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New mill apartments drawing tenants

By **DINA MENDROS**

Staff Writer

BIDDEFORD — Gary and Judy Clark were taking measurements and looking at the amount of available cabinet space on Saturday, getting a sense of their soon-to-be new home overlooking the falls of the Saco River. The couple, currently living in Portland, said they are anxious to move into their new apartment, one of 66 units at The Mill at Saco Falls, which will be ready in November.

The Clarks were among the many people attending an open house on Saturday at the apartment complex, which is one of the buildings making up the Riverdam Mill. The renovation of the 165-year-old mill building is nearly complete.

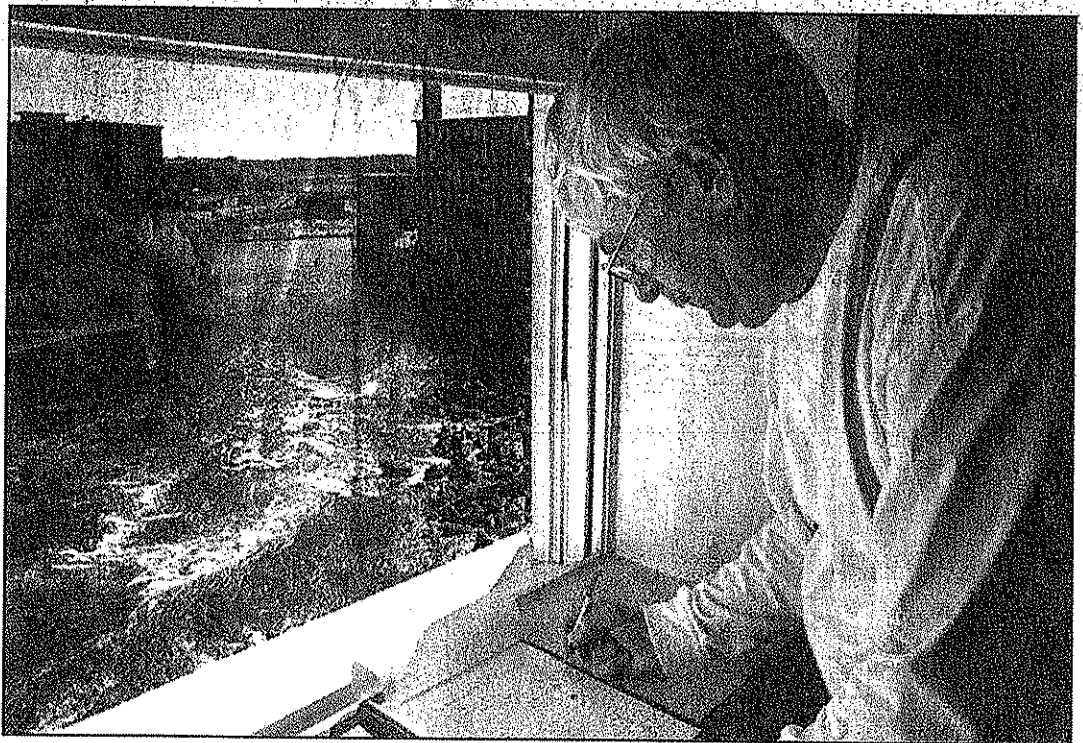
Before moving to Portland, said Gary Clark, the couple had lived in Fryeburg.

"We wanted to move to a city atmosphere," he said.

Clark said he found the apartment in Biddeford when he was searching the Internet.

"This was far better than anything in Portland that was in our price range," he said.

"We think they've done a really nice job.



DINA MENDROS/Journal Tribune

Gary Clark checks out the view from the window of an apartment at The Mill at Saco Falls in Biddeford that he plans to move into with his wife on Nov. 1. On Saturday, the Clarks attended an open house at the complex, which is being renovated and is expected to be completed soon.

"We have an absolutely beautiful view," added Judy Clark. The Clarks' apartment is one of the many units that have a river view.

The couple, who applied for their apartment in February, were second on the list of

approved tenants, they said.

Another tenant who has already been approved for his apartment also attended the open house on Saturday. Brendan Wallach, from Biddeford, said he's also looking forward to moving in.

"It will be a nice change from where I am now," he said.

Wallach said he'd been following the progress of the ren-

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DINA MENDROS/Journal Tribune

Brennan Scott and Jen Bowden of Saco said they applied to move into one of the 66 apartment units at The Mill at Saco Falls in Biddeford. The former mill building is being renovated by the development company, The Szanton Company of Portland. The couple were among more than 100 people who attended an open house at the complex on Saturday.

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ovation of the building before he decided to move there.

"I'm a big proponent of trying to get Biddeford revitalized," he said.

He's also anxiously awaiting other changes in the mill district that have been discussed by city officials, said Wallach, such as the development of the Biddeford RiverWalk, which is already in the planning stages, and the creation of a pedestrian crossing over the Saco River.

Besides those who are already approved tenants, others who were interested in possibly moving in to The Mill at Saco Falls also attended the open house.

Brennan Scott and his girlfriend Jen Bowden from Saco decided on the spot to apply for one of the apartments.

"We saw it and fell in love," said Scott. "The apartment we have now is a beautiful property, but this has the views and security."

Visitor Barbara Meadows from Scarborough said she can't move from her current apartment yet because she has a lease, but she said once her lease is up she would definitely consider moving into The Mill

at Saco Falls.

"There's nothing in Scarborough that compares to this," she said. "Our two-bedroom now doesn't even come close."

The Mill at Saco Falls is being developed by The Szanton Company of Portland. The facility includes 66 units, with a mix of one-, two- and three-bedrooms. Forty of the units, which have been developed using affordable housing tax credits as well as state and federal historic tax credits, are affordable units and the remainder are renting at market rate. Income limits are enforced for the affordable units.

Amenities include free wi-fi, an on-site fitness center, laundry facilities, kayak storage and more.

According to Michelle King of Dirigo Management Company of Portland, more than 100 people attended the open house on Saturday and several people applied for apartments that day. Prior to Saturday, she said, 35 apartments were on hold for people planning to move in next month.

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