



2016 Roster of Events

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

WAA Legislative Day

Wednesday, March 23 • 10:00 a.m.

State Capitol, Madison

Cost to cover lunch & materials is \$25 per person.

Watch for more details via email & on the WAA website (www.waaonline.org)!

Pre-register with Kristy at the WAA office no later than **Friday, March 18th.**

WAA Spring Landlord Education Day & Trade Show

Saturday, April 16 • 9:30 a.m.

Oshkosh Convention Center, Oshkosh

Registration is only \$29 per member, if registered by Jan. 30th!

More details coming soon via email & on the WAA website (www.waaonline.org)!

CHANGES FOR 2016!

WAA is moving forward with a “reboot” of the association. With this restructuring, we are pleased to tell you that local member dues have been reduced and will now be **ONLY \$45!** Over the years, one of the reasons given for not being able to attract new members was the cost of the dues. With dues now only \$45 a year, we are certain that your local will be able to gain many new members. And with new members, comes new ideas and a larger voice in Madison for the WAA!

There will be a few other changes for 2016, including limited office staff and a total of six issues of the newsletter will only be sent out via email. We hope that with the lower dues, we will be able to attract many new members and will be able to bring back additional issues of the newsletter and other services in the near future, including online education.

Please feel free to contact Chris Mokler, Chairman, at 920-279-6104 or by email at chrismokler@waaonline.org if you wish to discuss this or have any questions.

Cut out & Save!

2016 WAA DATES

Wednesday, March 23
WAA Legislative Day
State Capitol, Madison

Saturday, April 16
Spring LED & Trade Show
*Oshkosh Convention Center,
Oshkosh*



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If you are a current member and have not been receiving recent emails from the WAA, please be sure to check your SPAM /Junk folder. We are now using the email service, *Mail Chimp*, to email our members and your email program may need your approval to allow our emails to come through to your inbox. Please also be sure to email our office of any contact information changes so we can keep communications coming to you. Thank you!

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.



Chairman's Letter



The Future of our business...

Step back for a moment and think about your business of owning rental properties...think about the many different types of people who own rental property. Many are folks who own a few units and have full time jobs. Many own a few more units and do this "job" exclusively. There are probably just a few that own many units and do this job via managers and other employees. Many might have another business in conjunction with owning rental units, in which either the rental properties or the other job is kind of a side line. Some got into this to get rich quick after watching the info-mercials, other got into by force as they could not sell their home when they were forced to take another job.

So what is my point in all this? We are a diverse group of people with different levels of attentiveness to our rental property business. Sometimes this creates issues in our lives. If we have another business to attend to or we got into this unexpectedly, we may not be "up" on everything, we might not be involved as we should in our rental units or industry as a whole. If we got into this unexpectedly, we probably are not up on all the laws and all things we need to do. If we have employees, we have to keep them properly trained.

The business of owning rental property is not very simple. We wear many hats from repairman to accountant, all the way to hats we should not be wearing, such as counselor or sometimes psychiatrist. We all heard the woes of some of our tenants when their life is not going as planned! The best one yet for me was the tenant who did not quite have all the rent, so he went to the casino to win more money to pay the rent, and lost it all! Surprise, surprise! We all have our stories and we all have good tenants. It is only some tenants that stick out in our minds! But as we know there are tenants that don't always do as they should, there are property owners that are not up on the laws and not doing as they should. It never ceases to amaze me when I get certain questions from long-time property owners and I ask them, "How long have you been doing this?" "You're really asking that question?"

All in all, the business of owning rental property is not easy. For many of us that are involved on a day to day basis with our tenants and rental units, we take a personal stake in our units and when we do not get our rent or the unit is damaged, we take it personally. We get mad, we feel hurt, and why the #\$%* did this happen?!

Still confused where I am going with all this....my point in all this is that we need to run our BUSINESS, no matter how many units we have...professionally! We need to know the laws. We need to be involved in the industry to affect good laws, laws good for us and our customers! We need our fellow property owners to be doing the SAME! On e owner doing something bad gives us all a bad name! Get involved in your business. Become educated on the rules and laws surrounding your business. Reach out to others to do the same and we all benefit!

Respectfully,

C. Mokler

Chris Mokler

Chairman of the Board of Directors/Director of Legislative Affairs



When Should a Landlord Hire a Lawyer?

In some situations, property owners can benefit from a lawyer's help. Learn when to consult an attorney.

