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OF THE FLORIDA
APARTMENT
ASSOCIATION

SPRING 2015

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An Ounce of Prevention

**AN ORGANIZED SYSTEM
FOR MAINTENANCE SAVES
TIME, TROUBLE, AND MONEY**

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**WORKING TOGETHER
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

My Open-Door Policy

BY **RON WENZEL**, GREYSTAR MULTI-FAMILY SERVICES

As I wrote in the president's message in the last issue, my vision for my term as FAA president is to make our statewide organization more relevant. And, one of my ways I plan to fulfill that vision is to spend time at each of our 11 local affiliates, working with their leadership to help those affiliates become more relevant, too. In the first month of 2015, I attended officer installation ceremonies at two locals, and I've made arrangements to attend special events at several more. I'm really looking forward to filling my calendar with travel plans.

As I was preparing for our annual Legislative Days event in Tallahassee a few weeks ago, I was thinking about why visiting the locals is such a priority for me. Specifically, I was thinking how worthwhile it is when constituents — whether from FAA or other organizations — take the opportunity to speak with legislators in person. Candidates do plenty of traveling while they are campaigning to win votes. Then after they are elected, they settle into their new jobs and get down to the business at hand. Often, they become somewhat removed from the very voters who supported them. I don't believe it's intentional, but it's the reality as they focus on the job they were elected to do. That's why these Legislative Days and the Capitol Conference hosted by the National Apartment Association (NAA) in Washington, D.C., are crucial. Meeting with our elected officials provides an opportunity to explain why certain issues are important to us, our industry, and ultimately the state's economic well-being. By taking the time, we make issues personal.

Similarly, I know there are issues that are significant to you as a multifamily housing professional. The officers from the local affiliates do an outstanding job of representing your interests at our quarterly board meetings, committee meetings, and other events throughout the year. But I want to make it personal.

I want to know what matters to you, and what motivates you. What challenges in your job could become more manageable with some fresh ideas? Is your local affiliate giving you

the kind of support you need and want? Is there something the FAA could do to help your affiliate? Would it be helpful if larger affiliates share success stories with smaller affiliates that may be struggling a bit more?

Keep in mind, communication is a two-way street, and I'm asking you to do your part, too. As with anything else, the more you put into this organization, the more you are likely to get out of it.

- Volunteer to serve on a local committee that is aligned with your interests and abilities.
- Have you attended a meeting of the board of directors? Remember, board meetings are open to all members. Ask your local officers for more information.
- Did you attend the Legislative Days event in Tallahassee in February? That's a wonderful opportunity to have a direct impact on matters of importance to the multifamily industry. It's also a great way to get to know your fellow multifamily professionals. (View event photos and read about Legislative Days beginning on Page 17.)

I know that our members are committed to their jobs and to our industry. I support that commitment and I encourage you to demonstrate it through your involvement in your local and state association. Let me, another FAA officer, or your local leaders know how we can help you do that. ▲

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **April 22:** Leadership Lyceum Governance Module, Hyatt Regency Pier 66, Fort Lauderdale
- **April 23:** FAA Board of Directors Meeting, Hyatt Regency Pier 66, Fort Lauderdale
- **June 25-27:** NAA Education Conference & Exposition, Mandalay Bay Resort & Convention Center, Las Vegas



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The Power of Association

BY JOSH GOLD, CAE, CMP, FAA EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

A father had a family of sons who quarreled among themselves. One day he told them to bring him a bundle of sticks. When they had done so, he placed the bundle into the hands of each son in succession, and ordered him to break it in pieces. Each son tried with all his strength, and was not able to do it. The father opened the bundle and placed the sticks one by one into his sons' hands. All of the sons broke the sticks easily. He then addressed them in these words: "My sons, if you are of one mind, and unite to assist each other, you will be as the bundle, uninjured by all the attempts of your enemies. But if you are divided among yourselves, you will be broken as easily as these sticks."

