

MF

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WINTER 2019

MULTIFAMILY

TECHTRENDS

New technologies can ease parking issues, communication headaches and property-tour scheduling, but they come at a price. Several Florida property managers weigh in on the value they add.

**2019 FAA
ANNUAL
CONFERENCE &
TRADE SHOW**

PAGE 14

**FAA'S
2020
LEGISLATIVE
PRIORITIES**

PAGE 24



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CONTENTS

FEATURES



14
Out of this World
 2019 FAA Annual
 Conference & Trade
 Show Takes Attendees
 Beyond Orbit
 BY LAUREEN CROWLEY



12

DEPARTMENTS

03

President's Message:
Defining FAA's
Mission and Vision
for the Coming Year
 BY KATIE WRENN, CAPS
 WRH REALTY SERVICES INC.

04

FAA Update:
Focusing on the Future
 BY JOSH GOLD, CAE, CMP

24

Legislative Report:
FAA sets priorities for
2020 legislative session
 BY AMANDA GILL



24

28

Community Spotlight:
Luxury at The Jaxon
 BY RANDA GRIFFIN

32

Apartments By
the Numbers

ADVOCACY IN ACTION:

2019 FAA Legislative Victories



✓ During the 2018 election cycle, 92 percent of the candidates who were supported by APAC were elected.

✓ APAC is nonpartisan and supports both Republicans and Democrats in Florida.

Passed legislation to clarify the impact fee process.

HB 207 standardizes the collection of impact fees for multifamily construction projects and protects revenue from being misused by local governments — saving multifamily developers time and money.

Stopped harmful housing discrimination legislation.

FAA stopped HB 565 and SB 958 from advancing to the House and Senate floors, which saved apartment owners and operators from increased legal costs and frivolous lawsuits.

Secured 62% more funding for affordable housing programs.

The FY 19-20 budget provides \$200.6 million for affordable housing programs, which is \$76.9 million more than the FY 18-19 budget. Funds are used to build and renovate affordable apartment homes.

Passed legislation to prohibit unfunded mandates.

HB 7013 prevents municipalities from imposing unfunded affordable housing construction mandates, saving multifamily developers across the state millions of dollars in construction costs.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Defining FAA's Mission and Vision for the Coming Year

BY KATIE WRENN, CAPS | WRH REALTY SERVICES INC.

AS WE WRAP UP 2019, I am honored and humbled at the opportunity to serve as the president of the Florida Apartment Association. It is through the great leadership of our Immediate Past President Bonnie Smetzer, the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, and the entire team at the Florida Apartment Association – Josh Gold, Laureen Crowley, Carina Favale, Amanda Gill, Will Jaycox, Rona Long, and Ralph Robinson – that we have once again had another flagship year. Thank you for all your hard work, dedication, and value that you bring to the Florida Apartment Association and our industry. Among the many great successes of 2019, we most recently wrapped up another record-setting Annual Conference & Trade Show at the Hilton Bonnet Creek in Orlando. This conference was out of this world with a “beyond orbit” theme that was headlined by astronaut Capt. Scott Kelly! He shared his inspiring insights of his journey into space including the lessons of strength, endurance, teamwork, and preparation that it took to make his voyage a success. Our education sessions went to new heights by offering more options than ever before, including a dedicated track for maintenance professionals. This year's trade show soared with a showcase of quality services and innovative products from our supplier partners. The conference wrapped up with the founder of Hello Fears, Michelle Poler, who launched a social movement that challenged us to step out of our comfort zone and face our fears.

I also want to take a moment to thank all our conference attendees including management companies, supplier partners, and

sponsors, who came together to help make this event a success. Every year we work diligently to make the next conference more innovative and exciting than the last, and I don't think next year's will be any different. If you were not able to attend this year's conference, you can “Make Your Mark” at next year's conference, which will be at the Diplomat Beach Resort in Hollywood, Florida, on September 30–October 2.

As I look forward to the next year as the president of the Florida Apartment Association, I am excited to see the continued growth of the FAA's network through brand awareness and elevated engagement across all levels within the industry. We are also launching a research project with HR&A Advisors to support and reinforce our legislative priorities. This research will help identify the drivers of housing costs within Florida's four major markets – Jacksonville, Miami, Orlando, and Tampa. Each of these initiatives is a result of a one-day strategic planning session in August where we not only identified our goals over the next three years, but also reiterated our mission and defined our vision.

Our mission: The Florida Apartment Association is a federation of associations representing and advocating the interests of the Florida multifamily rental housing industry.

Our vision: To be the recognized leader of Florida's multifamily industry.