By Ron Leshnowar, www.nolo.com

If, like many landlords, you own or manage only a few rental properties, you are unlikely to have a lawyer on staff or even "on retainer" (where you pay a lawyer in advance to handle routine questions and issues). Fortunately, you shouldn't need to constantly consult a lawyer or even keep one in the wings, "just in case." You *do* have to be able to recognize those situations when expert help is needed -- even if it's just for some advice and coaching.

Landlords are fundamentally no different than any other type of business owner -- they aim to make their business profitable while steering clear of liability. In certain situations, hiring (or consulting with) a lawyer to help you achieve these goals is a smart move. Here are some of the most common scenarios that will benefit from a professional's review or help.

Evicting a Tenant

In most states, an eviction lawsuit takes much less time than regular civil cases. But in exchange for expedited treatment, landlords must follow highly detailed rules, from notifying the tenant of the lawsuit to filing the right papers and forms. In addition, because it's the tenant's home that's at stake, many judges will set the bar very high when it comes to ruling in the landlord's favor. Winning an eviction lawsuit, even one that you'd think is a slam-dunk, isn't so easy.

Still, many landlords try to evict a tenant themselves, often with success. But you may be better off hiring a lawyer if:

- this is your first eviction
- the tenant is fighting the eviction and has a lawyer
- the tenant is an employee whom you're firing
- the tenant is filing for bankruptcy, or you must comply with rent control or housing program rules for eviction.



Being Investigated or Sued for Illegal Discrimination

You don't need a lawyer every time a prospect or tenant accuses you of illegal discrimination. In fact, landlords who diligently comply with fair housing laws can still get these accusations from prospects they reject or tenants they evict for legitimate business reasons. But if a prospect or tenant sues you for discrimination, or if HUD or a fair housing agency agrees to investigate a claim, you'll probably want to consult a lawyer.

HUD administrative law judges can award a civil penalty of \$16,000 per violation for first-time offenders, in addition to actual damages, attorneys' fees, and other relief. Your liability can be much higher if your case goes to court or you settle. Also, if you become the subject of a discrimination lawsuit or investigation, it can make the press and harm your business' reputation. A lawyer can help you resolve the dispute and end the investigation or lawsuit as soon as possible.

Sued for Injury or Illness

If a tenant or guest sues you and claims that she got hurt or sick because of your carelessness, you'll almost certainly want to hire a lawyer to defend you. Personal injury cases are typically high stakes, and personal injury lawyers know their way through these cases much better than you do. Also, you may find it difficult to confront a tenant who has suffered a serious loss, even though you believe you should not be held responsible.

Any lawyer you hire will be emotionally detached from the case and experienced in effectively negotiating these types of situations. Fortunately, if you have liability insurance and pay your premiums, your insurer should provide you with a lawyer to defend you against personal injury claims..

(cont'd on page 6)



Legal Tip (cont'd)

(cont'd from page 5)

Sued for Major Property Damage

Tenants or guests may also sue you if they think that your failure to maintain the rental property caused damage to their property. For example, if you don't maintain the roof and a leak occurs during a normal winter rain, soaking the tenant's furniture, the tenant may look to you for compensation

In situations like this, your liability policy would also kick in. When the claim is high, you may decide to refer the matter to your insurance company and take advantage of its obligation to provide a lawyer. When the claim is low, especially if it's brought in small claims court, you'll probably want to handle it yourself, but could still benefit from a coaching session of an hour or so.

Audited by the IRS or the State

If you learn that the IRS or your state tax agency will be auditing your return, you don't always have to hire a lawyer. For example, an audit in which an additional few thousand dollars of taxes is at issue probably isn't enough to justify the expense of a lawyer. But you'll probably want to hire a lawyer (or another tax professional) to help you with an audit when there's a lot of money at stake.

If you made a serious mistake on your taxes that the government hasn't yet noticed -- for example, you didn't report certain income or you took deductions for which you're not entitled -- hiring a lawyer before the auditors uncover the mistake can help you avoid a potentially damaging and embarrassing situation.

Defending Your Reputation

If a serious crime or accident occurs on your property, or if one of your employees makes headlines for an unflattering reason, your business could suffer from the negative publicity (on top of any lawsuit that may take place).

Especially if you're not used to dealing with public relations, you should consider talking with a lawyer about how to handle the press. The lawyer can advise you on what you should -- and shouldn't -- say, or speak for you, and perhaps recommend action you can take to draw positive attention to your property and business.

