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341 N. Maitland Ave., Suite 130
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Fax: 407-629-2502
www.faahq.org

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Naylor Editor: Rasha Slepov

Project Manager: Leron Peete

Marketing & Research Associate: Alex Rodriguez

Publication Manager: David Evans

Account Representatives: Derrick Boutin,
Chris Chiccarello, Cherie Dubay, Adam Firestone,
Janet Frank, Parisa Hosseini, Jason Hughes,
Heather Locke, Debbi McClanahan, Jessica Semonin,
Chris Zabel, Jason Zawada

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FAA Calendar

November 8-10, 2012

**NAA Assembly of
Delegates Meeting**

JW Marriott, Indianapolis

February 26-27, 2013

FAA Legislative Conference
Tallahassee, Florida

February 25-27, 2013

**NAA Student Housing
Conference & Exposition**
Las Vegas, Nevada

April 15-17, 2013

NAA Green Conference
Baltimore, Maryland

June 20-22, 2013

**NAA Annual Education
Conference & Exposition**
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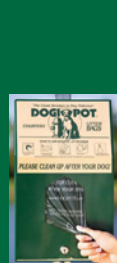
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Forty Years Later

by Linda Paolo

WRH Realty Services

The Florida Apartment Association is a federation of associations representing and advocating the interests of the Florida multifamily rental housing industry. FAA's total membership comprises 11 independent local associations throughout the state, which represents the majority of apartment homes in Florida – more than 415,000. We have come a long way in 40 years, and accomplished things barely dreamed of by our founders.

Under Susan Truesdale's leadership, FAA accomplished a great many things in 2011 and 2012. Of greatest import, we are working towards becoming self managed, which is a big and exciting step for the association. I want to thank all our volunteers who have worked hard to make FAA a success.

If you are reading this, I hope you are here with me at the Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate for our association's biggest event: the annual FAA Education Conference and Trade Show. I want to thank Stacey Stuart and Ruben Parker, the 2012 Education Conference co-chairs, and their committee for all their efforts in putting together another great conference. After reviewing your comments from last year, the committee has added more sessions that are sure to deliver the quality education you have come to expect from this conference. If you are attending you will not be disappointed. With keynote speakers like Christine Cashen and Joel Zeff, you will leave the conference educated, energized and motivated.

There will be numerous networking opportunities, as well as another sold-out trade show to showcase our wonderful suppliers.

Working on legislative affairs has become probably FAA's most important activity for its members. Ours is a large, successful and complex industry that deals with one of a human being's most powerful attachments: their home. This makes us a target, and requires interaction with a complicated web of outside interest groups. Laura Heiselman, our Government Affairs director, along with our lobbyist Ron Book and Kelly Mallette, are busy working on the legislative issues that will impact FAA in the coming years. The most important issue this year is trying to secure some guidance and legislative relief for the issue of allowable maintenance activity on our properties. We also continue to work on fire codes, landlord/tenant law and other issues that affect you every day.

You will be hearing about our annual trip to Tallahassee to meet with our legislators as we represent our industry and see the political process in action. Please note the dates of the next FAA Legislative Conference, Feb. 26-27, in Tallahassee.

I cannot mention the work done by our association concerning legislation without mentioning APAC. The Apartment Political Action Committee (APAC) is a "Committee of Continuous Existence" registered with the State of Florida's Division of Elections. APAC's objective is to support candidates for state offices who understand the needs and challenges faced by the Florida apartment industry, and

issue-based campaigns with statewide significance. We're about to go into a hotly contested election season in November, as every seat in the Florida Legislature is up for election after the district map was redrawn this year. We want to help our old friends and get involved with new ones as we work to improve the business of rental property management. APAC dollars improve FAA's relevance and I thank you for providing your support. We are working to broaden the base of support within our membership.

Now that you know a little about FAA and all the exciting things we are doing, I welcome you to become active in your local and state association. By becoming involved you will know what issues are affecting our industry, which will make you a more valuable employee in your profession. Our locals have so much to offer, from great education for managers and maintenance personnel to fantastic networking opportunities for management and suppliers alike, to honoring the best in our industry. I guarantee you will get a lot out of joining and deepening your involvement. At the same time, we need your involvement to keep getting fresh thoughts and ideas. All over the state, we have seen a new generation of leaders take their place at the local and state level over the past two or three years. It is because of the great volunteers we have on the local and state level that we continue to grow and thrive as an association.