Lastly, I am looking forward to serving as a resource for our membership and engaging with our affiliates across the state. We have an exciting year ahead and I am truly grateful to be a part of such an amazing organization. **MF**

Focusing on the Future

BY JOSH GOLD, CAE, CMP |
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

WELCOME TO THE FIRST issue of your redesigned *Multifamily Florida*! Although we modernized the masthead and made a few other updates over the past few years, this is first complete redesign since *Impact* became *Multifamily Florida* in 2006. That's a long time to keep doing the things we've always done, and it was time for a change. The redesigned magazine includes a vibrant table of contents that will help you navigate to the content that's most relevant to you. And, because we know you're busy and your time is valuable, fast facts and call-outs throughout the publication will enable you to glean information quickly.

Your monthly *Florida APTitudes* e-newsletter has also been revamped to serve you better. We've kept the same sections – What's New in the FAA, What's New Nationally, and Supplier Updates – and we've streamlined the publication. If you're not receiving *Florida APTitudes* in your email inbox every month, send an email to communications@faahq.org and ask to be added to the distribution.

These improvements to how we deliver valuable information to our members are aligned with the goals that were established at a strategic planning session in August. FAA leaders, members, and staff met at the Apartment Association of Greater Orlando headquarters in Maitland, and brainstormed about what we've been doing well and what could be improved. We reviewed our mission statement and established a vision statement and overarching goal for 2020-2022.

Vision: To be the recognized leader of Florida's multifamily industry.

Goal: Increase engagement at all levels in the industry, leading to membership growth and a stronger affiliate network.

We plan to accomplish that goal through four areas of focus:

- Strengthen affiliate network
- Raise brand awareness
- Grow conference and events
- Enhance advocacy and research

As I shared with many of you at the 2019 FAA Annual Conference & Trade Show, we have already made strides in strengthening our affiliate network, by helping FAA's three smallest affiliates – BCMHA, CCAA, and ECAA – hire professional association executives. This will help ensure that members across the state receive a consistent level of service. Nine of our 10 affiliates are now using the Novi association management system for their websites as well as their member databases. This year, Novi implemented a "data handshake," which effortlessly transfers updated member information from the affiliate to FAA.

At the conference, we offered for the first time ever an education track directed to maintenance professionals – crucial members of multifamily teams in so many ways. We again offered The Masters Sessions, an opportunity for senior multifamily executives to interact and collaborate with their peers, and are exploring other ways to serve and engage that key constituency.

We're developing an advocacy toolkit for affiliates, which will be available on the FAA website and will contain information regarding a variety of public policy issues

as they relate to the state of Florida. This content is intended to provide relevant background information for affiliate leaders to use when broaching these topics with local policymakers.

FAA has added a statewide job board to faahq.org to help members stay up to date on job openings in their area or across the state. The job board compiles listings from affiliates and allows employers to directly post open positions in regions where there is no affiliate job board.

Housing affordability is a hot topic across the state and the nation, and FAA is doing our part to address this issue in several ways. In partnership with AAGO, we produced a Housing Affordability Toolkit to provide information on how local governments can encourage developers to build affordable housing. The toolkit resulted in media coverage as well as policy discussions with local governments. The toolkit is available in the resources section of the FAA website and will soon be available on the NAA website as a resource to affiliates across the country struggling with similar issues.

In addition, we are partnering with NAA on a research project to quantify the impact of Florida-specific barriers to multifamily housing construction. The data obtained by this research will help FAA and its members validate the need for state and local government policymakers to pursue the apartment industry's alternative solutions to address housing affordability.

As always, I encourage you to let us know how we're doing and to share your ideas for how FAA can continue in our vision of being the recognized leader of the multifamily industry in Florida. **MF**



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MULTIFAMILY TECH TRENDS

New technologies can ease parking issues, communication headaches, and property tour scheduling but they come at a price. Several Florida property managers weigh in on the value they add.

BY RANDA GRIFFIN

TOUR24

Many communities have virtual tours available on their websites, providing prospective residents an instant tour of the unit without them having to get up from their computer. While these virtual tours are beneficial for bringing residents to the property, they don't always provide the hands-on experience residents need before committing to a community and signing a lease. That's where self-guided tours come in.

Tour24 is one company making inroads in self-guided tour technology.

"Tour24 is the innovative new way for renters to tour apartments on their own using a mobile app without a leasing agent or broker," said Georgianna Oliver, founder of Tour24.

The app allows prospective renters to schedule a tour, submit their photo ID, get entry credentials to the property and model unit, and even start the leasing process – all from their cell phone. Properties customize tours to ensure that key features and amenities are highlighted. As the resident tours the community, the Tour24 app points out important features and provides additional information, just as a leasing agent would. Tour24 also tracks and reports visitations.