Anytime You're Going to Court

Aside from evictions, personal injury, and discrimination lawsuits, you may need to go to court for one of a number of other reasons, either as plaintiff or defendant. For example, a former tenant may take you to housing or small claims court, claiming you wrongfully withheld the full amount of his security deposit. Or you may decide to bring a civil action against a contractor to get compensated for shoddy or incomplete work.

If you're going to court, or if you're entangled in a legal dispute that may lead there, at the very least consider consulting a lawyer, even if it's just to get some coaching. Whether to hire a lawyer should depend on: the complexity of the situation, how much is at stake, your budget, your confidence in handling the matter (or part of it) yourself, and your experience (if any) with a similar matter in the past.

Changing Your Business Structure

You may decide your business would be better served as a limited liability company instead of as the S-corporation you've been running for years. Or, after operating as a sole proprietorship, you may want to get a partner involved. It's wise to consult a lawyer to discuss your options and what each one entails.

Depending on your choice of business structure, you may need to file certain documents with your state on a one-time or annual basis (which you can often handle yourself). Any decision regarding your business structure will have important tax and legal ramifications, which your lawyer can explain.

Buying or Selling Property

Buying or selling property may be common, but it's filled with more complexities and legal risks than many people are aware of, especially if that property also has a business (such as a building full of tenants) that goes along with it.

A lawyer knows the steps and can walk you around common pitfalls, from negotiation to closing. For example, a lawyer can help resolve environmental or structural issues that come to light in an inspection report, and can commit the seller to removing liens, mortgages, judgments and tax levies to ensure you get "clean title" -- that is, ownership that's free of claims.

(cont'd on page 21)



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:

A prospective tenant asked about our carpet cleaning policies and stated that we are not allowed to require them to have the carpets cleaned at the end of their lease term. I am wondering if this is in fact not legal to do as we have them sign an addendum stating that they are required to have the carpets professionally cleaned upon vacating their units. It is in the lease rules that they sign and also as a separate addendum.

Answer:

There are two types of carpet cleaning:

FIRST TYPE: When the carpet needs to be cleaned because of damage done to the carpet or because of “excessive wear”.

SECOND TYPE: Everything else, which is considered “normal wear and tear”.

When normal wear and tear crosses the line into excessive wear or damage is not a simple question. It depends on many factors, so I can't clarify that.

When carpet cleaning is done because of damage or because of excessive wear, then and only then can the cleaning be deducted from the security deposit (as any damage charge can be).

When there is no damage or excessive wear, then carpet cleaning is considered “routine” and therefore “normal wear and tear”. You can NEVER deduct a normal wear and tear item out of a security deposit.

Security Deposit withholdings are covered in WI SS 704.28. (They were formerly covered in ATCP 134.06, but when 704.28 was added to the statutes, it replaced parts of 134. Where SS 704 and ATCP are in conflict, the statute rules. However both statute and rule are consistent in normal wear and tear.)

For a long time, there has been the question if a tenant can be billed for carpet cleaning separate from the deposit, in other words you send the tenant their refund check back, AND a separate bill they need to pay for carpet cleaning. Courts went both ways on that issue. A few years ago, however, the Wisconsin Apartment Association had Attorney General Van Hollen do a legal opinion and in that opinion it states that a landlord can have in the contract a requirement for tenants to clean carpets and bill the tenants if they don't. However, that billing cannot come out of a deposit. You can contact the WAA for a copy of this legal opinion.

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:

Kristy Weincke

PO Box 2922

Oshkosh, WI 54903



Holiday Shopping Brings Package Headaches for Apartment Landlords

By Steve Brown, From www.american-apartment-owners-association.org

The holidays are almost here.



And they bring big headaches for apartment owners who must deal with thousands and thousands of packages showing up on their properties' doorsteps.

That's right, all that stuff you order from Amazon and other Internet retailers over the next couple of months will be piling up in your apartment community's management office.

Last year, delivery firms dumped off more than \$300 billion in Internet purchases.

Forecasts say that online retail sales will jump by almost 60 percent in the next two or three years.

Apartment landlords know this trend all too well.

"It's a challenge in December when FedEx and UPS are delivering," said Jim McGinley, senior vice president of the apartment investor Monogram Residential Trust. "These are actually truckloads of packages coming in every day."

Monogram Residential is adding large package holding rooms to its developments and putting systems in place to deal with the flood of mailed merchandise, McGinley told execs this week at a Dallas apartment industry seminar.

"Some of the large managers and owners have been stopping packages and adding weight limits," he said. "We are actually going into the other direction."

