



WAA News

Volume 37 Issue 2 • March/April 2016 • Connecting the Rental Community Right Next Door and Across the State

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**WAA Spring LED is on Saturday, April 16...
Don't Miss It!**

See the full schedule on page 12.
Registration form on page 13.



2016 Roster of Events

(for a full calendar of events, visit our website at www.waaonline.org)

UPCOMING EVENTS

WAA Spring Landlord Education Day & Trade Show

Saturday, April 16 • 9:30 a.m.

Oshkosh Convention Center, Oshkosh

Registration is only \$49 per member, if registered by April 6th! After the 6th, registration for members will be \$69 and non-members will be \$79.

Webinar: SECURITY DEPOSITS- Know When to Hold 'Em... Know When to Fold 'Em

Wednesday, May 18 • 12:00 p.m.

Online via GoToWebinar • Presented by John H. Fischer, aka Dr. Rent

Watch your email for details and link to register!

IMPORTANT NOTE ON WAA NEWS PRINT COPIES:

Due to a number of members concerned about no longer receiving a print copy of the newsletter, the Board of Directors researched the cost of continuing to print newsletters for those members who do not have email or access to the internet.

The Board has decided to offer the **option of having the bi-monthly issues of the 2016 WAA News printed and mailed for an additional cost of \$35** for the year. If you wish to receive print copies for 2016 and are willing to pay this fee, please **send a check for \$35 made payable to WAA to our office (PO Box 2922, Oshkosh, 54903) no later than April 15th**.

Cut out & Save!

2016 WAA DATES
Saturday, April 16
 Spring LED & Trade Show
 Oshkosh Convention Center,
 Oshkosh

We do have a limited number of professionally printed copies of the January/February and March/April issues available, so the first 50 members to respond will receive them. If there are more requests received after the 50 have been taken, a stapled black and white copy will be sent with future issues professionally printed. Feel free to contact the WAA office with any questions.

NOTE: Information in these articles should be used as a guide only and should not be relied upon as the sole source of information relating to its content. Additional sources of information may be listed herein. No warranty, either expressed or implied, is made with respect to the information contained herein. Neither WAA nor RHR is responsible for any loss, inconvenience, damage (whether special or consequential) or claims arising out of the use of the information contained. You should always seek advice from your attorney regarding any legal matters.



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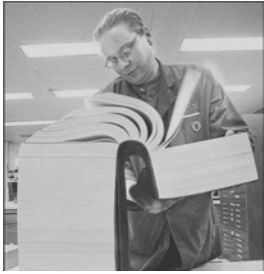
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Chairman's Letter

Dear Members of WAA,



Just last week, a fellow WAA Board member sent me this picture (left) of what appeared to be at least a three-foot high book entitled, "How to be a Landlord," or something like that. While it is funny, it is also kind of true. Housing, being an essential need of the human condition, is a very regulated industry. Let's take a look at all the regulations, laws, codes, ordinances, etc.:

Locally, a landlord has to know the local housing code affecting rental property. Often times, there is also some type of Property Maintenance code that is supposed to be used for all properties, too, that we need to know. Important, but this only results in a half inch in your Guide Book.

On a State level, the book really gets big. You've got Statute 704 (Gosh, I hope you know this one!), 799 (Regarding Courts and evictions), 815 (Garnishments), 66 (Local municipality inspections...areas recently changed by Legislation WAA recently worked hard to get passed), and a host of many other relating statutes. You also have ATCP 134, case law backing up many of the statutes, and much more. You also have Construction standards, companion animals, and fair housing. This is good for many inches in your Guide Book.

On the Federal side, you have fair housing, companion animals, HUD rules (for section 8 or other types of federally involved programs), American with Disabilities Act, and so much more. Again, this can account for many inches in your Guide Book.

Now toss in *your leases, policies, and all the things I forgot to mention*, and your Guide Book is easily as big as the picture shows!

You might be wondering what's my point?...My point is that being a rental property owner or landlord is not a "fly by the seat of your pants" business. Certainly, we see many people out there who have gotten into the business by force (inherited or could not sell their home and had to take a job elsewhere) or without knowing all that I mention above..."by the seat of their pants," and are not serious about the business and when things go wrong, they go really wrong, hurting themselves, others, and give our industry a bad name. Still, others get into it seriously, but do not do the work to understand all that is involved. Granted there are many who try to do their "homework," but do not realize everything that is involved...much of it not always agreed upon as fair. Many of the above laws are over burdensome, just try reading the position HUD (Department of Housing and Urban Development), ADA (American with Disabilities Act), and the DOJ (Department of Justice) take on Assistance Animals and Companion Animals without your eyes crossing after four sentences! I think you need at least three law degrees to interpret what they are writing!

