

July 17, 2009 3:09 PM

Local apartment vacancies fall in second quarter

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THE GAZETTE

An initial batch of new soldiers at Fort Carson helped drive down the area's apartment vacancy rate in the second quarter, a report shows.

Apartment vacancies fell to 8.5 percent between April and June, down from 9.9 percent in the first quarter and 9.3 percent during the second quarter of 2008, according to a survey released today by Apartment Insights, an online research company.

Troops arriving at Fort Carson as early as May helped lower vacancies, said Doug Carter, a Springs-based broker for national real estate firm Sperry Van Ness and part owner of Apartment Insights. Apartment complexes near Fort Carson saw their second-quarter vacancies fall to 7.8 percent after averaging 14.2 percent for most of the past three years, according to the survey.

Second-quarter vacancies in areas outside Fort Carson also declined as the apartment market stabilized, Carter said. Colorado Springs' southwest side, for example, had a second-quarter vacancy rate of 5 percent, down from 7.1 percent in the first quarter.

Monthly rents averaged \$633 in the second quarter, up from \$624 in the first quarter and down from \$639 a year ago. Those figures include concessions, such as free rent.

As thousands of additional troops arrive later this summer, vacancy rates will drop further, while rents will rise and fewer concessions will be offered, Carter said.