I am proud to be your president as we all continue to work hard to make FAA the best association it can be.



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GRASSROOTS: Advocacy News for FAA's Roots – Our Local Affiliates!

by Laura Heiselman

FAA Government Affairs Director

It is often said that at the heart of innovation is collaboration. This concept was further illuminated for me when I attended the National Government Affairs Director Roundtable in early August.

More than 80 Government Affairs professionals from state and local associations descended upon Santa Monica, Calif., to learn, share and seek help from one another. Over the course of three days, we discussed policy, politics, the media, fundraising and strategies for success both from an individual perspective as well as for our industry as a whole.

It is encouraging to know that the Government Affairs staff that represents our association is made up of dedicated, competent and results-oriented professionals. We are also stronger because of the sum of our parts. Many of the issues that are currently being faced by various associations have been addressed in other regions, and by collaborating, we are able to learn from others and let their experiences help guide us in our approach.

Though states and localities are governed by different rules, there were numerous issues that were a shared concern.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Water, Energy and Air Quality continue to be topics of relevance for our industry.

In areas like Houston, where they have suffered from serious droughts over the last year, cities are considering

partially rationing water, with a potential penalty for using too much. In a drought that is considered a Stage 3 or Stage 4, the use of water outdoors is prohibited. (A property couldn't fill its pools, water landscaping, etc.) Additionally, determining who is responsible for water use is tricky, as a landlord cannot cut off water from an apartment home.

In Glendale, Calif., a smoking ordinance was introduced that required people to post a map in a residential structure that identified which units had smokers and which units did not.

And in more news from our friends on the West Coast, Santa Monica's residents argued that taking away their ability to smoke should result in a reduction in their rental rates, as smoking is a right.



SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS AND SECURITY ISSUES

Civil liberties vs. liabilities

When considering installing surveillance devices, our colleagues from Connecticut encouraged us

It is encouraging to know that the Government Affairs staff that represents our association is made up of dedicated, competent and results-oriented professionals.

to remember to post signage to notify people that they are under surveillance, and they also recommended the use of products that allow you to download the recordings. It was also mentioned that communities should examine their surveillance policies and evaluate the wisdom of erecting "phony" cameras or posting signs indicating the presence of surveillance equipment if no such devices exist.

HOARDING

Fair Housing and Hoarding as a mental disorder

Hoarding may soon become classified as a mental disorder. The Institute for Challenging Disorder, a non-profit organization out of St. Louis, Mo., has resources and a "hoarding scale" that you can review for more information: www.challengingdisorganization.org.

In dealing with hoarding issues in your communities, we were reminded to review 24 CFR 100.202, which defines the general prohibitions against discrimination because of a handicap. Section D states the following:

"Nothing in this subpart requires that a dwelling be made available to an individual whose tenancy would

A June 2012 Kentucky Supreme Court ruling may increase a landlord's liability for a dog bite by a tenant's dog, even if the incident occurred "on or about the property."

constitute a direct threat to the health or safety of other individuals, or whose tenancy would result in substantial physical damage to the property of others."

PETS

He's a nice dog!

Pets continue to be an issue for communities throughout the country.

A June 2012 Kentucky Supreme Court ruling may increase a landlord's liability for a dog bite by a tenant's dog, even if the incident occurred "on or about the property." The Court also determined that "the landlord can be considered the statutory owner of the dog under KRS 258.095(5) if the landlord has permitted the dog to be kept on the leased premises."

This past April, a Maryland Court ruling applied a strict liability standard to any attack involving a pit bull, meaning that the owner would not have to be shown to have been negligent and even a landlord renting to a pit bull owner could be found responsible if an attack occurred. On Aug. 22, 2012, the ruling was revised to include only "pure-bred pit bulls," but the Humane Society is doubtful of the validity of that revision.

