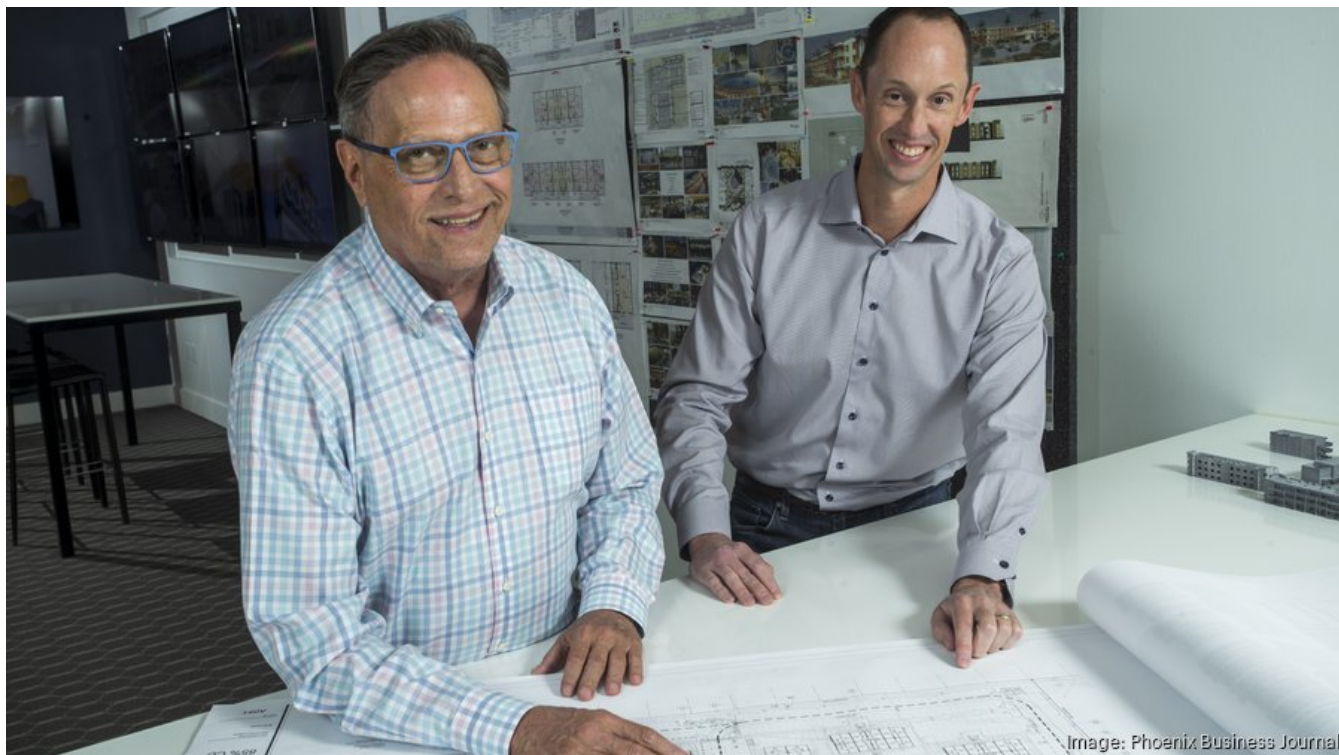


# Small Business Awards: Small company winner – Greenlight Communities



Rob Lyles, left, and Dan Richards, two of the partners at Greenlight Communities. Not pictured is partner Pat Watts, the other partner.

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL



By [Mignon A. Gould](#) – Associate Editor, Phoenix Business Journal  
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One sign that a business is on the road to success is that it recognizes a gap in the market and then proceeds to fill it. That’s exactly what Pat Watts, Rob Lyles and Dan Richards – the partners of Greenlight Communities – have achieved as they aim to develop rental properties throughout metro Phoenix for renters with a range of incomes.

Committed to addressing a pressing market challenge and providing "attainable" apartments, they created Greenlight Communities LLC and developed the Cabana and Streamliner brand rental properties.

“The inception of Greenlight stemmed from recognizing a gap in the market,” said Watts. “Most new rental housing being built caters to a minority group

who can afford luxury rental communities and a small percentage of government funded low-income housing. This leaves limited privately funded rental options for the average Arizonan, including median earners.”

The company has defined the gap in the market as the “missing middle” and described it as “a segment our product is tailored to serve.”

Watts and Lyles started the company 30 years ago under the name Starpointe Communities, which converted existing apartments into for-sale condominiums, said Richards, who joined the company in 2003. By 2009, the company transitioned from renovating existing apartments and selling them as condos, to building new condominiums, and starting 2010, the business operated as Deco Communities until 2017, when it was renamed Greenlight Communities.

Leveraging their real estate development background, the business owners recognized an opportunity to offer a service that was needed in the rental community..

Having a distinct business model and product type is what gives the company a competitive edge, said Lyles. While many builders focus primarily on building luxury rental housing, Lyles said that Greenlight is dedicated to addressing the lack of attainable housing for the average Arizonan.

But even with a clear market to address, there have been hurdles. A significant challenge has been balancing the demand for affordable housing with rising costs. Greenlight addressed these issues by adopting innovative construction techniques and ensuring efficiencies within the company’s project management team.

“We have effectively revitalized underutilized land and engaged in open communication with neighboring communities. Our product is inherently more cost effective because our product type is built to provide everything renters needs, but the critical component is, nothing they don’t,” said Watts. “Greenlight Communities has quadrupled in size in the last three years and we’re proud to be able to continue to hire while many companies were forced to layoff employees.”

Since its first project completion in 2020, the housing developer has finished six projects, including 2,500 rental units with plans to develop more than 5,000 units by the end of 2025.

## **Greenlight Communities LLC**

**Local Leader:** Co-founder and Partner Pat Watts

**HQ:** Scottsdale

**Year Founded:** 2017

**Number of Employees:** 43

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## **Small Company Finalists**

### **Insectek Pest Solutions**

**Year founded:** 2013

**What it does:** Pest control

**Local Leader:** Ben McAvoy, founder

**Headquarters:** Phoenix

**Number of employees:** 25

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## **Cypress HomeCare Solutions**

**Year founded:** 1994

**What it does:** Home care

**Local Leader:** Bob Roth, managing partner

**Headquarters:** Scottsdale

**Number of employees:** 38

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## **Forrest Anderson Plumbing & Air Conditioning**

**Year founded:** 1961

**What it does:** Plumbing, HVAC

**Local Leader:** Audrey Monell, President

**Headquarters:** Glendale

**Number of employees:** 30

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## **Gold Star Plumbing & Drain**

**Year founded:** 2020

**What it does:** Full-service plumbing company

**Local Leader:** Michael Smith, owner and general manager

**Headquarters:** Tempe

**Number of employees:** 23