— Aesop's Fables

Literature and history are filled with countless examples of the value of teamwork. Aesop's fable about a father and his bickering sons, dating back more than 2,500 years, is a good illustration of how the whole is stronger than the parts. "United We Stand" has been a motto and rallying cry from the days of the American Revolution to the attacks of September 11, 2001. Business books offer plenty of advice on how to build high-performance teams.

The reason? Working together works better. Simple, right? Well, yes and no. The concept is simple, yet putting it into practice takes the right principles, planning, and execution.

I recently shared with our Leadership Lyceum students a story about two similar industries with very different approaches and very different results.

In the early 1990s, both the Pecan Growers Board and the Almond Board of California embarked on programs to grow their respective industries. The almond



people supplied media personnel with samples, recipes, glossy photos, and even experts who would be interviewed on radio talk shows.

The pecan people had a similar idea, but they began by funding the program with a half-cent assessment per pound of pecans produced. The money would be used to fund a public awareness campaign and publicize nutritional information for one year, after which the growers would vote on whether to continue the program. At first blush, it might seem like the pecan group would be more successful — after all, the growers were being given a voice in the process. Instead, the plan backfired, with the smaller growers banding together to protest the assessment. After just one year, the program was shelved.

Take a look at all the varieties of almonds available on grocery store shelves today, and it's easy to see which group was more successful, even though pecan trees are abundant from Virginia to the Southwest. So what went wrong? By not



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considering the needs of all its constituents, the pecan board had divided rather than united them.

Creating unity is not unlike building an effective team. While experts disagree on precisely how to do that, their approaches typically share some key factors:

- A clear, shared vision or purpose
- Open and clear communication
- Inclusion of all members
- Acknowledgement of the contributions of all

Those elements are precisely why we place such an emphasis on listening to our individual members, whether from our smallest local affiliates or the largest. It's why we invite you all to join us in building our legislative platform in December and traveling to Legislative Days in Tallahassee in February and to the National Apartment Association's Capitol Conference in Washington, D.C., in March.

Your input helps us determine where to focus our efforts, what our shared vision will be. Your participation enables us to

communicate that vision more effectively. More than 150 of your colleagues ensured that we were heard regarding key initiatives at the state level. (Read more on Page17.)

Our voices are louder when we speak the same language and share the same goals. Collectively, we are stronger than individually. The reason, quite simply, is the power of association. ▲

Your input helps us determine where to focus our efforts, what our shared vision will be.



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AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

An Organized System for Maintenance Saves Time, Trouble, and Money

BY LAUREEN M. CROWLEY



If you are responsible for the maintenance of an apartment community in Florida, you know that keeping the apartments and the community in tip-top shape is a year-round undertaking. We asked professionals at some leading property management organizations to share best practices for apartment community maintenance.

For many people all around the world, “spring cleaning” brings to mind opening the windows to let fresh breezes through, performing many deep cleaning tasks that get neglected during the winter months, and preparing the home for the spring holidays of Passover and Easter. If you are responsible for the maintenance of an apartment community in Florida, you know that keeping the apartments and the community in tip-top shape is a year-round undertaking. We asked professionals at some leading property management organizations to share best practices for apartment community maintenance. Here are some of their tips and tricks.

Begin at the beginning, and make residents part of the team. During the move-in orientation, have a maintenance technician walk through the apartment and explain even things that may seem obvious: how to operate the thermostat, the location of circuit breakers and water valves, how to operate the sink garbage disposal, and what switches operate which lights or electrical outlets. For many residents, apartment living is a new experience, whether they are former homeowners or just striking out on their own. Helping them feel comfortable can go a long way toward preventive maintenance. If residents are not afraid to ask a question — even one

that may seem silly — you are more likely to learn about a small problem before it becomes a big one. Speaking of which, be sure your resident understands the process for requesting maintenance service. Consider providing a refrigerator magnet with important phone numbers.

Be proactive rather than reactive. Virtually everyone we spoke with has a preventive maintenance plan that includes tasks to perform weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annually. At Richman Property Services communities, maintenance technicians turn in a monthly “PM recap sheet” listing all preventive maintenance tasks completed, explained Chad Wood, national maintenance director. The sheet should include not just weekly and monthly tasks, but also that quarterly tasks have been completed for one-third of the apartments. “It makes it where they don’t put it off until the last minute.”