Oliver said the biggest benefit of self-guided tours for renters is convenience. While work schedules make touring difficult during business hours, self-guided tours give prospective renters the flexibility they need to see the property and make a decision. She said the company's statistics show the majority of self-guided tours take place after the leasing office is closed or on the weekends.

"By offering Tour24, a property can have coverage at all times for prospective renters to view the community and the available or model unit," she said.

One of the biggest challenges to implementing self-guided tours in a community is having the proper smart locks on model units, Oliver said. Since many properties aren't customarily set up for these specific locks, Tour24 includes them as part of its product.

At Riverwalk Apartment Homes in Fort Myers, property manager Marilyn Urquiola has used the service for several weeks and said it saves her from hiring staffers for off-hour tours. She said her company pays about \$500 monthly for the service but it's worthwhile because "that is the future."

Johanna Rodriguez, property manager for The Exchange Lofts in Fort Lauderdale, said they are

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about to launch the program and appreciate that it better accommodates prospective tenants with busy schedules.

“It’s hard when you have to try to fit that tour in during your lunch hour,” she said.

Guests have 30 minutes to tour on their own and managers can determine the hours. The requirement that touring guests submit photo identification adds a level of assurance, Rodriguez added.

HENRI

Resident portals have become a common feature in community management for submitting maintenance requests, collecting rent payments, and communicating with residents, all in one place.

The Henri resident portal has taken a new approach to resident portals by incorporating more than just the basics and providing an all-inclusive place for financial, social, and logistics management. It includes numerous unique features like package management, amenity reservations, coupons for local stores, an events calendar, and even a resident marketplace.

“After hearing time and time again that residents wanted something more than the boring and typical ‘pay rent’ or ‘request maintenance’ buttons, we decided to take things into our own hands,” said Dan Vonderheide, Henri resident portal vice president of sales. “We offer a more social savvy experience with a much more modern tech stack.”

Henri makes it easy for management staff to post updates, send notices, and share information because it can be fully integrated into the community’s current property management software. Vonderheide said the goal of Henri is not only to make work easier for management, but also to engage residents and give them a more connected community experience.

“The sad reality is that in most communities people don’t know who their neighbors are,” he said. “Henri gives residents a voice, a sense of community, and a fun way to interact with their neighbors and management.”

Dillon Schuman, leasing manager for Lost Lake Apartments in Jacksonville, said Henri saves residents from a barrage of text messages or email blasts, and gives them information on the same portal where they pay their rent. Residents use it to submit work orders.

“This way, they can choose to open it up,” he said.

The software is new, he added, and had a few kinks, but the service team has addressed issues in a timely manner.

PARKING BOSS

Parking Boss has developed an app that enables residents and their guests to register vehicles so that on-site staff can track parking. Marketing manager Leah Griffiths said communities can select which Parking Boss services they need, including 24/7 online registration for guest vehicles, scannable decals for resident vehicles, live reports, interactive mapping for assigning spaces, paid parking options, and more.

Parking Boss enables managers and staff to track

who is parking at their community at all times, how many vehicles residents really own, and how many they are allowed to have. “Essentially, it helps them structure and enforce their parking policies,” Griffiths said. “We help them take something that is typically difficult and frustrating and turn it into a fair and manageable amenity.”

Guests register their vehicles through the mobile website and managers don’t have to pass out paper permits. Managers can also generate revenue from paid parking and better manage

resident carport or garage rentals.

Because all permits are tracked in real time – often by towing companies – managers have up-to-date information. The ability to tie in their enforcement or towing partners keeps them accountable and provides proof of violations.

Interactive mapping allows staff to assign resident parking and take inventory of parking availability. The company is working on property-management software integration and automated license plate recognition.

Jeanne Klein, community manager of Doral 4200 in Doral, has been using the service since July and said it generates additional revenue while giving vehicle-booting and -towing companies better information about which cars don’t belong. Tenants pay \$15 to register each vehicle and once a few dozen are registered, the monthly charge of \$395 to Parking Boss is covered.

“All the drama is eliminated,” Klein said.

Guest registration is easy and – using their phones – they can scan codes that are on the guest-parking signs.

“We help them take something that is typically difficult and frustrating and turn it into a fair and manageable amenity.”

— LEAH GRIFFITHS,
PARKING BOSS

Barnacle is a tool for parking enforcement that attaches to an illegally parked vehicle's windshield and obstructs the driver's view. The vehicle owner can remove the device after paying a fine.



BARNACLE

Barnacle is a new tool for parking enforcement. Barnacle has found its place in multifamily by providing a new way that's simple and safe to enforce parking rules. Scott Monroe, senior vice president of business development, said this product can be beneficial to on-site staff.

