replacing the boxes was the most important item on the list of work that needed to be done." The total cost was \$100,000, but it was a small price to pay for residents' safety, Ippolito explains. Other interior renovations include new flooring throughout each unit, fresh white paint for a brighter look, new kitchen and bathroom countertops and fixtures, energy-efficient LED lighting,

and new washers and driers and wash tubs in the laundry room of each building.

Exterior safety came next and it, too, was a tall order. Trees and bushes were overgrown, with many tree branches encroaching on the roofs of some the apartment buildings. Coupled with poor exterior lighting throughout the grounds, the area provided security risks. To increase resident safety, says Ippolito, some trees were trimmed of lower branches to raise the canopy, while many other trees were removed entirely. "It was like a jungle and very, very dangerous and dark," says Ippolito. "We cut down a lot of trees to lighten up the area and make it safer." The lanterns outside the front door of each building also were replaced primarily for safety reasons but also for cosmetics. Other cosmetic improvements include tearing down all of the rusty patio awnings and replacing the structures with attractive new ones. Exterior renovations extended as well to the resurfacing of the property's multiple parking

*Continued on page 12*

*Continued from page 5*

lots, replacing all 32 roofs, sprucing up the leasing office inside and out to make it brighter and more inviting, and redesigning and reorienting the property's ground sign. "No one could see the original sign," Ippolito explains, adding that the sign was parallel to the street rather than perpendicular. Now, people coming down the street from north and south can see the sign, which is lit up at night."

No residents were displaced during the renovations, and the property is at 100 percent occupancy, says Ippolito. And while Ippolito spearheaded the transformation, which was "done in record time," he doesn't save all of the accolades for himself. Instead, he credits the skill and dedication of what he refers to as his "No. 1 team," some of whom have worked for Ippolito for ten or more years. "It's a team effort," says Ippolito. "Together we again have been able to contribute to people's homes, making their

lives better."

For more information, call 330-753-4879, stop by the leasing office at 549 Fifth Street, S.E., or go to [kingscourtpartment.com](http://kingscourtpartment.com). If you would like to learn more about the owner, Ken "Super Genius" Ippolito, go to [kenippolito.com](http://kenippolito.com).