"There actually is no such thing as a pure-breed pit bull," said Cory Smith, a senior director with the Humane Society of the United States. "It's not a breed of dog."

Many other issues were discussed at the GAD Conference, including:

"FOGS" (fats, oils and greases), military housing, ADA compliance, smoke detectors and tenant screening. The time spent collaborating and strategizing for the common good was invaluable. As I'm sure we can all agree, it is comforting to know that you have a team of people behind you working towards a shared goal. I'm proud to be one of the newest members of your GAD team and look forward to the work ahead.

Laura A. Heiselman can be contacted at laura@faahq.org or by phone at: direct: 407-599-0679, mobile: 407-575-3826.

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Defeating the Tigers

How to transform apartments from temporary 'hotel rooms' to homes

by Ron Grausam

Vice President of ARD Distributors

Ryan is 26 years old with a liberal arts degree. He is trying to sell real estate for a living. He lives with his mother, a former bank vice president now working as a bank branch manager at a third of her former salary, but she is happy to have it after three stints of unemployment in the last five years.

His income helps her meet her mortgage payment, since she can't sell her house because she is so under water. They have no hope of getting out from under this burden. Her retirement is in jeopardy because she used all her 401k and IRA money to live during her 20 months of unemployment. The only way she will ever be able to help Ryan pay off his student loans is to die with mortgage insurance.

There are two and a half million Ryans entering the workforce every year. They all grew up watching their parents proudly achieve their primary goal: home ownership.

For Ryan's parents, their early years in apartments were treated like one-year stops in hotels; places to stay until they reached their real destination, their own house. Well they got it, and now not only is it killing his mom, but it is threatening Ryan's future.

In those early years, they moved from a one-bedroom apartment, with few amenities, to a two bedroom with a pool and a playground for Ryan, to a three bedroom with cable TV and a washer and dryer. There were some problems with each, but it wasn't that big a deal because it would only be for the year of the lease. They were willing to put up with a lot just until they got their own house.

How do you think Ryan and tens of millions of other under-35 children look at home ownership? Do you think they are even remotely considering the opportunity to buy a house now while the market is depressed? To them, that would be like buying that cute little tiger cub and letting it sleep in their bed ... forever. What about when it stops being cute – and it will. Mom's tiger has her by the throat!

Looking forward, we in the apartment industry have a huge opportunity ... no responsibility! Apartments will stop being one-year hotel stopovers on the road to home ownership. It's time to take down the blinking sign saying, "Vacancy, color TV and pool."

What does Ryan want? First and foremost, he wants stability in a home he can move into without planning to move out. One year leases suck. It's just a long-term hotel room, the one where you actually put your clothes in the dresser. For years, we in the apartment industry strived to give our residents the feeling of resort living, which reinforces the hotel image. Here is what it will take to eliminate Ryan's Tiger.

1. THE TIGER LIKES ONE-YEAR LEASES

- a. Give Ryan a five-year lease
 - i. Give him longevity options, portability and asset value

2. THE TIGER LIKES THREE DESIGNER APARTMENT CHOICES

- a. Give Ryan a design center to customize his "home." He will be there for at least five years, so you can afford to meet his individual tastes and needs. Let him choose options like:
 - i. Color walls or even wallpaper
 - ii. Jacuzzi bathroom
 - iii. Gourmet kitchen
 - iv. Outdoor kitchen
 - v. Hi-efficiency in-unit laundry
 - vi. Insulated media room

3. THE TIGER LIKES COMMON AREA AMENITIES

- a. Do not force Ryan to share his life with others
 - i. Let him cook out privately on his own balcony
 - ii. Let him have his own exercise room

4. THE TIGER LIKES TO BE CLOSE TO HIGHWAYS, DOWNTOWNS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- a. Give Ryan a village, as in "it takes a village" mentality
 - i. Churches, schools, parks
 - ii. Give him the comfort that his kids **could** and **would** move here too

5. THE TIGER LIKES APARTMENT NUMBERS

- a. Give Ryan an address that only belongs to **his home**, even if it is on the third floor

6. THE TIGER LOVES LANDLORDS

- a. Give Ryan a voice in the management of his “home”

Until 2006, we had the Tiger by the tail ... now he has us by the throat.