UDR Inc., which has more than 50,000 apartment homes nationwide, uses a multi-tiered approach, explained Greg Bass, area service manager. A comprehensive property management software program generates automatic work orders for preventive maintenance needs as well as to respond to residents’ service requests. Then during “community focus days,” everything in a common area — the pool, playground, clubhouse, theater room — is inspected and any needed maintenance or repairs are handled, says Bass, who oversees 23

communities. Exterior maintenance such as pressure washing and detailing buildings is completed on a rotating basis.

Seize the opportunity. Have a maintenance technician accompany a third-party pest control provider on routine visits, and bring a checklist or computer tablet. The checklist should include change air conditioning filters as needed, check smoke detectors, look under the sinks for leaks, drop dye tablets in toilets to check for leaks, etc.

“Tablets are used more for leasing, but they are also useful for maintenance,” says Jeffery Chew, director of property management for Tzadik Management, based in Miami. Using property management software such as Yardi Systems or OneSite Solutions means a work order can be generated immediately, he adds. “Then you have history if something goes wrong.” If a resident stops paying rent and claims it’s because of an unresolved maintenance issue, you have proof that you’ve been keeping on top of things all along.

Richman Property Services also makes the most of pest control visits to identify a range of needs. During those visits, Wood said, “We’re able to capture a lot of information: mold problems, things that are broken or damaged, pets we didn’t know about, or housekeeping issues. Then you can go back to the office and say ‘I need letters on the following, and I need these work orders.’”



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While the expectation on these visits is to complete simple tasks such as changing air conditioner filters, work orders are generated for more time-consuming jobs. For example, if an inspection shows that an air conditioning coil needs cleaning, that would go on a work order. "Many companies expect maintenance techs to knock down a giant list" during each monthly visit, Wood explained." But the danger is they just say they did it." Although the process creates more work orders, he said, it also adds certainty that the work gets done.

Some companies do record parts used as work orders are completed, to help track inventory. Most we spoke with are not yet using software to track inventory but some are considering it.

Keep the lines of communication open. Some companies are proactive when it comes to maintenance requests. In the past, staff might have asked about possible maintenance needs when the rent check is dropped off. Because many of today's residents pay their rent online, there may be fewer chances to interact. Surveys at lease renewal time can identify potential issues. Have service techs be the ones to reach out to residents to build that relationship.

Make sure residents are notified well in advance when maintenance tasks will be performed in their building or area. Recognize that some types of service will be disruptive, and communicate why these services are necessary to prevent serious problems down the road.

Remember your maintenance technicians are your ambassadors. In the past, many property managers and owners measured maintenance success based exclusively on "turnaround," completion of specific tasks within a given time frame. Today, there's more of a recognition that residents may interact with maintenance workers more often than any other staff in your community.

"We do a lot of customer service training," said Lee Caudill, regional maintenance director for WRH Realty Services Inc., which has about three dozen communities in Florida, as well as others throughout the Southeast and Texas. WRH uses the SatisFacts resident survey program to gather feedback about the service call. The goal is to get the highest possible rating of five stars. "For us, when it comes to customer service, when we're working on someone's unit, they're the most important person on the property." ▲



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RENTAL PAYMENT

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BY EMILY CHRISTIANSEN

They were the perfect renters. They had great credit scores, they flew through the background check process, they always showed up to appointments promptly, and they paid on time for the first few months.

Then it happened. The seemingly perfect residents stopped paying and skipped out on the apartment, owing past-due rent and never to be seen or heard from again. The risk of unpaid rent, midnight skips, and bad rent balances with seemingly perfect residents, or any applicant, can be decreased significantly, and

your success at collecting the skipped rent can be improved, with rental payment history.

“Rental payment history offers a host of advantages to apartment companies and renters alike,” says Brannan Johnston, vice president and managing director of Experian RentBureau, which began incorporating rental payment history into its credit reports in 2010. “In addition, rental payment history is proven to provide a superior prediction of a resident’s likelihood to pay rent on time and improve an owner/operator’s ability to recover skipped rent, while also helping residents build positive credit history.”