My overall point is that Landlords have to take their business seriously and learn as much as they can. They need to fight over burdening laws and seek changes for a level playing field. Landlords need to be professional in all that they do. We need to be a part of a professional organization to band together so we can accomplish this thru education and Legislative action. We need to be active and support candidates for office that help us to the end goals that WAA wants to accomplish. We need to hold ourselves to a higher standard and hold our fellow rental property owners to the same standard. We need to treat our customers with respect, which includes making them follow the law and pay their rents. With better educated and more professional landlords, I believe rents will increase, which help income and profitability increase.

In the end, your membership and involvement in WAA is so important to accomplish these goals and make that Guide Book seem more easily handled and your business much easier to run!

Respectfully,

C. Mokler

Chris Mokler
Chairman of the Board of Directors/Director of Legislative Affairs





How to Make Hiring a Home Contractor Less Like Gambling

From www.american-apartment-owners-association.org

Hiring a contractor to do a major home renovation is difficult for most of us. We're risking a lot of money, so it's important to avoid costly mistakes. Since it's not something we do often, we have few opportunities to practice and improve our skills.

Even for experienced home renovators, hiring a contractor can feel a lot like gambling. But there are things you can do to improve your odds.

"All the documentation needs to be clear and concise," says H. Dale Contant, president-elect of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry and president of Atlanta Design & Build. "There should be no ambiguity."

You need to do a lot of planning and a lot of work before you ever talk to contractors. A major home addition, for example, will require architect's drawings and specifications. Even for a routine bathroom or kitchen remodeling job, you should have a general idea of your preferred layout and what materials you want to use before you seek bids.

"You need to know what you want before you start talking to your contractor," says Angie Hicks, founder of AngiesList.com, which provides referrals and reviews of contractors. "Sometimes people forget this step."

You can't get an accurate estimate until you know exactly what you're going to do. "Redo the kitchen" could mean replace cabinets and countertops in the same positions, or it could mean tear the walls and floors down to the studs, replace and move all the plumbing and redo the electricity and/or gas lines. That is going to significantly affect your bids, so you must have the details ironed out first.

"The more detailed scope of work you have written out before you hire your contractor, the better," says Brandon Turner, vice president of BiggerPockets.com, a networking and information site for real estate investors.

The best way to find a good contractor is ask everyone you know, seeking referrals from homeowners who have had similar jobs done. Ask your friends, relatives, co-workers, fellow church members and neighbors.



Even in this Internet age, personal references are far more useful than online reviews, though you should certainly read those, too, as well as seeking referrals from online services such as AngiesList.com, HomeAdvisor.com, Google and Yelp.

When you get bids from contractors, you want to find out a lot more than what your job will cost. Ask prospective contractors detailed questions about experience. How long has he been in the business? What other jobs has he done similar to yours? Will he use subcontractors or employees to do the work?

Ask for copies of licenses, insurance and references from previous clients. Then call those previous clients and ask detailed questions: Were they satisfied with the work? Did the project go over budget and why? Did the contractor show up on time? Did he clean the jobsite when he left?

"If it's a really large job ... you should go a little bit further to verify that they've done that kind of work," Contant says. This includes asking additional questions, consulting more references and doing an in-person visit to a past job.

Once you've received the bids, don't think it's time to start work. You and the contractor will need to hammer out a detailed contract, listing exactly how you want the project completed, what materials will be used and what will happen if you change your mind midway through the process or unforeseen problems arise. The contract should include a schedule of progress payments and a timetable.

"The amount of time you spend documenting what-if scenarios pays off down the road," Hicks says.

(cont'd on page 6)



Landlord Tip (cont'd)

(cont'd from page 5)

Here are 12 ways to improve your odds of getting the job done right, on budget and on time when you hire a contractor:

Get permits. Cities and counties require permits for most remodeling jobs. It's customary for the contractor to get the permit and add the cost to your bill. Some contractors may offer to do the job for less without permits, but that could cause problems later if the remodeling work is not done to code, or if the city catches you the next time you get work done. You could receive a fine and be required to remove the faulty work to redo it. "In the end, if you fail to pull proper permits for your jobs, it's on you," Hicks says.

Call references, and go look at the work. When choosing a contractor, nothing is more important than references. Go to see the work if you can, and ask the homeowner detailed questions about what it was like to work with the contractor. Consider interviewing subcontractors as additional references and asking if the contractor treats them well and pays on time.

Sign a detailed contract. Rather than providing only the basics, the contract should drill down to the exact model faucet you'll include in the kitchen (or provide a specific dollar allowance). It should detail when the work will be done, what will happen if it's not done on time, what hours the contractors can work at your home and who will clean up at the end of the day.

Be scrupulous about change orders. Most jobs include surprises. You may discover repairs that need to be made once walls are opened, or you may change your mind about an aspect of the project. Any time there is a deviation from the contract, make sure you and the contractor sign a change order detailing what additional work will be done and at what cost.