Earlier this year, one of Texas' largest apartment owners and developers stopped accepting packages for its residents nationwide.

Camden Property Trust told its renters it could no longer be responsible for taking in the mounds of stuff they order online.

The apartment company has said its leasing offices handled more than 1 million packages for its residents last year.

Camden said the manpower to deal with all those packages costs it millions a year.

Some apartment owners are using new locker systems and email notification services to deal with the delivery problem.

With most home deliveries coming while residents are at work, most landlords say it isn't realistic to turn away packages.

"We can't totally get away from it," said Adam Brown of the developer Trinsic Residential Group. "It's a big deal."

Brown said his firm is putting in systems that allow residents to get their goods after the leasing office closes for the day.

"When people get home at midnight they want their package."



Top 10 Apartment Resident Complaints...And What You Can Do About Them

By Amanda Cupp, www.multifamilyinsiders.com, August 27, 2015



What would you give for a peek inside the minds of your residents?

Thanks to the results of a recent apartment resident customer satisfaction survey from leading marketing research firm J Turner Research, you may be closer to understanding than you think. Let's take a closer look at the study findings, along with what they mean for strategic-minded property managers.

The Research Is In

After analyzing 10,000 customer satisfaction surveys nationwide, J Turner's list of the "Top 10 Multifamily Apartment Resident Complaints" included the following:

1. Rental rates
2. Poor grounds/common area upkeep
3. Disorganized staff/lack of communication with staff
4. Quality of response to maintenance requests
5. Overall customer service of management staff
6. Quality of parking/parking availability
7. Concerns over security/safety/lighting
8. Lack of upgraded amenities
9. Pets not on leash/poor pet waste removal
10. General lack of preventative maintenance

Some of these aren't exactly surprising. After all, what resident wouldn't opt for better parking or lower rental rates, given the choice? Others involve straight-forward fixes, such as maintaining common areas and upgrading amenities. However, a few are eye-opening — particularly as they pertain to the roles and responsibilities of the typical property manager.

A Common Thread

When announcing the survey results, J Turner Research president Joseph Batdorf said,

"Apartment residents remain concerned with a broad range of customer satisfaction issues but far and away the immediate opportunity to improve customer service and resident satisfaction levels is by addressing dissatisfaction with onsite staff responses to resident concerns."

In other words, resident relations with apartment community staff is a critical customer satisfaction factor. Failure to respond to maintenance or other requests, lack of enforcement of leash laws and other rules, and an overall deficit of efficient, effective communications account for a significant amount of resident disgruntlement, and yet could be ameliorated through some simple corrective measures.

Key Takeaways

It's a fact of apartment life: residents will occasionally be unhappy. After all — regardless of what spot it claims on the list — a drop in rent may not be coming anytime soon. However, in addition to fixing any budget-permitting issues at the property level, there's something else you can do to solve several of these renter complains with one streamlined action: better communications.

Gone on the days when flyers, bulletin boards and mailings were the only way to share information with residents. In the digital age, there are more options than ever when it comes to making your messages heard by residents in the most direct and meaningful way. From phone to email to text, the latest messaging systems allow you to reach your residents through their preferred means of communication. So whether you're reminding residents about waste disposal or announcing an upcoming maintenance project, your residents will always be in the know....and have less to grumble about.

Satisfied residents are likely to stick around, and to spread the word about your apartment community to their friends and family members. By listening to your residents and taking proactive steps to improve resident relations through digital communication methods, you can improve resident relations while simultaneously positioning yourself to fill your occupancy.



2015 Landlord Education Day Highlights

2015 Landlord Education Day Highlights





Local Affiliate Updates

APARTMENT ASSOCIATION OF NORTHEAST WISCONSIN (AANW), GREEN BAY

Info submitted by Kathy Haines



Our September meeting will be a Seminar by Dr. Rent-John Fischer, "Top Ten Landlord Pitfalls."

October is our 11th annual Vendor Show. Door Prizes, Food, Networking and 24 vendors with so much to offer.

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



On July 16, the District 4 State of Wisconsin Appellate Court ruled in regard to the case of David E. Olson et al vs. City of La Crosse. The court affirmed the order in part; reversed in part and remanded the cause with directions. Here is the link to the appellate decision, which affects all in the Wisconsin Rental Housing Industry: <http://wscca.wicourts.gov/index.xsl;jsessionid=4BE89023C232675FAA6EC65E3E27273A>. Click, I agree, then on next page under case search, attorney name, type in last name Cueto, first name Bernardo.