Barnacle attaches to an illegally parked vehicle's windshield using commercial-grade suction cups that adhere with 1,000 pounds of force. By obstructing the driver's view, Barnacle prohibits legal operation of a vehicle.

Barnacle differs from traditional parking boots in that its platform includes payment processing, a 24/7 call center, real-time tracking, and data reporting. Each

device is equipped with tamper alarms and GPS tracking. Violators can easily remove the device themselves in less than five minutes by following the instructions printed on the device after paying online or over the phone. The violator is then responsible for returning Barnacle to a drop box or management office to release the deposit on their credit card.

"Effective management of parking areas is critical to providing a safe, secure, and convenient environment for residents," Monroe said. "Use of the Barnacle removes the angry interaction between a driver and property manager or parking enforcement officer. Routine use of the Barnacle provides a visual and strong reminder that parking regulations must be followed, and it removes the liability apartment managers face related to erroneous impoundment or damage from towing."

Barnacle recognizes that one of the largest conflicts between owners and tenants is parking. "The customer experience of a towed vehicle is incredibly burdensome," Monroe said, and can also damage a vehicle. "The Barnacle's high-strength suction has been perfectly tuned to ensure adherence without damaging the windshield. The ability to self-release the device ensures the violator can quickly remove it on their own and be on their way."

Monroe said Barnacle has been slow to integrate into Florida multifamily communities because municipalities restrict the use of vehicle immobilization devices, and often charge substantial fees for their use. **MF**

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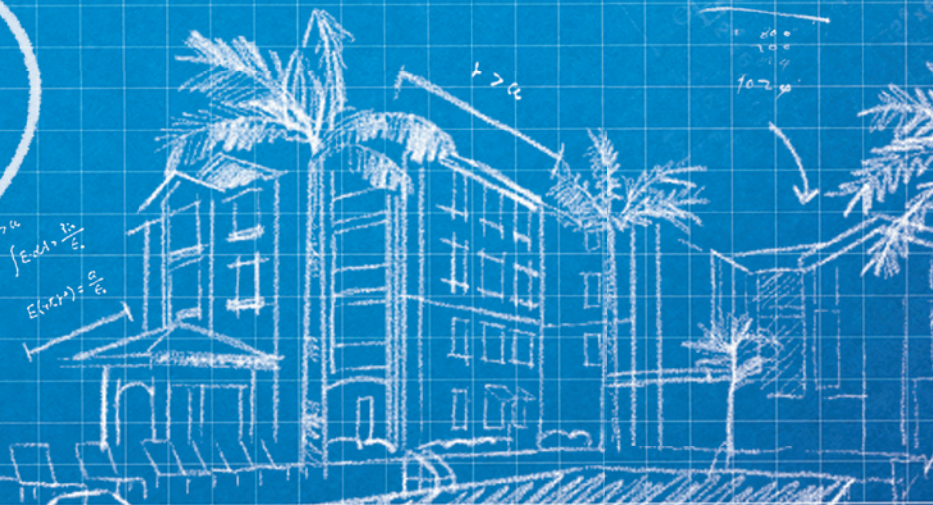
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IS RENT-BY-BEDROOM THE WAVE OF THE FUTURE

BY RANDA GRIFFIN

RENTS CONTINUE TO GROW — 2.9 percent through the first three quarters of 2019, according to a recent Yardi report — and demand for apartments remains high, with occupancy rates staying above 90 percent across the state. New renters entering the market may find that the price of even a one-bedroom apartment is too steep.

One answer could be renting by bedroom, which has begun to show up in more places than just student housing. The option to rent by bedroom takes the hassle of finding roommates off the resident and helps the community ensure that roommates are all qualified and separately responsible for their leases, while also reducing the cost of rent for individual residents.

X Miami is a 646-unit community located in the heart of downtown Miami that opened in summer 2018. The community is taking the lead when it comes to renting by bedroom, rather than units.

"The design narrative for the project is 'downtown hustle,' and the goal was to create attainably priced homes with the most fun and useful amenities," said Brian Koles, PMG brand and marketing director.

"People are renting longer, paying off huge student loans, valuing experience over stuff, and craving authentic, real-world connections."

— BRIAN KOLES, PMG

Koles said from a management perspective, the concept of renting by bedroom has many benefits, mainly because roommates have their own separate leases, which makes billing and renewals much easier than typical roommate arrangements. Turning units is also much simpler.

"The fully furnished units make move ins and move outs very easy," he said.

Rather than arriving with moving trucks and large pieces of furniture, residents normally show up with just a few suitcases and boxes.