Have a payment schedule with specific milestones. Most professional contractors ask for a small down payment up front then additional payments as specific milestones are reached, with the last 10 percent due only after all the lien releases have been received, final inspections have been done and all punch list items are completed. Be wary of a contractor who asks for a large down payment upfront, unless the job requires the contractor to buy a significant amount of expensive materials before getting started.

Select your finishes on time. You will likely include some major components of the job (tile floor or granite countertops, for example) in the contract, with the specific finishes to be selected while the work is ongoing. If you don't meet your deadlines to choose materials, the contractor can't meet his, either.

Get lien releases. Anyone who provides labor or materials for your home can file a lien against your title if the bill is not paid. Before you make final payments to the contractor, ask him for lien waivers from all the materials suppliers and subcontractors affirming they have been paid. "A lien waiver really does protect the customer a ton," Contant says.

Expect and plan for expensive surprises. If you have \$50,000 to spend on your remodeling job, don't sign a contract for \$50,000 because there will always be unforeseen repairs required. Budget at least 10 percent to cover those. "No contractor can see through a wall," Hicks says. "You want to plan for the unexpected."

Verify licensing and insurance. Ask the contractor to give you copies of licenses and insurance policies, and then call the local or state agency that issues the licenses to verify they are valid.

Be suspicious of bids that are significantly lower than all the others. The cost of doing the same work in the same area is not going to vary significantly. If one bid is significantly lower, ask detailed questions about materials and the scope of work to make sure everything is included.

Hire the right contractor for the job. A one-person company is usually not the right choice for a whole-house remodel. Ask detailed questions about previous jobs like yours and request references from customers who had the same project done. Even if your job is small, don't rule out a larger company, which may have more employees and be able to do small jobs efficiently.

Expect stress. Having workers in your house, living without a kitchen and having a cloud of dust over everything is challenging for even the calmest homeowners. Expect disruption and make plans to deal with it. "One of the things consumers don't plan for is the stress of having [the renovation] done," Hicks says.



Ask the Doctor Monthly Q&A

By John H. Fischer, aka Dr. Rent

Welcome to the latest edition of *Ask the Doctor*, in which John provides an answer to a question that he recently or frequently receives. If you have a question you would like covered in a future issue, it can be submitted to John at drrent93@hotmail.com.



Question:

I just bought a duplex that has tenants in it, they are both month-to-month. Are the leases still valid after the ownership change? After interviewing the tenants, I do not wish to continue with one of them. Since it is a month-to-month, can I give them a handwritten letter 28 days before the next payment would occur?

Answer:

When a property is purchased with a lease, that lease runs with the property. The tenant has contractual rights to the property and sale of the property does not impact those rights (unless the rental contract specifically says it does). So, unless the written rental agreements specifically state that they change or terminate with a sale of the property, yes they are still valid.

To terminate a month-to-month agreement, either party (landlord or tenant) can give the other party WRITTEN notice terminating the agreement. The notice has to give the other party at least 28 days. The agreement can only end on the last day of a rent paying period. The notice can be hand delivered to the tenant, can be mail certified or registered mail, can be posted on the property with a copy mailed 1st class mail, or can be served by a process server. Methods of service are covered under WI SS 704.21

Although you don't need a reason to terminate a month-to-month agreement, you cannot terminate it for a discriminatory reason. For example, one tenant doesn't have kids and the other does and you are terminating the one with kids. You may need to be able to prove that the fact they had kids was not the reason you gave notice if you were questioned on it by a regulatory agency. I bring this up because you stated you interviewed them.

Typically, the best course of action would be to establish non-discriminatory criteria and then have the tenants fill out new applications. If the tenant meets your fair criteria, they stay and if they don't you provide notice.

Editor's Note: Answers in this column are specific to Wisconsin, other states may have different landlord-tenant laws. Nothing in this article should be considered legal advice. Dr. Rent, along with the Wisconsin Apartment Association, recommends you contact an attorney familiar with landlord-tenant law if you need legal advice.



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WAA Newsletter Dates & Procedures

1. Items for newsletter should be forwarded to kristy@waaonline.org, electronically whenever possible.
2. Please submit news articles in the following formats: MS Word, Html copy, PDF, MS Works, eps, jpeg, tiff or text format.
3. Your articles, either by email, fax, or US mail must be received by the 3rd of the preceding month.

Please send your articles to:
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PO Box 2922
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Rejuvenate Your Lawn With 7 Spring Musts

By Jennifer Noonan, From www.bobvila.com



Reviving your lawn after a cold winter can be a challenging task. From seeding and aerating, proper spring lawn care encompasses a range of responsibilities. In order to create a thriving, beautiful lawn, you'll need to start early. Include these 7 important tasks to your spring to-do list, and by the time summer rolls around, you'll have a lush, thick carpet of green grass.

1. Dethatching

Dead grass and lawn clippings accumulate and get matted down into thatch. While some thatch protects the roots, a half inch or more prevents moisture and nutrients from reaching the soil and promotes fungal growth. Dethatch the lawn by giving it a good once-over using a dethatching rake.