There are two distinct ways for apartment owners and operators to benefit from rental payment history: accessing and sharing. Accessing involves including rental payment history data in the screening process through the apartment company’s screener, while sharing involves contributing rental payment history through an automated process that sends the data to credit reporting agencies directly from property management software.

The impact of accessing rental payment history for apartment companies was examined closely in the *Risk Versus Reward: Identifying the Highest Quality Resident*



History 101

Using Rental Payment History study of more than 750,000 residents living in apartments across the country. The study was done by Experian RentBureau using its database of information. The analysis found that rental payment history could play a significant role in the ability of apartment companies to better identify the highest-quality residents, increase occupancy and realize more steady cash flow.

“Whether it’s used in conjunction with traditional credit scoring or as a standalone screening tool, rental payment history matters,” Johnston says, noting that Experian RentBureau is not a screener. “In fact, our study found that renters with two or more prior rental debts have a default rate that is nearly six times higher than applicants with positive rental history.”

Identifying the highest-quality resident traditionally has revolved around one factor: the prospective renter’s credit score. A high credit score supposedly meant they were the most likely to pay rent on time, every time. However, the study found that renters with even the highest credit scores who also had negative rental history are more than four times as likely to default as those with positive rental history, further underscoring the need to leverage both rental payment data and credit data in screening.

The study also looked at the impact of rental payment history on unscorable applicants. About 10 percent of individuals in the study did not have enough credit history available at the time of screening to receive a VantageScore. Those with positive rental history had a default rate of 9 percent, which was lower than the overall average for the unscorable applicants in the study (11.01 percent). Rather than automatically rejecting applicants without a credit score, apartment



“Rental payment history offers a host of advantages to apartment companies and renters alike. In addition, rental payment history is proven to provide a superior prediction of a resident’s likelihood to pay rent on time and improve an owner/operator’s ability to recover skipped rent, while also helping residents build positive credit history.”

– Brannan Johnston, vice president and managing director, Experian RentBureau

companies with occupancy challenges could review rental payment history and accept those with a positive rental payment history, which would increase occupancy.

“We have the ability to individualize the screening criteria for each property by assigning a weight to the rental history information,” says Michael Johnson, executive vice president and chief administrative officer for ALCO, a Memphis, Tenn.-based property management company. “For example, we may set the criteria to accept an applicant who has no credit or limited credit if he or she has a positive rental history. Depending on the market, we may take applicants who have a history of paying their rent even if they have a history of not paying some other bill. The rental payment data is integrated in the screening process, and a recommendation to accept or reject the applicant is delivered without my staff trying to interpret the data themselves. This gives me consistency in reviewing applications.”

Finally, the study found that rental payment history could help minimize late and nonsufficient funds (NSF) payments, as well as reduce bad debt and skips. Renters with three or more late or NSF payments have a default rate more than twice as high as renters with only two or fewer late or NSF payments. In addition, individuals who likely are serial skippers have a 35 percent chance of defaulting again. By reducing the number of serial skippers and late payers they accept, apartment companies can realize a more steady cash flow.

No matter who the applicant is — the perfect renter or the conditionally approved renter — rental payment history can help you select the applicant most likely to pay on time, every time, until the end of their lease term. ▲

Emily Christiansen is the director of marketing for Experian RentBureau. The study can be found at experian.com/rentbureau/analysis-request.html.

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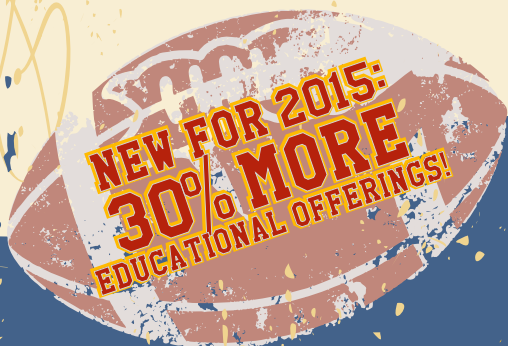
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FAA Members Meet with Legislators to **ADVOCATE ON KEY PRIORITIES**

BY LAUREEN M. CROWLEY

Some 150 FAA members met with 86 legislators and legislative aides February 17 and 18 in Tallahassee to talk about funding for affordable housing and an expansion of the work apartment maintenance technicians are allowed to perform. The priorities were identified during a legislative platform workshop attended by FAA leaders, members, and staff in December.