Koles said the biggest challenge to having individual bedrooms as a "unit type" is that it doesn't easily integrate with some property management software, but as the trend grows, software capabilities will likely grow with it.

Given the housing affordability crisis that is especially acute in urban Florida, Koles thinks renting by bedroom will become a typical feature in most successful apartment communities. As for X Miami, the concept has been so successful, there's no going back, he said.

"It's been a phenomenal success that PMG is replicating in new projects across the country," he said. "People are renting longer, paying off huge student loans, valuing experience over stuff, and craving authentic, real-world connections."

Like many services in the sharing economy, the concept can seem difficult at first, but Koles said with clear expectations and consistent accountability for renters, it can yield huge benefits for the community and residents. **MF**



OUT OF THIS WORLD

2019 FAA ANNUAL CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW **TAKES ATTENDEES BEYOND ORBIT**

.....

BY LAUREEN CROWLEY





MORE THAN 1,500 MULTIFAMILY management and supplier professionals considered infinite possibilities of customer service, productivity, technology, finding and keeping top talent, and much more at the 2019 FAA Annual Conference & Trade Show October 2-4 at the Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek.

The theme of Beyond Orbit: Infinite Possibilities was epitomized throughout the event, from the opening montage of space movie excerpts and space-themed music, to master of ceremonies “Leasa Space” and her sister “Ivanna Tenant” offering tours of a Space Age apartment run by “Galaxy Management.”

The fun atmosphere belied the gravity (we had to say it) of the educational offerings, which were more extensive than ever before.

From Capt. Scott Kelly’s opening keynote, “The Sky Is Not the Limit – Lessons from a Year in Space,” to Michelle Poler’s closing, “What Are We So Afraid Of?” the conference offered more sessions than ever before, including a first-ever maintenance education track. Maintenance professionals from all of FAA’s

10 affiliates learned about the life cycle of a building, how maintenance can add value for management, and gadgets and gizmos to improve efficiency.

The conference opened on Wednesday, October 2, with meetings of the FAA Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and Florida Suppliers Council. The annual Legislative Platform Meeting helped determine FAA’s focus for the 2020 Florida legislative session. The day culminated with the Isla de APAC fundraiser at Mango’s Tropical Cafe, which included a silent auction to benefit the Apartment Political Action Committee. The auction raised more than \$6,000.

After the educational sessions concluded on Friday, supporters of the Nan Cavarretta Memorial Scholarship Fund for FAA Leadership Lyceum students gathered for a wine tasting fundraiser. The conference wrapped up with a closing celebration dinner, which honored Volunteers of the Year from each local affiliate, FAA Leadership Lyceum graduates, and major APAC contributors, and included the swearing-in of the 2019-2020 FAA Executive Committee.

ISLA DE APAC

Following a day of meetings focusing on the governance of the association, supporters of the FAA Apartment Political Action Committee gathered for a fundraiser and celebration. APAC champions let their hair down at the Isla de APAC event at Mango's Tropical Cafe, which featured food, drink, and entertainment — including a Michael Jackson impersonator. Tickets plus proceeds from a silent auction yielded nearly \$44,000.



HALL OF FAME AWARD

Kellie Jackson, Southeast regional vice president of property operations for Highmark Residential, is the 2019 FAA Hall of Fame Award recipient. Jackson is a past president of FAA and has served in numerous capacities with FAA and NAA. She was presented the award by **Steve Lamberti**, president of Highmark Residential, who described her as "always willing to step up and serve the industry, as she has locally, on the state and national level to effect change and implement new ideas for the improvement of our industry and its members."



SPONSORS

Platinum sponsors of the 2019 FAA Annual Conference & Trade Show were Apartments.com, HD Supply Inc., House of Floors Inc., i4 Waste Valet & Recycling; Massey Services Inc., Publix Super Markets Inc., Redi Carpet Sales of Florida Inc., RentPath Inc., RezCor, The Sherwin-Williams Co., Switch Electric LLC, Valet Living, and Yardi Systems Inc.



EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

The educational portion of the conference opened with an inspirational keynote address from renowned astronaut **Capt. Scott Kelly**, who shared life lessons, including those from a year in space. Senior multifamily executives at the Masters Session shared challenges and ideas on topics such as hiring and retaining top talent. For the first time ever, the maintenance education series offered content tailored to the maintenance professionals who fill an important role in keeping multifamily communities running smoothly. Several sessions featured panels of experts who offered a variety of viewpoints. The educational component of the conference closed with fear-facer Michelle Poler.



WINE TASTING FUNDRAISER

A wine tasting benefited the Nan Cavarretta Memorial Scholarship Fund, which assists future association leaders with the expenses associated with the FAA Leadership Lyceum program.