2. Testing

To grow a great lawn, you need good soil. Most grass varieties thrive in conditions that are neither acidic nor alkaline. To test your soil's pH, you can either send a sample to your local extension office, or if you'd prefer to do it yourself, your local gardener should have cheap test kits.

3. Clean up

After being neglected all winter long, your lawn could use a thorough spring cleaning.

With your rake and pruning tools in hand, fully examine your property and assess the state of your lawn. Look closely for any plants that didn't survive and discard twigs and leaves that may be compacting the grass. Lastly, don't forget to prune your trees and bushes as well.

4. Aeration

High traffic patches of lawn can become compacted and inhospitable to grass roots. In order to alleviate the compaction, manual or mechanical aeration is necessary. This process involves perforating the soil with small holes to give the roots room to spread and allow air, water and nutrients to penetrate the soil.

5. Weed Treatment

Preventative treatment is your best bet for a weed-free lawn all season. Apply a pre-emergent herbicide early to tackle weeds before they even sprout. If it's already too late, try using a post-emergent herbicide designed to kill growing weeds. For an alternative, chemical-free weed treatment, try cornmeal gluten.

6. Seeding

Check for any bare patches of ground and plant grass seeds. Planting grass in the spring requires a lot of watering and weeding during the hot summer months, so reseed in moderation. Also keep in mind that, once fall comes, you'll most likely have to seed again.

7. Equipment Maintenance

Check the performance of your outdoor equipment before lawn season is in full swing and perform basic maintenance now. Sharpen blades, change the oil, replace the air filter, and take your machine for a professional tune-up, if necessary. Finally, make sure you have enough fuel on hand in time for the first grass-cutting of the year.

WAA Attends Bill Signing for Act 176



Assembly Bill 568 is Now Act 176 & WAA was there!

Assembly Bill 568 was signed by Governor Walker on Monday, February 29. Act 176 accomplishes several of the Wisconsin Apartment Association's Legislative goals:

- Landlords are finally getting a tool to help stop crime occurring within their apartments and are now able to terminate tenancies of offending tenants, and protect good tenants in the process. Other language now allows landlords to work with tenants who violate lease agreements on certain types of leases rather than just evict them.
- Local governments will be prohibited from creating ordinances that regulate landlords, yet do nothing to resolve problems created by tenants. It is the Wisconsin Apartment Association's hope that cities and local municipalities can work with landlords to educate and hold all parties responsible for improper actions.

Again, we thank all members who took the time to call their Legislative officials and let them know they should support this bill, especially the members of the Apartment Association of Northeastern WI (Green Bay) and the Wausau Area Apartment Association for their extra effort in contacting their state senators.

And a **BIG THANK YOU** to Gary Goyke, WAA Lobbyist, for his expert leadership and guidance! The WAA could not have stayed on top of this legislation and moved it along without his help.





2016 Spring Landlord Education Day Schedule

2016 Spring WAA Landlord Education Day & Trade Show Schedule

(All seminars/events & locations subject to change without notice)

Saturday, April 16, 2016				
Saturday, April 16th	8:30am – 9:30am	Registration Welcome & Vendor Recognition		
	9:30am – 11:30pm	Trade Show		
	11:30am – 12:30pm	Trade Show & Lunch		
	12:30pm – 1:45pm	General Session: Board of the Whole & Legislative Update by Chris Mokler & Dale Hicks, WAA Legislative Co-Chairs		
	2:00pm – 3:15pm	<i>Screening Basics & Techniques – Dale Hicks, WAA Director</i>	<i>Recent WI Legislative Acts & What They Mean for Landlords – Chris Mokler, WAA Chairman & Legislative Co-Chair</i>	<i>Tax Tips & Strategies for Landlords – Anna Lautenbach, CFP, EA, ChFC; Liberty Tax Service</i>
	3:30pm – 4:45pm	<i>Animals-Pet or Service/Companion? – Dale Hicks; WAA Director of Municipal Affairs</i>	<i>Basics of Evictions – Chris Mokler, WAA Chairman & Legislative Co-Chair</i>	<i>Be on Notice About Notices (UPDATED based on 2015 Act 146) – John H. Fischer, aka Dr. Rent, via GoToWebinar</i>

2016 Spring Landlord Education Day



Walk-In Registration Form
2016 Spring Landlord
Education Day & Trade Show
Saturday, April 16th, 2016
at the Oshkosh Convention Center,
Downtown Oshkosh

MEMBERS: ONLY \$69/person!

Includes all sessions & lunch

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NON-MEMBERS: ONLY \$79/person!