The Legislative Days event began with a welcome reception Tuesday the 17th sponsored by Line1 Communications, at which



Josh Gold, FAA executive vice president, welcomes attendees at the Legislative Briefing Dinner.



John Fabrega of Line1 Communications Inc., sponsor of the Feb. 17 Reception with Legislators, addresses attendees at the reception.



FAA's Courtney Barnard showed videos to help attendees understand the issues and to give them confidence in speaking with legislators and legislative staff.



FAA President Ron Wenzel with Legislative Days attendees.



Jaimie Ross of the Sadowski Coalition explains the coalition's position regarding continuing full funding of the Sadowski Trust Fund for affordable housing programs. FAA recently joined the coalition.



Attorney Richard Herring explains the FAA's position in favor of expanding the scope of work that can be completed by staffers who hold a Certificate for Apartment Maintenance Technicians.



Pete Zimek of iLS network, sponsor of the Feb. 17 Legislative Days dinner, addresses attendees.



State Rep. Edwin Narain (D-Tampa) stopped by to thank FAA for its support during a tough primary race last year. He told attendees that the Tampa area is experiencing a renaissance of sorts, with many new mixed-use communities where residents can live, work, and play.



Lobbyists Ron Book (left) and Kelly Mallette (center) and FAA's Courtney Barnard helped prep attendees for their visits with legislators and legislative staffers.



Lobbyist Ron Book discusses the upcoming legislative session.



A silent auction raised \$1,080 for FAA's Apartment Political Action Committee. Attendees and local affiliates also made donations to APAC, for a total of \$13,835 raised at the event.



Courtney Barnard (center), FAA government affairs director, with attendees Erin Toung (ET&T Distributors) and Lauren Kerby (CPS, Inc.).

lobbyist Ron Book spoke about issues facing the legislators this session, including the potential impact constitutional Amendment One could have on affordable housing funds.

A silent auction raised \$1,080 for FAA's Apartment Political Action Committee (APAC). Attendees turned in pledge cards and local affiliates also made donations to APAC, in the amount of \$12,755, for a total of \$13,835 raised at the event.

At a dinner sponsored by iLS network, Lori Trainer, FAA treasurer, told attendees about a scholarship fund that has been established in memory of Nan Cavarretta, a longtime FAA member and leader who was especially active in educational programs for professionals in the multifamily industry.

Jaimie Ross, president of the Florida Housing Coalition, offered additional detail about the affordable housing issue. In November, voters approved Amendment One, which directs a portion of documentary stamp taxes to environmental causes. Documentary stamp taxes also fund the Sadowski Trust



Lori Trainer, FAA treasurer, announces the establishment of the Nan Cavarretta Memorial Scholarship Fund.



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Fund, which is used for affordable housing programs. FAA joined the Sadowski Coalition last year to advocate for full funding of the Sadowski Trust Fund.

The Sadowski fund provides money to the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) for programs in counties and cities, and the State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) program, which can be used to renovate and retrofit existing communities or build new communities to accommodate people with disabilities, the elderly, veterans, and other vulnerable populations. The Sadowski Coalition estimates private sector loans and equity add \$4 to \$6 for every dollar from the state, and that fully funding the programs with the doc stamp allocation of \$267 million (based on expected transactions) would create 24,950 jobs and \$3.1 billion in positive economic impact in Florida.

Attorney Richard Herring of Capital Analytics also spoke at the dinner and explained the FAA's position advocating greater scope of work allowed by apartment maintenance staff. Workers who hold a Certificate for Apartment Maintenance Technicians would be permitted to perform more basic maintenance tasks than they are currently allowed to do. Apartment owners would not have to hire outside workers as often, meaning repairs would cost less and could be completed more quickly, minimizing the inconvenience to residents.

