

PICTURE THIS, TENANTS!



NYCHA honcho John Rhea can't seem to make up mind on whether housing projects will get security cameras.



1 month later, she sweats out a new fridge

BY ERICA PEARSON
and GREG B. SMITH
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

FOR THE ENTIRE sultry month of July, Bronx retired home health aide Catalina Martinez lived without a working refrigerator because the city Housing Authority couldn't find a replacement.

On Thursday night — 30 days after the appliance died and after the Daily News called NYCHA — she finally got what most renters reasonably expect from their landlord: a working fridge.

"You guys did a phenomenal



VIORLE FLORESCU

Now chief says you WILL get cams

BY TINA MOORE
and GREG B. SMITH
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

THE CITY'S public housing honcho has thrown it in reverse — again.

NYCHA Chairman John Rhea renewed a promise to install cameras in 80-plus developments by the end of the year. Two days earlier, Rhea told the Daily News there would be security enhancements at the selected housing projects, not necessarily cameras.

That, of course, contradicted a statement from the housing authority two weeks ago that said "approximately 85 developments will receive security camera installations by the end of 2013." The mayor's office — acknowledging Rhea's flip-flop — released the latest version of Rhea's intentions on Friday.

"The chairman is absolutely firm in his commitment that all 80-plus developments will receive security cameras," the statement read. "There will be additional

enhancements at some developments."

The city's renewed pledge was met with sighs of relief at Seward Park Extension, a lower East Side complex where a cop was shot last month.

"It's about time," said Dolyn Hamilton, 47, who has lived there for over a decade.

20 of the 80 or so developments. He promised specific plans for the other 60 by year's end.

Meanwhile, Mayor Bloomberg admitted blowing off a nonprofit agency that warned him about NYCHA's problems last year and complained that the agency had failed to apply for \$600,000 in available federal

Bloomberg alleging that NYCHA was hampered by "delay, confusion and complaints."

Bloomberg said the group had a meeting with "three of our top people in the city" and that its members "didn't like what they heard."

"I can just tell you the bottom line is we are not giving up on

job," declared Martinez's son-in-law, Steve Wiggins, expressing gratitude to New York's Hometown Paper.

Martinez, 68, first noticed the fridge's temperature was climbing on July 2. She called NYCHA and a maintenance worker came to her apartment in the Gun Hill Houses and checked the appliance.

"He said, 'It's messed up. You need a new refrigerator.' And I said, 'When?' He said, 'I don't know, housing doesn't have any new refrigerators.'"

As the days turned into weeks, she was forced to get takeout Chinese food in her Bronx neighborhood and buy food to cook right away.

While the USDA says refrigerator temperature should be 40 degrees or below, a thermometer placed inside Martinez's fridge Thursday afternoon read an unsafe 60 degrees.

A News investigation recently exposed the agency is sitting on nearly \$1 billion in federal funds intended for repairs, half of which dates back two years. Some goes back to 2009.

Nine workers showed up late Thursday and installed a new fridge for Martinez. She was happy with the replacement, but frustrated by the delay.

"All I'm saying is treat people fair," her son-in-law said.

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RHEA
AND
WEEP



JULY 13
Approximately 85 developments will receive security camera installations by the end of 2013.

NYCHA CHAIRMAN JOHN RHEA

AUG. 1
No. That's not how we phrased it...We said security enhancements.

FRIDAY
The Chairman is absolutely firm in his commitment that all 80-plus developments will receive security cameras. There will be additional security enhancements at some developments.

THE MAYOR'S OFFICE



"We've been pushing for this for years."

Robin Stucker, 54, echoed the sentiment and slammed high-salaried NYCHA honchos.

"Thank you to you guys for trying to get to the truth," she told a reporter. "It's about time someone exposed these people for what they are."

Rhea told The News his agency has a precise plan for cameras and upgraded door locks called "layered access" at

funds.

"It's all ginned up by some group," Bloomberg said Friday on WOR-AM radio's John Gambling show. "They wrote us a letter. And, yes, it's true, they did not get a written response."

Bloomberg went on to say it's hard to attract good people like Rhea to government "if there's this character assassination."

He chided the charitable Metro Industrial Areas Foundation, which last year wrote to

NYCHA, and we're not walking away from the residents. And I'm not losing faith in John Rhea and his team," Bloomberg said.

Also on Friday, U.S. Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) who is already investigating a \$10 million consultant report that NYCHA won't release to the public, demanded information on the six-figure salaries of Rhea and two NYCHA board members.

With Denis Slattery
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