This case has been published and holds a precedent for other similar situations involving rental housing registration and inspection programs. The issue of rental housing registration and inspection programs is of statewide concern, so therefore this outcome affects the practices in the entire state.

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

JANESVILLE AREA RENTAL PROPERTY ASSOCIATION (JARPA)

Info submitted by Dale Hicks



JARPA has just had its quarterly meeting with the city. We discussed the changes to the lead laws that passed in the legislation with the State budget. We also spoke about Section 8 voucher and the new openings along with streets that are slated for work to be done and ash bore infected trees and the process for home owners to remove dead trees.

JARPA has also invited all four Legislative Representatives or Senators to our October meeting. This will be a good time for our membership to get acquainted with them and ask questions.

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

Marshfield mourns the lost of one of their members. Heather Holden (age 55) lost the battle to cancer on June 20. In 1992, she moved to Marshfield WI where she started her own real estate and apartment management business. The family, friends, and the Marshfield community will truly miss her.

On a lighter note: We had two Marshfield police officers at our business meeting, Lieutenant Patrick Zeps and Sergeant Nick Poeschel. It was a question and answer session, with both sides learning a lot. We also invited Anthony Smith to our meeting to discuss updates to our web page.

On August 19th, we held our annual picnic at Weber Park in Marshfield. Members brought a dish to pass with the association providing the chicken, hamburgers, and condiments. Games were played and all had fun.

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

September 16th we will be having our annual TACO NIGHT for our members and Associates. It's our 'Give Back Taco Picnic' for our members.

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.



Local Affiliate Updates

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.

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, September 14th 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 Sept. 14th meeting speakers will be the incoming Housing Inspector, Jason Zellner, and outgoing inspector, Andrew Prickett. Members will meet the new inspector and begin developing the same positive working relationship we had with Andrew. We wish to thank Andrew for meeting with our organization each year to foster a positive relationship with Oshkosh landlords. Andrew also presented at our Landlord Training Seminar, jointly put on by the Winnebago County-UW Extension and our association.

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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8 Ways to Increase Association Memberships

By Marisa Cogan, www.cpscards.com

Memberships are the lifeblood of many associations, and for good reason – they represent professionals that establish standards and ethics in a given industry and, more importantly, they drive revenue. That's why each year, association managers are tasked with one very special goal:

TO INCREASE MEMBERSHIPS! If your association membership numbers have been flat or, if even worse, you are losing members, you may need some fresh ideas to pump up your numbers. Start by putting yourself in the shoes of a potential member... Why would they join? What's in it for them? And for a new member, what would make them stay after their initial year?

There is definitely strength in numbers, so how can you give your membership count a boost? I've rounded up a few simple ideas that are easy to implement and will help to get your creative juices pumping during your next strategy session.

1. Market where your members hang out

If you're a professional business organization, advertise in an industry-specific publication, participate in LinkedIn discussions focused on topics related to your industry, or use social media to tweet about industry news using #hashtags that will generate followers or endorsers. **Go where your members are** and you will be able to find new members/leads to mine.

2. Host events that professionals will want to attend.

Associations are known for their professional events – whether it is an annual expo, a quarterly lunch & learn or an online webinar. These types of professional events drive millions of attendees each year. **Make your events “must attend”** affairs by offering fresh speakers (those that have not made the rounds of every other industry event) and sought-after topics. You'll gain credibility and the opportunity to add additional members. A bonus idea: recruit new members by allowing attendees to bring a “guest”, gratis.

3. Have a membership drive.

Develop an annual membership drive and reward those who generate the highest number of new members.

4. Get feedback from current members.

How will you know what to improve upon if you don't know what is wrong? By asking your current member base for their opinions, you'll be able to adjust your membership benefits to appeal to the masses. **Create an annual member survey** to collect feedback. If the responses evoke a change in member benefits, make sure to broadcast this to your current members. They will not only be impressed that you've addressed their concerns, but they will likely spread the word to non-members. Plus, your new benefit perks will automatically elicit a positive response.

5. Keep existing members happy.

Increasing your membership count also means **retaining current members**. The fewer you lose, the easier it will be to reach your annual growth goal. New members, those within their first year of membership, are at the greatest risk for drop-off. For these members, develop a drip email campaign that will touch these members several times within the first year. For all other members, consider reaching out beyond email – at events, via direct mail or social media – to stay top-of-mind and to communicate continuing benefits.