LEADERSHIP LYCEUM

Twenty members of the FAA Leadership Lyceum class of 2019 received certificates for having met all the requirements of the program. Several members of the inaugural class were honored at the opening session of the conference, as the FAA Leadership Lyceum program marked 10 years.





EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE INSTALLATION

National Apartment Association President **Mike Clow** (far left) swore in 2019-2020 officers (from right) **Kimberly Maggard**, vice president; **Kristi Novak**, treasurer; **Jimmy Chestnut**, secretary; **Bonnie Smetzer**, immediate past president; and **Lisa LaVigne**, associates' vice president.



Katie Wrenn, 2019-2020 FAA president, presented a plaque to **Bonnie Smetzer**, immediate past president.



FAA President **Katie Wrenn** was sworn in for the 2019-2020 term by her mentor, **Kellie Jackson**.



VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

Each affiliate selected one management member and one associate member to be recognized as Volunteer of the Year.

BEST BOOTH AWARD

Conference attendees voted for the best booth at the trade show. The 2019 winner was CORT Furniture.



LOOKING AHEAD



Jimmy Chestnut and **Lisa LaVigne**, co-chairs of the 2020 FAA Annual Conference & Trade Show, had fun announcing the “Make Your Mark” theme for that event, which will be **September 30-October 2** at the Diplomat Beach Resort in Hollywood, Florida.



Photo Credit: Richard Cavalleri / Shutterstock.com

Stand Out from Your Competition

The screenshot displays the FAA Supplier Directory interface. At the top, the FAA logo and navigation links (About, Events, Membership, Advocacy, Resources, News) are visible. The main content area features a map with a location pin for ET & T Distributors, Inc. in South Daytona, FL. The company's contact information, including address, phone number, and website, is listed. Below this, a 'COMPANY OVERVIEW' section provides a detailed description of the company's services and a list of key staff members with their roles and profile links. A 'Tweets' section shows a recent tweet from the company. The interface is clean and professional, with a focus on providing comprehensive information about the supplier.

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The screenshot displays the FAA Supplier Directory interface for a basic listing. It features a map with a location pin for an FAA Supplier in Orlando, FL. The company's contact information, including address and phone number, is listed. The interface is clean and professional, with a focus on providing essential information about the supplier.

Upgrade today at faahq.org/marketing



FAA sets priorities for 2020 legislative session

BY AMANDA GILL

FOUR PRIORITY LEGISLATIVE CONCERNS will form the basis of the Florida Apartment Association's advocacy during the state legislative session that convenes on January 14, 2020. The priorities were established by FAA members along with FAA's government affairs team at the Legislative Platform Meeting held on October 2 at the 2019 FAA Annual Conference & Trade Show at the Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek.

The four priorities are:

- Protect the Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

- Reduce emotional support animal fraud and abuse.
- Clarify fire radio system requirements.
- Allow local governments to offer affordable housing tax incentives.

SADOWSKI AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND

The Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust Fund was created in 1992 to fund Florida's affordable housing programs. Often, however, the state Legislature diverts some of the money in the fund to other areas of the state's budget, in a process known as

"sweeping." The Sadowski fund is financed by document stamp taxes that are paid on all real estate transactions that take place in the state.

The fund helps the apartment industry by providing money to build and repair affordable apartment homes for Florida's most vulnerable populations, which include veterans, the elderly, people experiencing homelessness, and people with special needs. In general, 30 percent of the funding is used for initiatives such as the State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) program and 70 percent of the funding is used for

single-family housing initiatives (SHIP). In the apartment industry, SAIL funds are used to rehabilitate existing apartments or build new units where additional affordable housing is needed.

The demand for apartment homes across the state continues to rise, and more than 922,000 Floridians spend at least 50 percent of their income on housing. Sadowski funds can help mitigate the demand for new affordable apartment homes by aiding in the construction or refurbishment of affordable units.

Sadowski funds are highly leveraged with private sector loans and equity, which provide \$4 to \$6 for every dollar of state funding. As a result, Sadowski funds have a powerful economic impact in the state of Florida. In addition, the appropriation of the estimated \$350 million in the state housing trust fund in fiscal-year 2019-20 into Florida's housing programs would create 30,000 jobs and \$4.4 billion in positive economic impact in Florida, based upon documentary stamp projection from the August 2019 Revenue Estimating Conference for fiscal-year 2020-2021.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS

Emotional support animals, also known as ESAs or companion animals, are used by patients to alleviate symptoms associated with a variety of disabilities. Unlike a service animal that is trained to perform a specific task, an ESA's presence is what benefits the patient. In accordance with the federal Fair Housing Act (FHA), an individual may request a reasonable accommodation to keep an ESA in his or her dwelling. Reasonable accommodation examples can include but are not limited to: eliminating the pet rent fee or allowing an ESA to reside on a "pet-free property."