The transitions from “apartments” to “homes” will be accomplished by a set of Tiger Tamers, when they offer:

1. ONE-YEAR LEASES

- a. Same as it ever was

2. TWO-YEAR LEASE OFFERING NEXT-LEVEL FEATURES LIKE:

- a. Outdoor cooking
- b. Room colors

3. THREE-YEAR LEASE OFFERING FEATURES REQUIRING A MINOR CAPITAL INVESTMENT FOR THINGS LIKE:

- a. Flooring options
- b. Wallpaper
- c. High-efficiency laundry

4. FIVE-YEAR LEASE OFFERING REAL CUSTOM FEATURES REQUIRING A MAJOR CAPITAL INVESTMENT FOR SUCH PERSONAL TASTE ITEMS AS:

- a. Custom kitchen
- b. Custom floor plan
- c. Option to renew for an additional five years at pre-determined rate

It will take years for the attitude shift about apartments to develop. In the meantime, the forward-thinking companies will be the first to benefit from these concepts.

Progressive management companies understand it. Some have started offering unique features like outdoor cooking and longer-term leases. Builders catering to first-home buyers may shift their focus to become the building arm for the owner and/or management company. The demographic of first-home buyers may shift from the 25 years olds to the 35 age group to the over 35 age group.

This change is not as simple an issue as *Tigers* makes it seem. There is a balance somewhere that will not upset the fine-tuned systems in the industry, but that will also satisfy the long-term

needs and desires of the millions of upcoming Ryans.



Ron Gausam is Vice President of ARD Distributors, a supplier of appliances to the apartment industry. Ron can be reached at Ron@ARDonline.com or 305-627-0231.



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Resident Retention

A resident who has built relationships with you and their neighbors will want to stay

by **Lauren Suarez-Kmiec**
Michaelson Realty Group

Working on-site in our industry entails myriad responsibilities, many people to please and many balls to juggle. I think we can all attest to that! In the midst of repairing your roof, resurfacing your asphalt, preparing next year's budget and implementing your weekly marketing plan, there is the ubiquitous "Resident Event." In my humble opinion, that is one of **the** most important monthly to-dos!

Though you've heard it before, I will reiterate: resident events really do create a sense of community. Communities are what we manage – communities would not exist without their residents. It only stands to reason that a resident who has built relationships with you and their neighbors – a resident whose child/children has made friends in **your** community – will want to stay. It is much more difficult for a resident to move away from what he or she has invested in and committed to emotionally, regardless of

its cost. And is it not financially beneficial in almost all cases, to keep the customers you have versus trying to replace them with new ones? I think yes.

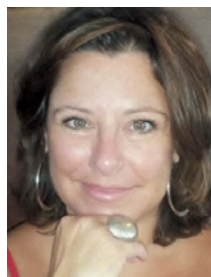
So how do you enable this relationship-building process, you ask? In a text-driven time when the majority of us fail to communicate face-to-face or even orally, for that matter? By consistently providing the platform for interaction, communication and connection between yourself and your residents – face-to-face, every single month, rain or shine!

Your resident event does not have to be a \$3,200 grand opening. It does not have to be a holiday extravaganza with caviar and pâté. It does not have to be a poolside blow out with DJ Jeff and the Solid Gold Dancers! It can be kids' crafts day for two hours in the afternoon –equipped with (Dollar Store) crayons, markers, paper and stickers. It can be Popsicles by the pool on Saturday afternoons. It is "yappy" hours at the dog park with dog bones and a cooler full of sodas. It's Pamper Your Pet Day by scheduling your local mobile pet groomer on-site once a month. It's having a cooler full of waters in the back of your golf cart to hand out to the resident that's moving or carrying in their groceries. It's simply having a presence, engaging and connecting constantly and consistently.

Will all of your residents participate? Absolutely not. But I promise you, as you consistently engage and provide that platform, they will recognize the effort, they will see the pattern and they will come. And even if it is only a few that you reach, they count. Promise yourself that sending out "late rent" notices will **not** be the only method of communication you have with your residents each month. Promise yourself that you will make

the effort to nurture and create that sense of community within your own. The ideas are endless, the cost is minimal and the payoff is priceless.