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Name of Registrant(s): _____

Company Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: (____) _____ - _____ Fax (____) _____ - _____

Local Affiliate: _____ Email: _____

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TOTAL Conference fees \$ _____ Please draft check to "WAA Conference"

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Local Affiliate Updates

APARTMENT ASSOCIATION OF NORTHEAST WISCONSIN (AANW), GREEN BAY

Info submitted by Kathy Haines

At our April meeting, our featured speaker will be Deron Andre with Andre Law Firm. Deron will update members on the new law changes regarding Act 176 and also educate us on evictions. The form that we will review this month is using Non Standard Rental Provisions.

Check out our website at www.aanw.org for more information.



Meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the Green Bay Distillery, 825 Mike McCarthy Way, Ashwaubenon. Networking at 6:00 p.m. & meeting at 6:30 p.m.

APARTMENT ASSOCIATION OF THE LA CROSSE AREA (AALA)

Info submitted by President Pamela Strittmater



Meetings are held the 3rd Thursday of each month at the Moose Lodge

CHIPPEWA VALLEY APARTMENT ASSOCIATION (CVAA), EAU CLAIRE

Info submitted by President Diana West

Check out our new website at www.cv-aa.org!

Meetings are held the 2nd Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Elks Lodge, 3411 Stein Blvd, Eau Claire

GREAT RIVERS APARTMENT ASSOCIATION (GRAA), ONALASKA

Info submitted by President Johanna Pralle

The Great Rivers Apartment Association (GRAA) is now the newest local affiliate. With almost 15 members, we represent almost 500 units. GRAA is meant to encompass landlords in Onalaska, Holmen, Galesville, Trempleau, West Salem, Bangor, Sparta and Tomah. If you have units in La Crosse, please join the Apartment Assoc. of the LaCrosse Area. You can belong to both. (You only pay State dues once). As members you're welcome to attend meetings of both locals.

Meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Onalaska Public Library, Room A

JANESVILLE AREA RENTAL PROPERTY ASSOCIATION (JARPA)

Info submitted by Dale Hicks



Meetings are held the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at Commercial Bank, 1400 Blackbridge Rd., Janesville



KENOSHA LANDLORD ASSOCIATION (KLA)

Info submitted by Secretary Jeanette Marchetti-Hamm



Meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Fireside Restaurant, 2801 30th Ave., Kenosha
Networking with refreshments at 6:30 p.m. & meeting at 7:00 p.m.

MARSHFIELD AREA APARTMENT ASSOCIATION

Info submitted by President Kris Mueller

Educational seminars are on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at Belvedere Supper Club, Marshfield
Networking & dinner (at your own expense) at 6:00 p.m. & seminar at 7:00 p.m.
Board meetings are held on the 1st Thursday of every month at the Sunrise Restaurant. Everyone is welcome!

SOUTHERN WISCONSIN LANDLORD ASSOCIATION (SWLA), RACINE

Info submitted by President Jon Frickensmith

Visit our website at www.racineswla.org!

Meetings are held the 3rd Monday of each month at Harbor Lite Yacht Club, 559 State St, Racine
Networking & food at 6:00 p.m. & meeting at 6:30 p.m.

WAUKESHA AREA APARTMENT ASSOCIATION

Info submitted by President Adele Vogel

Meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Waukesha Eagles Club, Grandview Ave, Waukesha
Networking/dinner at 6:30 p.m. & speaker begins at 7:00 p.m.; Business discussion to follow.

WAUSAU AREA APARTMENT ASSOCIATION

Info submitted by Larry Sommer

Serving Marathon, Lincoln, Portage and Wood Counties. The Wausau Area Apartment Association currently has 72 members that manages approximately 7,000 properties.

Meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of each month at Sam's Pizza, 5811 Bus. HWY 51 South, Schofield
Networking at 6:30 p.m. & meeting at 7:00 p.m.



Local Affiliate Updates

WISCONSIN RAPIDS AREA RENTAL PROPERTY OWNERS

Info submitted by Helen Streekstra

Our meetings always are the 2nd Monday quarterly at the Hotel Mead beginning at 5:00 with a social time including a pizza buffet with the meeting starting at 6:00.

Meetings are held 4 times per year: Next meeting is Monday, June 13th at the Hotel Mead
Social/dinner at 5:00 p.m. & meeting at 6:00 p.m.

WINNEBAGO APARTMENT ASSOCIATION, OSHKOSH

Info submitted by President Donn Lord

Our March meeting's focus was meeting the new Police Chief Dean Smith. Chief Smith was also accompanied by Captain of Patrol Services, Kurt Schoeni.

At our Monday, April 11, meeting, the speaker will be Public Education Specialist, John Holland, from the Oshkosh Fire Department. This educational presentation will concentrate on rental housing, fire safety and prevention topics including smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector use and placement in residential and rental housing units.



Winnebago Apartment Association has a Facebook page. We maintain a community page and a closed group page. Wisconsin Apartment Association numbers are welcome to join our closed group Facebook page.