In response to the growing use of ESAs, unqualified providers have established websites that offer false ESA "documentation" for a fee. These online providers do not have a license to practice in the state of Florida and lack an established treatment relationship with the patient. As a result, an individual who does not qualify for a reasonable accommodation under the FHA can easily obtain fraudulent documentation online – without interacting with someone

who is qualified to assess the disability or disability-related need.

The apartment industry strongly supports the rights of individuals with disabilities to request reasonable accommodations. However, the abuse that exists in

the current system places an undue burden on property owners and undermines the intent of the Fair Housing Act.

FAA supports legislation that would:

- Require ESA accommodation documentation to be completed by a














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licensed provider who has a treatment relationship with the patient.

- Clarify a property owner's right to verify the authenticity of such documentation.
- Clarify that the liability for any harm or damage done by an ESA is the sole responsibility of the patient – not the property owner.

FIRE RADIO SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Florida Statute 633.202 was amended in 2016 to give local governments discretion to regulate fire radio systems for buildings within their jurisdiction. However, the vague language that is currently in the statute is creating implementation inconsistencies and unintended consequences for property owners across the state.

Under the current statute, local governments have the authority to determine the signal strength needed for existing and new

buildings within their jurisdiction. Existing apartment buildings are not required to comply with local signal strength requirements until January 1, 2025. However, apartment buildings are required to apply for the appropriate permit for the required communications installation by December 31, 2022.

The problem is, the current statute does not articulate any minimum requirements for municipal radio equipment, timelines for ongoing equipment inspection, or the ability of a municipality to withhold a certificate of occupancy, which must be obtained prior to residents moving into a newly constructed apartment community.

The apartment industry recognizes the importance of fire safety in high-rise buildings. However, the vague language in the current statute is problematic and should be addressed to:

- Require local radio systems to meet a minimum national standard.

► Fast Facts About ESA Requests

PetScreening.com evaluated numerous requests for reasonable accommodation for emotional support animals in Florida and determined that:

- 46% were started but not completed.
- 20% provided insufficient information, became unresponsive, or were determined to be fraudulent.
- 34% received a recommendation for approval.

- Provide a reasonable timeline for inspections (not more than one every three years).
- Require local governments to provide developers with a radio signal coverage heat map to help determine

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whether a project will have a radio strength signal issue early in the construction process.

- Clarify the certificate of occupancy process as it relates to radio signal system requirements.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT TAX INCENTIVES FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

In order for a new apartment community construction project to break ground, a developer must secure financing from investors, who demand a specific rate of return in exchange for their investment. Florida has a critical need for more affordable housing, since it has only 23 affordable and available rental units for every 100 extremely low-income renter households (earning less than 30% of the area median income, or AMI). But the required rate of return is difficult for developers to achieve when it comes to building affordable apartments, which are rented below market rate. As a result, it can be extremely challenging for a developer to secure the financing needed to make an affordable housing construction project feasible.

Developers of affordable housing rely on a combination of state and federal tax incentives, along with private funding. However, the process of obtaining these government tax incentives is extremely competitive, with a very limited number of projects ultimately receiving this type of funding each year.

Florida law currently lacks clarity regarding a county's ability to waive or reduce local property tax rates for affordable housing, which is an impediment to encouraging the construction of affordable apartment communities at the local level.

In light of the dire need for more affordable housing, FAA supports legislative action to provide counties with the authority to offer additional tax incentives at the local level.


FAA members will visit their legislators and legislative staff members during the 2020 FAA Legislative Conference January 28-29. Learn more and register at faahq.org/legislative-conference **MF**



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Luxury at The Jaxon

BY RANDA GRIFFIN

► Fast Facts

Location:
Jacksonville
Managed by:
Tribridge
Residential
Year built: 2018
Number of units: 287
Rents: \$1220 - \$2425
Floor plans: 12 floor plans ranging from studio to 3-bedroom

TRIBRIDGE RESIDENTIAL STRIVES TO develop luxury communities around the country that stand out in their aesthetic and service to residents. The Jaxon, one of Tribridge's newest communities in Florida, is no exception. The 287-unit community in Jacksonville welcomed its first residents in August 2018 and, management says, has grown into a community focused on resident satisfaction.

Carla Laribee, community manager at The Jaxon, said, from her perspective working on-site, Tribridge is a distinctive company that really cares about its residents and communities.

"They're very involved, very pro-resident, and quality is a top priority for them," she said. "They also do their part to give back locally and globally because the communities they serve are really important to them."