Lauren Suarez-Kmiec is Director of Media & Communications with Michaelson Realty Group in Tampa, Fla.





Earn an Extra Gold Star in Property Management



Increase net income (NOI) by lowering operating expenses

by **George Pjevach and Greg Wilson**
Colliers International Central Florida

Apartment property managers are busy these days. The market is flush with individuals and families moving out of single-family homes and into apartment communities. Certainly, multifamily properties are positioned to enjoy benefits brought by this shift – that is, if they are well managed.

Investment property values are all about Net Operating Income (NOI). Of course, the most obvious way to increase NOI is through increased rents. Heavy focus is usually put on the income portion of the Income & Expense statements; however, NOI is just as significantly influenced by expenses. Here are a few expense areas that may be worth your time to assess as possible ways to help your profitability, increase NOI and increase the value of your property:

INSURANCE COVERAGE

We often see multifamily properties over-spending on insurance, either by paying for insurance they don't need or by not taking advantage of various opportunities to lower premiums.

Every 12 months, have an insurance agent who specializes in commercial real estate provide a free assessment to review your insurance policies. He or she may be able to identify opportunities to lower insurance costs.

For example, ensuring that your insurance company has an accurate record of the property's "replacement cost" may save you money if you are paying premiums based on an outdated replacement cost.

Also, estimates on a building's value fluctuate with the market, so getting an updated broker's opinion of value (BOV) every one to two years, especially if you haven't done so in a few

years, could result in decreased premiums. These estimates are often done by Apartment Sales Specialists, and in many cases, done at no charge. Get a BOV done for your property, then meet with the insurance specialist.

TENANT TURNOVER

A high rate of tenant turnover can get expensive for an apartment community. Loss of rent due to the vacancy and repair costs to prepare a vacant unit for a new tenant, and marketing expenses to attract a new tenant, all affect a property's bottom line. Aiming to attract quality tenants and retain them one to two years or longer is preferable to having sub-par tenants who are signing seven-month leases.

To make sure you are focusing on attracting quality tenants, consider being more conservative with move-in specials. If a tenant is unable to pay a \$250 move-in fee, that may be an indication he or she will not be reliable in paying rent each month. As a property manager, learning to be a good judge of character is an extremely valuable skill that can save tens of thousands of dollars for your company over a five-year period. However, keep in mind there is a line between being a good judge of character and discrimination.

Most importantly, work toward keeping your current tenants happy so they'll stay. Incorporate features in the units, clubhouse and community to encourage a feeling of "home," ensure the property is well maintained and safe and create a sense of community with occasional events for residents.

Also, nurture an accommodating culture where leasing office and maintenance staff respond to and act swiftly on requests.

PAYROLL AND PROCESSES

A thorough evaluation of a community's payroll and the job responsibilities of your employees may be an enlightening exercise that could reduce expenses substantially.

Assess each staff member's role to ensure that all his or her tasks are relevant, necessary to the success of the community and not being duplicated or derailed by other staff members. Also take into account the level of activities being handled by each staff member and the value they bring, in relation to his or her pay grade.

After evaluating the entire staff's responsibilities, consider what activities may need to be eliminated, merged, reassigned or outsourced to maximize productivity and profitability.

For example, as a rule of thumb, you need one full-time maintenance staff member per 100 units. We have seen owners of under-100-unit communities with two or more maintenance employees on staff, costing the company an extra \$30,000 per year. When your staff comes across a maintenance or repair order he or she is not capable of handling, consult a list of preferred contractors to assist with one-off projects as needed.

REAL ESTATE TAXES

Due to the recent downturn in real estate values, many properties have suffered drops of 30-40 percent in values from three to five years ago. As a result, we have seen real estate tax reduced by 10-20 percent. If your property owner has not had the property reassessed in recent years, he or she may be paying more on real estate taxes than is necessary.

When you start looking at this expense, pull your current assessed value and compare it with other similar properties in that sub-market. You may be surprised to find that a competitor is already paying a reduced rate. You can use this data as a leveraging tool when re-evaluating the real estate taxes on your property.