Meetings are held the 2nd Monday of each month at Benvenuto's Grill, 300 S. Koeller St., Oshkosh
Board meeting at 5:30 p.m., social (in the bar) at 6:30 p.m., & business meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the back room.

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New Membership Marketing Ideas for Associations

By *IntrinXec Management*, April 11, 2013

Sick of member drives and cold calls? Tired of incentivizing all of your board members to try to recruit more members?

Sounds like you need some new membership marketing ideas for your association.

Here are a few proven ideas to get you started.

MEMBERSHIP MARKETING IDEA #1:

Try focusing on engagement rather than membership numbers. Stop pushing for more members and take a look at the big picture. What is your association's ultimate role in your industry?

If you dig a little deeper into your mission, you might find that the ultimate goal is to have an engaged constituency – not necessarily more members.

Of course you need to financially support your association's initiatives. So, maybe your constituents aren't all paying members... but could they be paying for events? Could they be sponsoring certain projects or buying ads?

Serving more people means you're making a bigger impact, so evaluate your association's long-term goals before you start pounding the pavement for new members.

MEMBERSHIP MARKETING IDEA #2:

Grow your email list by giving away content that you already have. Maybe you've wondered whether your association's articles or newsletters should be open to the public, or if they should be an exclusive member benefit.

I submit to you that your association is missing out on a lot of opportunities by keeping it's content in the sacred "member's only" section. If your association has any articles, guides, or other valuable content — try giving it away in exchange for an email address. If your visitors are interested enough to give you their email address, you're one step closer to turning them into an event attendee, a new member, or even a sponsor.

MEMBERSHIP MARKETING IDEA #3:

Allow everyone to join your LinkedIn group. Many associations struggle with whether they should make their LinkedIn group public or private. Again I say, make it public!

Your LinkedIn group is yet another opportunity to engage your potential members. They will hear about your upcoming events, benefits of membership, and other services that your association offers. Your LinkedIn group is a teaser to the full value that your association provides.

MEMBERSHIP MARKETING IDEA #4:

Tell a story through video. Even if you're simply using the video camera on your phone — just pull one of your members aside and ask them a few questions. We've seen this 6-step interview process work really well for video testimonials:

1. What were you looking for or frustrated with before you came to the association?
2. What happened when you found the association? How did it help?
3. What was the membership process like? Was it easy to sign up or reach your goals quickly?
4. What results have you seen from membership and what do they mean to you? How do you feel about the results?
5. Would you recommend that people make an investment in the association?
6. Is there anything else you would like to add?



Debunking 3 Resident Myths About Renters Insurance

From www.american-apartment-owners-association.org

The Value of Renter's Insurance

Natural disasters have a way of shining a light on the necessity and value of renter's insurance. According to the Insurance Information Institute, insured losses due to natural disasters in the United States in the first half of 2015 totaled \$12.6 billion, well above the \$11.2 billion average in the first halves of 2000 to 2014. And yet, there are many who are renters that are skeptical and choose to opt out of renters insurance, deciding to assume possible risks.

Insurance

The meaning of insured risk management used compensation for potential safeguard against loss any measure taken a

A recent survey from NMHC mentions the U.S. apartment market has reached approximately 38 million renters. A 2014 Insurance Information Institute (III) poll conducted by ORC International found that only 37 percent of renters had renters insurance, a surprising number to take in.

With this in mind, it's hard to understand why residents would opt out of insurance coverage. Why are renters passing on a way to safeguard belongings and personal property? Based on misconceptions, residents can forego renters insurance for the wrong reasons. Below we've debunked some of the common ones:

Myth #1: Renters Insurance is Too Costly

Residents often cite cost as a big reason for failing to purchase insurance coverage. It's understandable for apartment residents to have cost concerns; the Insurance Information Institute reported 47.6 percent of renters nationwide spent at least 30 percent of their household income on rent and utilities in 2013. In the case of purchasing renters insurance, residents can be wrong about the big price tag.

"The average renters insurance policy costs \$15-\$30 per month, far less expensive than replacing personal possessions or being liable for an accident," mentions Jay Stoltz, Director of Market Development for LeasingDesk in one recent article.

Myth #2: The Apartment Property has Renters Insurance

Residents often believe they don't need insurance because their landlord or apartment community has a policy that includes coverage on their belongings. While it is true that an apartment community has insurance, the policy covers the structure itself, not a resident's personal possessions inside it.

Also, it does not offer liability coverage in case an uninsured person is hurt in a resident's home. If an uninsured resident causes damage to the structure – for example causing a fire when grilling on the deck – the property's insurance company can seek compensation for damages. The liability component of a renter's insurance would cover the resident.

Myth #3: I Don't Own Enough for Property Coverage

In the words of Joni Mitchell, "you don't know what you've got 'till it's gone."

It's not uncommon for people to undervalue the possessions they own. Even the most basic household contents – dishes, bedding, clothing, computers, etc. – can cost upwards of thousands of dollars to replace. Additionally, renters insurance protects against much more than loss of possessions. In the chance the apartment structure is damaged by natural disaster or fire, it can be reimbursed for temporary lodging if needed.