Laribee, who's been working at the community since March, credited the immense on-site amenities as the

main appeal for residents who decide to call The Jaxon home. A Vegas-inspired pool with a two-level resident lounge area, bar, and workstations, provides plenty of opportunities for residents to relax outdoors. The community also has a lake and a dog park to make living with pets comfortable and convenient for residents.

"I love that we have such a big dog park," Laribee said. "It's broken into areas for small pets and large pets, and it overlooks the lake, so people can be outside with their pets and have a great view. It's really relaxing and calming."

The Jaxon also provides storage units and indoor bike storage, along with a 24-hour gym and Peloton studio. Laribee said the community's amenities are frequently utilized and provide residents with luxuries often found in much larger apartment communities.

"Every one of our amenities are being used," Laribee said. "I can't say we have one area that I wish we had



► The property consists of three 4-story buildings with elevators. Floors 1-3 have 9-foot ceilings and all 4th floor locations have 10-foot ceilings.



done something different with, because every bit of our space is functional.”

She said that functionality carries over into the apartments themselves, which were designed and built to be open and practical.

“With our 9-foot ceilings, it really makes the apartment stand out because there’s a lot of space and no space is wasted,” Laribee said.

The apartments range from studios to three bedrooms, with a variety of floor plans to choose from. Laribee said there’s a perfect space available for anyone. The kitchens all have stainless steel appliances, and wood-style flooring can be found throughout each unit.

Laribee said another nice thing about The Jaxon is that it’s a very tech-savvy community. In each unit, there are built-in Bluetooth speakers and Nest thermometers for the residents to use. The gated







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community also uses a ButterflyMX entry system, which allows residents to see and talk to visitors through a video chat. The resident can then deny or allow access for the visitor trying to enter the building. Larabee said this is really convenient for residents who receive the visitor notification on their phone and can respond immediately.

Location is one of the main things on any prospective renter's mind, and Larabee said The Jaxon has a perfect central location.

"We're right at the end of the St. Johns Town Center, and what's nice about that is that you can take advantage of the town center without having to deal with all that traffic," Larabee said.

Retail shops and restaurants surround the community, and the University of North Florida is only minutes away. Larabee said the convenient location entices a lot of residents.

"Just from interacting with the residents, I can tell you it's very unique here," Larabee said. "We have something for everyone." **MF**



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Florida Statewide

CURRENT

	Occupancy Rate	93.9%
	Rent Growth	2.5%
	Market Rent	\$1,278
	Units Delivered	36,043

1 YEAR AGO

	Occupancy Rate	94.1%
	Rent Growth	3.3%
	Market Rent	\$1,249
	Units Delivered	40,140

3 YEARS AGO

	Occupancy Rate	94.2%
	Rent Growth	3.1%
	Market Rent	\$1,167
	Units Delivered	27,162

• JACKSONVILLE •

CURRENT

92.51%
Occupancy Rate

2.44%
Rent Growth

\$1,081
Market Rent

2,695
Units Delivered

1 YEAR AGO

92.65%
Occupancy Rate

4.48%
Rent Growth

\$1,053
Market Rent

1,528
Units Delivered

3 YEARS AGO

92.8%
Occupancy Rate

3.51%
Rent Growth

\$967
Market Rent

1,598
Units Delivered

• ORLANDO •

CURRENT

92.77%
Occupancy Rate

1.99%
Rent Growth

\$1,334
Market Rent

6,306
Units Delivered

1 YEAR AGO

92.94%
Occupancy Rate

3.93%
Rent Growth

\$1,306
Market Rent

8,373
Units Delivered

3 YEARS AGO

94.19%
Occupancy Rate

4.16%
Rent Growth

\$1,183
Market Rent

3,187
Units Delivered

• TAMPA •

CURRENT

93.09%
Occupancy Rate

2.73%
Rent Growth

\$1,218
Market Rent

5,446
Units Delivered

1 YEAR AGO

92.66%
Occupancy Rate

3.85%
Rent Growth

\$1,188
Market Rent

6,613
Units Delivered

3 YEARS AGO

93.17%
Occupancy Rate

4.20%
Rent Growth

\$1,100
Market Rent

3,284
Units Delivered

• MIAMI •

CURRENT

93.89%
Occupancy Rate

2.81%
Rent Growth

\$1,645
Market Rent

7,265
Units Delivered

1 YEAR AGO

94.61%
Occupancy Rate

2.21%
Rent Growth

\$1,606
Market Rent

4,991
Units Delivered

3 YEARS AGO

94.50%
Occupancy Rate

2.27%
Rent Growth

\$1,539
Market Rent

5,791
Units Delivered

Source: Costar

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