In addition to the appraisal, also obtain a BOV, which may show a lower figure than the appraisal. There is a chance some property assessors will not use anything other than an appraisal; however, many are comfortable with a quality BOV. There is no downside, and the best case is you take a free BOV and use it to save the owner several thousands of dollars in real estate taxes.

George Pjevach, left, and Greg Wilson are multifamily brokers at Colliers International Central Florida, focusing on buyer and seller representation for multifamily investors. They can be reached at george.pjevach@colliers.com and greg.wilson@colliers.com or 407-843-1723.





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Recycling During Renovation

by Amie Winters, MA

Sustainability Specialist, Valet Waste



According to EPA's most recent data, only 40 percent of construction and debris materials generated were reused, recycled or sent to waste-to-energy facilities, while the remaining 60 percent were sent to landfills. Sustainable renovation in your apartment community can reduce environmental impact by conserving landfill space, decrease energy and greenhouse gas emissions and save you money by reducing disposal costs.

Start with conducting a waste audit by identifying recyclable materials and quantity. Then contact your local builders association, your county solid waste department or your state environmental agency for information on haulers in your area and what they will accept. You can also visit Earth911.com and enter your zip code to find drop-off locations.

Here are several additional ways to implement recycling during renovation:

Construction and Demolition: Some materials can be recycled into the same product for re-use or can be reconstituted into other usable projects. Examples of recyclable construction materials are: masonry, metals, lumber, plastics, roofing, windows and doors, fixtures, asphalt, slate shingles, corrugated cardboard and wallboard. Certain types of roofing shingles can be recycled back into asphalt to pave roads. Wood scraps can be recycled into mulch or can be gasified to produce renewable energy. Many construction materials can have a second life.

Hazardous and Hard-to-Recycle Material: A certain portion of construction and demolition projects are considered hazardous waste, so all materials should be managed according to local regulations. Appliances, carpet and paint are just some examples of items that need to be disposed of properly or fines may result. Other materials can be recycled into new products. For example, carpets can be broken down and reused to make everything from carpet cushion to automotive parts. Tile can be

reused as gravel or dry aggregate for new concrete. Municipalities will most likely handle recycling certain materials and specialized facilities are available for others.

Re-use and Recovery: Store materials for later use or re-use. Typical materials suitable for re-use include plumbing fixtures, doors, cabinets, windows, carpet, brick, light fixtures, wood, HVAC equipment, etc. You can also check with local salvagers before purchasing new products. You may find cabinets, doors, windows and flooring in good condition and at greatly reduced prices. Another alternative is selling recovered materials or donating them to a local affiliate of Habitat for Humanity.

New Material: There are tax credits, rebates and other incentives often available when you purchase new environmentally friendly materials and amenities (e.g., CFL light bulbs). For example, by replacing one pre-1994 toilet with a dual flush or low-flow toilet, you can be eligible for a \$75-\$100 rebate (depending on location) towards a 1.28 gpf toilet, which would save you \$1,000 in water/sewer bills over 10 years. Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) is a helpful database that allows vendors, businesses and consumers find and evaluate information about green products and services, identify buying requirements, calculate costs and benefits, and manage green purchasing processes.

Green building experts rank managing waste as the second

most important element of environmental performance. Sustainable renovation not only adds value to your property and saves you money; it also greatly impacts the environment.



Amie Winters can be reached at Valet Waste's Tampa office at 813-279-2148 or awinters@valetwaste.com.

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COMMUNITY SERVICE SPOTLIGHT

Milestone Management

by Bobby Davis
FAA Editor

Members of the Florida apartment industry spend thousands of hours each year, in every corner of the state, helping the underprivileged people in need. Domestic violence shelters, homeless shelters, children with cancer, children's homes, and many others have benefited from the volunteerism of apartment managers and suppliers. In this issue, we'd like to spotlight the work of Milestone Management.

