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Note to Developers, MDU Providers: Make Your MDU Broadband Connections Stand Out

As more multifamily buildings are built, opportunities for developers to give their properties a competitive advantage with stellar broadband connectivity abound.

Multifamily developers and property owners are constantly looking for ways to attract and retain residents. The top amenity for multiple-dwelling-unit (MDU) residents today is broadband.

About 31 percent of U.S. broadband households, or 34 million homes, are in MDUs today. That means MDU broadband players have plenty of opportunities to differentiate their properties by offering high-speed broadband. This issue takes a deep dive into MDUs and their broadband approaches, from managed Wi-Fi to smart-home technology.

BROADBAND REPUTATION

Once an MDU enables broadband, maintaining performance is critical. But how can a potential resident know how good an MDU's broadband is? Companies including WiredScore and ROVR Score help MDU owners and property managers provide a broadband rating (see p. 32).

ROVR Score measures the Wi-Fi and cellular connectivity for multifamily and student housing owners and operators. WiredScore works with landlords to assess, improve, benchmark and promote their buildings.

Rollo Gwyn-Jones, global director of marketing for WiredScore, says several issues impact an MDU's broadband quality. "Digital connectivity is not just about speed. It's about resilience, reliability and price."

MAKE IT EASY

If there's any silver lining of the COVID-19 pandemic, it's that it

highlighted the importance of quality broadband. A recent RVA LLC and Fiber Broadband Association study revealed that videoconferencing exploded, with 46 percent of respondents using it for staying in touch with family, 24 percent for business, and 16 percent for education.

MDU owners can ensure they have enough bandwidth for current and future needs by installing fiber. Fiber-fed MDUs have the potential to reduce upgrades and service interruption as capacity demands rise.

The cost to wire MDUs with fiber is declining. For example, on p. 20, Steve Ross reveals that the prices have dropped to \$1,000 per unit for new construction.

Customers who move into MDUs want service to be available immediately. Service providers can leverage the fiber backbone to distribute services throughout a property and provide consumers with seamless service, regardless of where they are on the property.

As broadband has become an essential part of MDU life, developers, owners and providers need a formula that enables what one developer says is a "frictionless experience." ♦

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