6. Provide a personalized membership card.

By providing your new members with a **professional membership kit and card**, they will feel like they are a part of something special while being reminded of all the great benefits they will receive with their membership. A membership card can provide access to events, information and partner benefits (i.e. car rental discounts) and keep your organization top of mind all year long.

8. Begin the renewal process early.

Most members do not renew because they simply “forgot.” **Remind members early** (and often) to renew their memberships. It may take several “touches” before you'll receive a response. Also, in your correspondence, remind them of all the great benefits that they receive (and what they'll miss if they don't renew).

9. “Join NOW!”

Create urgency by offering potential members a substantial discount for joining on the spot.

As you can see, these ideas are simple, easy-to-implement and will help get your creative juices pumping for even more ideas! Sometimes you just need to ask yourself “what would entice me to join?”





Prepare Your Property for Winter with Outdoor Home Maintenance

By Leslie Courtney, National Property Management Group, October 17, 2013

If you own a rental property in an area that experiences seasonal changes, outdoor home maintenance should be at the top of your to-do list this autumn. Along with heating system maintenance, preparing your rental property in advance for the cooler winter temperatures not only cuts down on unnecessary repair costs, but will also protect you and your tenants from dangerous situations that are easily preventable with outdoor home maintenance.

Outdoor home maintenance should be a quarterly undertaking, especially if you own a rental property, but obviously to combat icy winters, you will have different tasks than you would with outdoor home maintenance in the summer.

Here are the areas you should focus on during your outdoor home maintenance to get your rental property ready for winter!

Faucets, hoses, and irrigation systems

The first step to outdoor home maintenance involves checking your rental property's faucets, hoses, and sprinkler systems. Outdoor faucets should be shut off and hoses completely drained before the onset of winter. This will prevent residual water from freezing and bursting your hoses, which can lead to costly replacements or repairs. If your property is equipped with a sprinkler system, draining it is another step in outdoor home maintenance. For this, you should contact a professional lawn irrigation systems specialist.

Caulking

Outdoor home maintenance also includes checking your exterior caulking. The main purpose of caulking is to keep a home insulated by preventing moisture and air from outside from seeping in. According to the US Department of Energy, 10% of energy loss in houses is due to old caulking, and climate experts agree that outdoor caulking is a source of costly heat leaks. Even if your caulking was properly completed in the past, it is advisable to frequently check caulk for cracking as a part of your outdoor home maintenance. The most appropriate time to re-caulk just before cold temperatures set in, preferably when the weather is over 45 degrees.



Gutters

Another step in outdoor home maintenance is checking your gutters for obstructions and removing any debris. Fall gutter cleaning is not a job that everyone enjoys, but it can save your rental property from extensive damage in the winter, such as rotting siding, ripped gutters, and roof leaks. If you do not clean your gutters now as a part of outdoor home maintenance, you will need to contact a professional for winter gutter cleaning. To check fall gutter cleaning off your outdoor home maintenance list, scoop the debris out into a bucket or force them out using a hose.

Chimney

Checking the chimney and fireplace is also a vital part of outdoor home maintenance. As we explained when discussing proper fireplace maintenance for your rental property, getting rid of build-up in the chimney will help you and your tenants avoid hazardous situations, like carbon monoxide poisoning and potential fires. Thoroughly inspect the flue for any blockages and buildup, then contact a professional if you need help removing any obstructions. This outdoor home maintenance activity should be carried out at least once in a year and fall is the best time to do it.



7 Holiday Light Safety Tips for Rental Properties

By Jennifer Maughan, www.rentprep.com, December 24, 2014



When all is merry and bright during the winter holidays, many tenants want to put up lights. When it comes to rental properties, there are often different rules for different places and your tenant may not know what you will or won't allow. Whether they are living in an apartment complex, condo or a single-family home, a few strings of holiday lights can really add some sparkle to the season.

Decorating Rental Properties

As a landlord, your primary concern is with the health and safety of your tenants and your property. There's just a few small things that you should pass on to your tenants about holiday light safety. In

extreme cases, holiday lights can boost the risk of fire hazards or personal injury on your rental properties. Why not plan on sharing these holiday light safety tips well before the season starts so you, your tenant and your property have.

Here are 7 safety tips that you should remind tenants of when using holiday lights on your rental properties:

Tip #1

Ask that tenants purchase lights, extension cords and electric decorations that are UL-listed. UL listed lights means that they have met the high standards of the Underwriter's Laboratory and its nationally recognized safety criteria.