As a company, their charity of choice has been the American Red Cross. "We chose them because they do so much for our industry," said Stephanie Smits, Benefits and Risk Manager of Milestone Management. "In the past, our organization has held fundraisers and our employees have volunteered at various shelters. Many of our employees have completed the Red Cross volunteer training and are ready to lend a hand when the time comes. In an effort to give back, we encourage all of our employees to become volunteers with the American Red Cross."

In Dallas, Nashville and Jacksonville, Milestone participates in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, which occurs in October of each year. Milestone has also partnered with Carter BloodCare and has held multiple blood drives at their corporate office as well as properties in the Dallas/Ft. Worth and Tampa



area. Company employees also collect toys for the Toys for Tots program each December.

Here in Florida, "We choose to support and give back to those organizations that do so much for our industry such as the Hubbard House and the Springs of Tampa Bay who support

domestic violence victims and, most recently, Building Homes for Heroes," said Katie Wrenn, Regional Training and Marketing Director. Milestone has worked with their state and local apartment association on charitable activities as well. This has been very rewarding for everyone involved.

Milestone began participating in the Charity Challenge in 2009, which was started by Senator Lee Constantine of Orlando, and it brings together volunteers from the housing and hospitality industries for fun and games. Proceeds go to the participants' charity of choice. Milestone employees, residents and vendors all participate in raising the money. The beneficiaries are as follows:

- **2009:** \$3,000 for The Hubbard House
- **2010:** \$3,000 for The Springs of Tampa Bay





- **2011:** \$10,750 for The Springs of Tampa Bay
- **2012:** \$12,500 for Building Homes for Heroes

On Wednesday, June 13, Lori Ohlensehlen, Aaron Karnes and Jordan Petras had the privilege of representing Milestone Management at the AAGO dinner meeting in Orlando. They presented a \$10,000 check to Building Homes for Heroes and an additional \$2,500 at the Charity Challenge. There were 13 Milestone properties across the State of Florida that worked diligently to raise money. Contributors included employees, residents and vendors.

Along with the representatives from the organization were three soldiers with whom they are currently working. Each of these men had been shot multiple times and their vehicles hit with IEDs, rocket-propelled grenades or roadside bombs. All

three of them had lost limbs, and each still suffers from other severe injuries such as loss hearing or vision. Association members learned first-hand what kind of sacrifices modern war may demand in the far-flung danger zones of the world.

"The best part of the evening for us was when we got to speak with them and their spouses privately after dinner," Jordan said. "The stories that they shared with us were amazing and will stay with us forever. We left that night with three new friends!" In addition, Milestone was represented at Bowling for Heroes to support Building Homes for Heroes. To volunteer or to donate, please visit <http://buildinghomesforheroes.org>.

Thanks to Katie Wrenn of Milestone for help with this article.



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Amanda Hiller
For Rent Media Solutions
Orlando, FL 32803
407-297-0832
amanda.hiller@forrent.com

Melisa Richie
For Rent Media Solutions
Orlando, FL 32803
407-297-0832
melisa.richie@forrent.com

Dori Rones
For Rent Media Solutions
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309
954-730-9700
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Barbara Sheridan-Geil
For Rent Media Solutions
Orlando, FL 32803
407-297-0832
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Mary Beth Suarez Peterson
For Rent Media Solutions
Tampa, FL 33634
813-888-6297
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Jackie Foxworth
Northwest Florida Apartment Guide
Gulf Breeze, FL 32563
850-341-1726
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dmills@ameriscapeusa.com

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Tracy Wilson
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tracy.wilson@ppg.com

Joe Booth
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Todd Barhydt
Aquatic Systems Inc.
Pompano Beach, FL 33069
954-977-7736
todd@aquaticsystems.com

Joshua Smith
Aquatic Systems, Inc.
Pompano Beach, FL 33069
800-432-4302
joshua@aquaticsystems.com

Chris Byrne
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Aaxon Laundry Systems
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edsmith@aaxon.com

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Coinmach Corp
Orlando, FL 32829
cbillerbeck@coinmachcorp.com

Maria D. Cortina
Coinmach Corp
Orlando, FL 32829
407-467-3000
mcortina@coinmachcorp.com

Kenneth Gebhardt
Coinmach Corp
Orlando, FL 32829
800-432-1541
kgebhardt@coinmachcorp.com