You Can't Afford Not to Have It

It takes just one event, whether theft, fire, accident, or natural disaster, to show the true value of owning a renters insurance policy. With the right education, renters can understand affordability of renter's insurance, especially in terms of the consequences of not having coverage.

How are you educating your future and current residents to the value of owning a renters insurance policy?



Update From Dale Hicks, WAA Municipal Affairs Chairperson & JARPA President

In January, Officer Chad Sullivan from the Janesville Police Department and I taught a law enforcement class to 30 officers in Fort Atkinson. Also, with the assistance of the Milton Police Department, we taught 40 Milton/Janesville landlords in February. Each person in the Milton class received a JARPA membership application. I will have to wait to see the results from that class. Because I have taught at other police departments around the state, I also get a number of calls back from officers around the state with questions about how to handle landlord/tenant situations.

Through all this, I have begun to see some things of interest, both from officers and landlords. How do we think about our tenants? How do we screen? What is our **ATTITUDE** towards prospective tenants and those who we presently rent to?

Do we look at our tenants favorably or do we have contempt toward them? This one little word, **ATTITUDE**, makes all the difference in our business. Positive attitude brings about better relationships and better tenants. Contempt brings about negative attitudes and negative tenants.

What do you do and do you need to change? A good attitude starts with screening and should be consistent with our treatment of our tenants the entire time that they rent from us. I don't just share this to say something, but this becomes more and more apparent as I do more training on both fronts. I feel that we, as landlords, have the ability to make the changes that will help our industry be a positive influence in the state.

Safety Tips for Showing Rental Properties

From www.leasingorlando.com

As a Property Owner/Manager or Leasing Agent, you put yourself at possible risk everyday. Meeting prospects at rental properties can jeopardize your personal safety. Most often, we meet complete strangers at vacant homes, so it is essential that you take precautions prior to meeting someone at the home, or walking into a vacant property. Here are some tips to follow to keep yourself safe:

- Your office should have a policy to know where you are for your showings, and a code word or phrase in case you feel threatened and need to have the police notified.
- If at all possible, meet them at your office first, ask for identification. REALTOR.org has a sample for "Prospect Identification Form" located under office safety forms that they can fill out and leave a copy of their identification.
- Never take people in your car, drive separately.
- Show during daylight hours.
- Always walk around the exterior of the building before going inside. You can tell a lot from the exterior, such as a broken window, sliding glass door open, etc. Call the police if you suspect someone is in the house, or someone has potentially taken up residence in the property.
- Always let people walk in front of you, you walk behind.
- Keep your cell phone with you, but lock away your valuables, don't leave them for other people to see.
- Don't park in the driveway so that you could possibly be blocked, always be in a spot where you could drive away quickly.

Its easy to let your guard down, especially when we all get in a routine. Please be careful out there.



HUD Rules Against Using Arrest Records

By Ryan Green, www.multifamilyinsiders.com,
April 5, 2016

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued new guidance on April 4th, 2016, that is going to require all single-family and multifamily rental professionals to revisit their policies. In a decision that is aimed at protecting the rights of “returning citizens,” HUD is limiting the use of arrest records in tenant screening nationwide for both public and private housing. While they are not discouraging the use of criminal records in the background screening process, they are requiring a conviction be reported for the record to be considered in the decision. Using an arrest record without a conviction is being viewed as discriminating against a consumer who has not been found guilty of having done anything illegal.

Per the new guidance:

Exclusions Because of Prior Arrest

A housing provider with a policy or practice of excluding individuals because of one or more prior arrests (without any conviction) cannot satisfy its burden of showing that such policy or practice is necessary to achieve a substantial, legitimate, nondiscriminatory interest. 25 As the Supreme Court has recognized, “[t]he mere fact that a man has been arrested has very little, if any, probative value in showing that he has engaged in any misconduct. An arrest shows nothing more than that someone probably suspected the person apprehended of an offense.”²⁶ Because arrest records do not constitute proof of past unlawful conduct and are often incomplete (e.g., by failing to indicate whether the individual was prosecuted, convicted, or acquitted), ²⁷ the fact of an arrest is not a reliable basis upon which to assess the potential risk to resident safety or property posed by a particular individual. For that reason, a housing provider who denies housing to persons on the basis of arrests not resulting in conviction cannot prove that the exclusion actually assists in protecting resident safety and/or property.

What does this mean?

In your rental policy there should be clearly defined requirements for an applicant to be approved to live in your property. For example, income must be xx times the monthly rent. Likewise, there should be criteria that will disqualify applicants despite them meeting other requirements. This is the section where your policy clarifies your stance on criminal records that appear during the applicant’s background check. Our recommendation is that you specify that the use of a criminal record must be the result of a *conviction*, and denial should be limited to specific crimes such as:

- Violent crimes, which would include any convictions with the use of firearms,
- Crimes of a sexual nature,
- Crimes against property or persons (such as arson and theft), and,
- Convictions of drug manufacturing or distribution.