State Rep. Edwin Narain (D-Tampa) stopped by to thank FAA for its support during a tough primary race last year. He

told attendees that the Tampa area is experiencing a renaissance of sorts, with many new mixed-use communities where residents can live, work, and play.

The next day, members from all of FAA's 11 local affiliates dispersed to meet with senators, representatives, and legislative staff for their regions. In addition to explaining FAA's position, members provided written materials the legislators and staffers can refer to as they address the issues in committee meetings and the session that began March 3. The materials highlighted the focus of "Jobs, Community, Growth," and included details about FAA, the multifamily industry in Florida, and the two main platform issues.

The FAA members in attendance included a number of suppliers as well as property management professionals.

"Our industry as a whole has an impact on the economy, job creation, and the entire future of our state," explained Jessica Romero of CORT Furniture Rental of Longwood, which provides furniture for temporary housing such as when workers are relocated.

Erika Johnson of PRG Real Estate in Orlando agreed. "It's exciting to be part of an organization that speaks for our industry."

Lisa Robinson of Concord Management added, "If you're going to reap the benefits of this business, then it's important to pay it forward to further the causes that support it, especially affordable housing." ▲



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Working Together to MAKE A DIFFERENCE

BY TRISH HARRIS

Unless you have been in a bubble with no access to reports of current events, you know that recently relationships between law enforcement officers and segments of the public they serve have been surrounded by negative publicity, steeped in animosity and frustration. This is the antithesis of what motivated Sgt. Bryan Dorman to join the police force nearly 17 years ago, he says.

“I became a police officer because I viewed law enforcement as a career that matters,” says the veteran cop. “And nowhere on any police force is there greater potential for making a difference than in community policing units.” Dorman supervises Bartow Police Department’s community services team of five, including three officers, one civilian coordinator, and one parking enforcement specialist. Bartow is in Polk County and has a population of about 18,000.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY POLICING?

It’s all about community and building relationships, says Dorman, who has been



Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime.

*Source: U.S. Department of Justice
Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)*

working closely with management and residents at the Azalea Gardens apartment community in Bartow for the past two years. “My definition of community policing is simple,” he says. “It’s a division that assigns outgoing and communicative officers to particular communities to address the residents’ quality-of-life concerns through partnerships and problem-solving techniques.”

Community policing pertains to anything from intercepting criminal activity to such situations such as confronting noisy residents who keep their neighbors up at night — an annoyance that might not always be police-related. “We may not be able to step in and solve every situation that arises in the apartment community,” explains Dorman, “but we can refer the resident or manager to someone who can help.”



Although every police unit certainly considers issues that affect life quality, not all departments have a dedicated team for community policing. “Still all cops routinely provide these services — even when they don’t realize they are doing it,” Dorman says. “For example, a patrol officer who responds to a complaint of stray dogs barking in an apartment complex will find the strays and contact animal control to have them removed. Such a case is not criminal in nature, but the officer performs a community service that addresses the quality of life. This is community policing.”

BUILDING TRUST TAKES TIME

Establishing an effective working relationship with an apartment community does not happen overnight. It is a continuous process that requires diligence of both police officers and management to overcome the animosity some communities have toward the police. “Trust of law enforcement is critical,” says Dorman. “To get anything accomplished, we have to have an open conversation with management,” he explains.

The unit works hard to create a congenial atmosphere that fosters mutual trust and a willingness to work closely together for the benefit of all. “We continually get our officers out of their cars with ‘boots on the ground.’ We chat with the residents, play basketball with the kids, and participate in events for the families,” he explains. All of these activities are designed to build trust, enhance relationships, and create positive and productive partnerships with apartment community owners, management, and residents. The sergeant points out that, when trust is established and people know they are being heard, walls begin to crumble and doors open to enhanced cooperation and collaboration.