Tip #2

Request that tenants use electric decorations that are rated for outdoor use. Not all strings of lights are meant for the outdoors and improper use of indoor lights can cause big problems. Ask tenants to check on the light packaging for the holographic UL label that states whether the string can be used outdoors, indoors or both.

Tip #3

Remind tenants that it's a good habit to inspect each string of lights and each bulb to ensure that there are no exposed wires, broken bulbs and frayed plugs. Broken or damaged strings of lights should not be used.

Tip #4

Tell tenants that the biggest fire risk happens when the wrong wattage is used in electrical decorations, from light strings to lit displays. If tenants end up having to replace bulbs, they should double check that the new bulb is the right wattage.

Tip #5

Advise tenants not to load up extension cords and plugs because putting too many strands end to end or loading into one outlet can be unsafe. Even if rental properties have properly working outlets, too much feeding into one can cause trouble.

Tip #6

Make tenants aware that they should turn off holiday lights and electric decorations before leaving or going to sleep to reduce the risk of fires or sparks without anyone noticing.

Tip #7

Specify how you want decorative light strings affixed to the house. There are many different types of plastic clips that don't do any damage to the structure, but there are some that might. If you have a preference on what tenants can and cannot use, make sure you communicate that.

Holiday lights can really make a rental feel like a home and it's not a big deal to allow tenants the pleasure of decorating for the holidays. As long as you are clear in what is and isn't allowed, and provide some basic safety tips, you can step back and let your tenant decorate for the winter holidays.



When Technology and Tenant Screening Don't Mix

By Chris at Tenant Verification Service Inc., www.landlordtalking.com, May 20, 2013

Technology has made it easier than ever for tenants and landlords to link up. Unfortunately, these same digital advances also make it far too easy for problem tenants to remain under the radar.



If landlords were to go “all in” with today’s new leasing technologies, they could advertise a vacant unit, allow prospective renters to self-tour a property, answer questions, accept a rental application and provide a lease online — all without ever having to meet the new tenant in person.

Imagine the impact this could have on tenant screening.

Email communication is one of the worst culprits. While emailing has its place, it’s not screening tenants. Nothing can substitute for phone or personal interviews to catch a

glimpse of a new tenant’s personality:

1. Email and social media interactions make it easy to hide a person’s true identity and personality traits.
2. A prospective tenant who prefers to communicate via email may be signaling a lack of commitment to the house-hunting process. This person may not be ready to move, or unable to afford the rent. It’s very likely this individual is looking at numerous properties and won’t remember any specific ad. This can be a hard lease to close, and waste the landlord’s time in the process.
3. Email communication allows problem tenants the chance to ponder their answers and hone in on what the landlord wants to see. Spontaneous answers tend to be more trustworthy.
4. Phone numbers are still easier for a layperson to track, rather than email addresses, which tend to be generic.

While phone communications reveal more about a tenant than email, nothing beats a face-to-face meeting with the prospective new tenant. The landlord can check photo ID against the person’s actual appearance, and can match the applicant’s voice to the one they just heard on the phone — minimizing the risk of being targeted by a bad tenant.

Welcome New Associate Members!



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Tenant Screening Woes: Evicting a Tenant

From www.alwayscreen.com, September 1, 2015

Evicting a tenant is the last thing any landlord wants to think about. Running resident checks, criminal background checks, employment histories, and landlord references can help you find the right people for your rental property. The comprehensive tenant screening offered by ATS can help ensure a long and peaceful landlord-tenant arrangement.

But things happen, of course. People change, jobs are lost. Maybe an unwanted guest moves in. When mediation fails and your tenant refuses a 'cash for keys' settlement, eviction is your only remaining option.

Yes, it's rare. But it's expensive, time-consuming, and stressful. During an eviction, one thing can help save your budget from getting swallowed up by lawyers—an experienced professional property manager.

Evictions can be long, drawn-out affairs fought in court over lease wording or other cryptic issues. A property manager will direct the process for you, making sure documents are presented accurately, deadlines are met, and that you're free to devote time to other aspects of your business.

A comprehensive resident background check is your best defense against undesirable tenants, but if you're forced into evicting a tenant, a property manager will make the process efficient, compliant, and as cost-effective as possible. That's apart from the many other management, marketing, maintenance, and legal benefits that come with using a property manager.

(cont'd from page 6)

Dealing With Problem Employees -- Or Employment Problems

Employment issues can arise whether you manage a large staff or have just one person helping you with your business. If you need to fire an employee for a valid reason but are afraid the employee may sue you for discrimination, or if tenants complain that an employee is harassing them, even a quick consultation with a lawyer may help steer you away from legal trouble.