When updating your written rental policy, you should review the content so it answers these 3 questions:

1. What is the nature of the criminal conviction?
2. How severe is the crime that resulted in a conviction?
3. What is the length of time since conviction occurred?

Along with each of these questions, you should consider whether your requirement is appropriate for the type of housing you offer, and the community it is in (i.e. family community, senior community, individual home, etc.).

(cont'd on page 21)



(cont'd from page 20)

The new guidance clarifies this requirement as:

A housing provider with a more tailored policy or practice that excludes individuals with only certain types of convictions must still prove that its policy is necessary to serve a "substantial, legitimate, nondiscriminatory interest." To do this, a housing provider must show that its policy accurately distinguishes between criminal conduct that indicates a demonstrable risk to resident safety and/or property and criminal conduct that does not.

HUD's new requirements may seem like a big change at first, but it can be followed very easily by following these steps:

1. Review your policy to make sure the language is clear, and conforms to the HUD guidelines (and have your housing specialist attorney read it over).
2. Educate your staff, or anyone involved in reviewing background checks, so they are aware of the new guidance.

Consider contacting your tenant screening provider to ask about their ability to restrict records that cannot be used in the decision.

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Sizing Up Today's Tenants

From www.american-apartment-owners-association.org

When it comes to the biggest influence in selecting their next apartment home, renters are swayed most by cost (63 percent) when their lease is expiring. This finding is one of the insights from research released by Apartment Finder that explores how apartment hunters shop and what entices them to sign the lease.

The national only survey of over 5,000 apartment seekers across the U.S. also reveals that online peer ratings and reviews matter: 96% of respondents said that online reviews influence their decision when choosing an apartment. But the final decision rests on the bottom line. Price and budget largely drive renters' final apartment choices. Location came in a distant second at 24%, followed by neighborhood crime statistics (7.3 percent), school system (3 percent), and community amenities (2.6 percent).

Renters Are On The Move

The top 3 reasons that apartment shoppers are looking for a new home are: their current lease is expiring (42 percent); job relocation/new job (22 percent); and moving out of parents' home (18 percent).

Apartment shoppers increasingly prefer to search on the move. While using their personal computer is still the leading method for searching for their next apartment home, nearly half (49 percent) of apartment hunters prefer to use their mobile device. Mobile users not only browse, but take action. With calling (45 percent) and emailing (42 percent) ranking as the top two ways to contact an apartment community to learn more, a mobile device makes it easy and convenient to do so. In fact, nearly half (49 percent) of respondents used their mobile device to call the apartment community directly from the listing.



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Landlord Interest: How to Protect Yourself from the Big Cut in Tax Relief

By Carl Bayley & Nick Braun

Overview

Starting in April 2017 landlords with residential properties will enjoy less tax relief on their mortgages and other finance costs. This guide explains how the new rules will operate and how landlords can beat the tax increase by increasing or postponing tax deductible expenses, accelerating finance costs, making pension contributions, reducing buy-to-let mortgages, selling properties, investing in other types of property, converting properties to a different use, using alternative investment structures, transferring properties to their spouses/partners, and using a company.



3 Easy Must-Do's: Your 2016 Checklist for Growing Your Real Estate Business

From www.american-apartment-owners-association.org



Setting goals for the year ahead is one thing. Making them happen is another. Most of us start a new year with renewed energy and big plans for growth. And then what?

If your main goal is to grow your business, get started with these 3 easy must do's:

1. Bring your website up-to-date (and into the 21st century)

It's a "must" in today's always-on-the-go business world to not just have a website, but to make sure it's mobile-friendly and fully customizable. Statistics show that over 90% of home buyers start their search online and over half use mobile devices. Now it's more imperative than ever that your website is mobile-friendly and up-to-date. The best part is that you can do it yourself: get a user-friendly website with easy-to-change templates.

2. Set yourself apart from others (and get to the top)

With so many online marketing solutions available, there is no excuse to stay in the shadows. There are plenty affordable advertising options available to you at the click of a button. Making your listings (and yourself) more visible is simply smart advertising. While Google advertising may be expensive, ads on large real estate consumer portals are affordable and efficient.

3. Know and connect with your prospects (right now)

With cold-calling a thing of the past, getting in touch with prospects can be much easier and faster. Start taking advantage of the amazing prospecting tools available to you. You can track your website traffic, automatically send emails to leads, and convert leads into sales, all thanks to customer relationship management software (CRM) and effective lead management tools. Choose an all-in-one solution with an integrated CRM system that helps you manage and analyze customer interactions and data, and turn more leads into sales.

Get the marketing tools you need to start putting it all into practice, and then see the results all year long.



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