Dave P. Wallace
Coin-O-Matic, Inc.
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800-642-9525, ext. 313
coinmiami@aol.com

Rhonda L. Myers
Mac-Gray Intelligent Laundry Services, Inc.
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rmyers@macgray.com

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Sun Services of America
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Steve Thomas
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904-778-6703
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770-214-9322
shanel@korkat.com

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A.R.T. Pest Control Service
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artpestcontrol@aol.com

Louis Jacobowitz
American Pest Management Inc.
St. Petersburg, FL 33713
727-321-6881
apm1@tampabay.rr.com

Tami Swanson
Massey Services
Orlando, FL 32804
407-466-4576
tswanson@masseyservices.com

Catherine Brody
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813-621-7337
cat.teamprevail@gmail.com

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Tammy Majette
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678-376-9878
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sonjia@alltexroofing.com

Richard C. Jenkins
Quality Roofing of Florida Inc.
Tampa, FL 33610
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rick.jenkins@qrfla.com

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Teresa Smetzer
National Exemption Service
Safety Harbor, FL 34695
tsmetzer@submeter.com

Kathleen Baker
National Exemption Service
Safety Harbor, FL 34695
kbaker@submeter.com

Jill P. Durham
OnePoint Technologies, Inc.
Woodstock, GA 30188
770-856-9447
jdurham@onepointtech.com

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American Utility Management
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Brandy Rich
ista North America
Jacksonville, FL 32256
904-807-2223
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Amanda Christensen
NWP Services Corp.
Lincoln, NE 68916
402-421-1668
achristensen@nwpsc.com

Victor Lucas
United Utility Services
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David Magrisso
Valet Waste, Inc.
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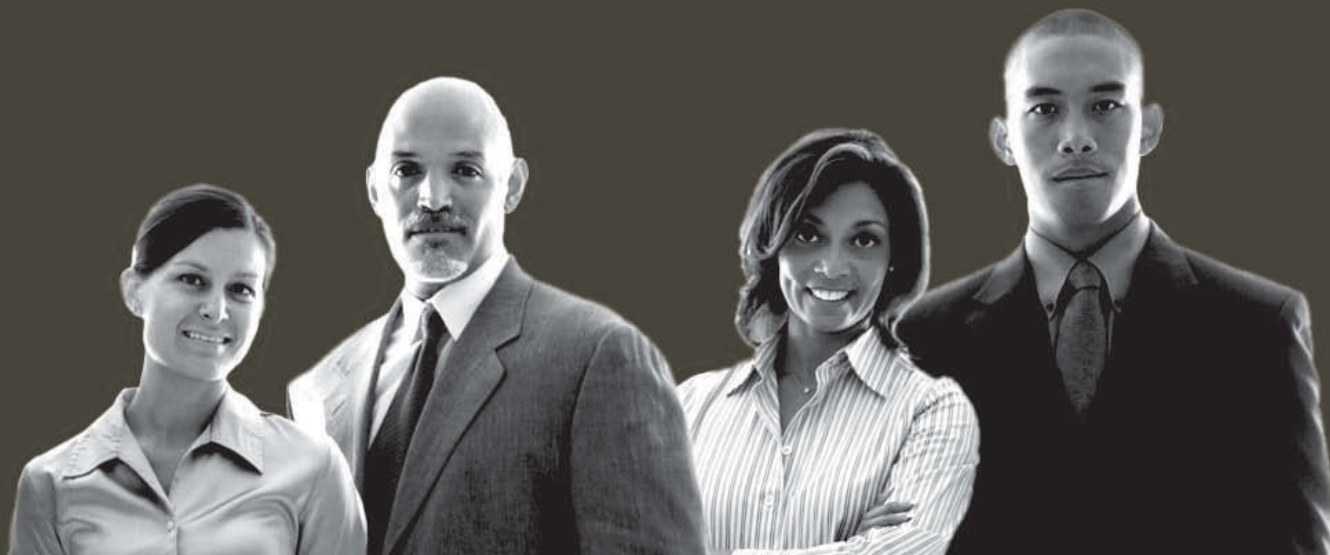
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