Protecting Your Intellectual Property Rights

When surfing the Web, did you happen to find a company logo that's strikingly similar to the one you paid a graphic designer to create for you several years ago? Did you spot language on another landlord's website or marketing materials that looks eerily familiar? These types of issues relate to your business' intellectual property rights. If you try to enforce them on your own -- for example, by contacting the alleged offender about the apparent violation -- and get nowhere, consult a lawyer who's an expert on copyright and trademark issues.

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Rental Housing Certification 100 Series

The Basics, is devoted to keeping rental property owners informed and education on new laws. Comprised of seminars on basic property management aimed at the new rental property owner, property manager, leasing agent; it is also suggested as a refresher series for those who have been in the business a number of years. Classes in this module are:

- 101 The Law and the Landlord I: Wisconsin Statute Chapter 704
- 102 The Law and the Landlord II: Consumer Protection (ATCP) Chapter 134
- 103 Fair Housing Laws
- 104 Lead Paint Awareness
- 105 Credit Reports
- 106 Basic Recordkeeping
- 107 Screening Your Applicants
- 108 Screening Workshop
- 109 Nuts and Bolts of Eviction
- 110 Bonding and Garnishment

NEW for 2014: "Landlord & Tenant Law in Wisconsin" by John H. Fischer – This is a 8-hour educational session that takes an in-depth look at Wisconsin-specific landlord-tenant regulations and also covers some of the most important federal regulations that deal with rental housing."

Why Join WAA?

The WAA is your portal to the rental housing business in Wisconsin. Membership gives you access to what you need to know and what you need to do to run your rental properties successfully, ethically, and responsibly.

10 things every successful landlord needs to know. Do you?

- Fair housing information
- Applicant screening and processing
- Eviction procedures
- Rental forms specific to Wisconsin
- Lead based paint requirements
- Rental disclosures required by law
- Bills and rental housing policies under discussion at the Capital.
- Best rental housing management practices
- Document storage, security, and disposal
- Property marketing techniques

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Smart Essentials for Real Estate Investing: How to Build Wealth in Rental Property Today

By Dan Gooder Richard



Overview

The housing crash turned millions of foreclosed homeowners into renters. Millions more are underwater, delinquent or in default. Waves of downsizing baby boomers (10,000 a day turn 65) are opting to rent. Boomerangers...3 million young adults who lived with their parents during the Great Recession...are now moving out to rent on their own. Every year hundreds of thousands of new immigrants are renting until they can buy into the American dream of homeownership. Simply put, millions of new renters will drive rental housing demand for years to come.

Why is this important?

Today the convergence of below-market inventory, low interest rates and higher rents has created a once-in-a-generation "Perfect Storm" of opportunity in the single-family rental market. Get rich quick schemes are still too good to be true -- and are mostly bunk. Today get rich slowly strategies are paying off handsomely for smart real estate investors.

How You Will Benefit In Under 100 Pages

This step-by-step SMART ESSENTIALS guide shows you the seven masteries you must get right to earn the profits that insider savvy delivers to smart investors today.

BLUEPRINT: Get the Big Picture to how real estate investing builds your wealth.

TOOLKIT: Learn the rules to maximize cash flow, tax breaks and investment return.

PROPERTIES: Find properties that make money both when you buy and when you sell.

ANALYZE: Run the numbers to spot diamonds in the rough that will cash flow profitably.

PURCHASE: Craft win-win counteroffers and nail financing that fit your strategy.

MANAGE: Avoid costly property management mistakes rookie landlords make.

CASH OUT: Know the triggers to time your exit and sell for the most profit possible.

SMART ESSENTIALS FOR REAL ESTATE INVESTING is written for the small investor. If you plan to invest in single-family homes, condos/co-ops, townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, quads or small apartment buildings with 2-10 units, this SMART ESSENTIALS is for you.

Cover Your Assets

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

While it's important to protect your tenants and your property, you also need to take steps to protect your personal assets.

One of the easiest ways of doing this is to incorporate in a business form like an LLC.

Lawsuits abound in the rental world, from slip and fall to bedbugs, secondhand smoke to crime. In many cases, a landlord can shield any personal assets not related to the rental property in the event of a lawsuit.

If you have multiple properties, some experts suggest forming a separate corporate entity for each property. If you have the option, it may be most effective to form the entity prior to purchasing the property, or prior to incurring a mortgage.



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