Such involvement brings benefits that reach far beyond the creation of good will and camaraderie. “If a crime occurs after we have established trust, it becomes much easier to obtain information,” Dorman says. “And this makes the criminal element leery of perpetrating crimes in such a community.”

GETTING UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Quality-of-life partnership activities the team participates in include job search programs, computer labs, tutoring, GED support, mentorships for young boys, and community events. “We were involved in a town hall meeting at which apartment residents voiced concerns about not enough recreational opportunities for children in the community,” says Dorman. As a result, his community services unit teamed with the city’s Parks and Recreation Division for a day of fun with tents, food, giveaways, and games. “We played ball with the kids, interacted with the residents, and learned that the parents see us as good role models and great resources, and that they really want us there.”

Dorman points out that in addition to many other positive aspects of his team’s work, the community services unit is in a position to help guide at-risk youth toward becoming productive members of society. “That’s an awesome opportunity and a humbling challenge,” he says.

SOLUTIONS AND SUSTAINABILITY

Dorman views community policing as a critical piece of the sustainability of the entire community. He points out that, because the apartment community spills into the surrounding neighborhood, management should claim responsibility for its



role in making the overall community sustainable. “Social responsibility is important for both managers and residents. We help them understand this and break down any repetitive issues so they can be addressed.”

The community policing unit meets regularly with apartment management on day-to-day concerns, as well as to address ongoing issues. Dorman explains that, if an apartment community increasingly consumes government resources (for example, repeated 911 calls regarding the same problem), it will be subjected to higher taxes. “We are at the core of the solution because we are a part of the community — 24/7. As the eyes and ears for the community, we can help the owners and managers save money — even on taxes,” he says.

“We are fortunate that Chief Joe Hall saw the need for a dedicated community policing team and made room in the department budget for our funding,” says Dorman. “I am very proud to be a part such a worthwhile endeavor that’s committed to community solutions and sustainability.” ▲

CRIME FREE MULTI-HOUSING PROGRAM

A growing number of apartment communities are partnering with local police agencies through the international Crime Free Multi-Housing Program. Law enforcement officers train to become coordinators of the program, and then return to their home communities to provide training to apartment managers. The international program, which began in Mesa, Ariz., in 1992, is in 2,000 cities in the United States, Canada, England, and Nigeria. It includes apartment communities in 48 U.S. states plus Puerto Rico.

Property managers receive three phases of training, explained Lori Trainer, who coordinates the program in Orlando along with Officer Derwin Bradley of the Orlando Police Department. Trainer is FAA’s treasurer and vice president of public relations for Southern Affordable Services.

In Phase One, all on-site personnel at the apartment community spend a day learning about crime prevention and details of the program.

Phase Two is called Crime Prevention through Environmental Design, or CPTED. The community is inspected for the presence of features proven to reduce crime, such as 180-degree viewers in doors, locks that meet certain specifications, adequately trimmed landscaping, and sufficient lighting. The community is given a punch list of items to correct before the next inspection.

Phase Three, Community Awareness Training, includes a social gathering where the community is presented a sign to display and residents are asked to sign an agreement that they and their guests will comply with the rules of the property and help keep the property crime-free.

The program has been shown to reduce calls for service between 40 and 70 percent in the first year, Trainer said.

The 2015 International Crime Free Conference will be July 8-10 at the Rosen Plaza Hotel in Orlando. For information, visit crime-free-association.org/conference-2015.htm or email Lori Trainer at ltrainer@sashousing.org. The conference will include Phase One training.

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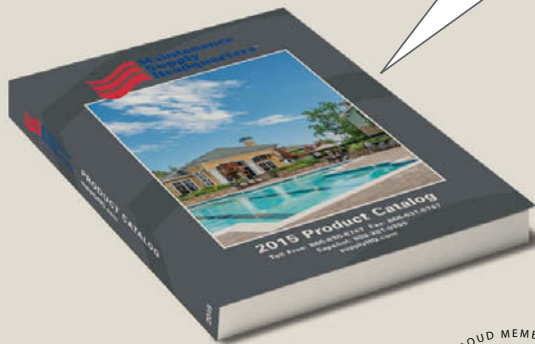
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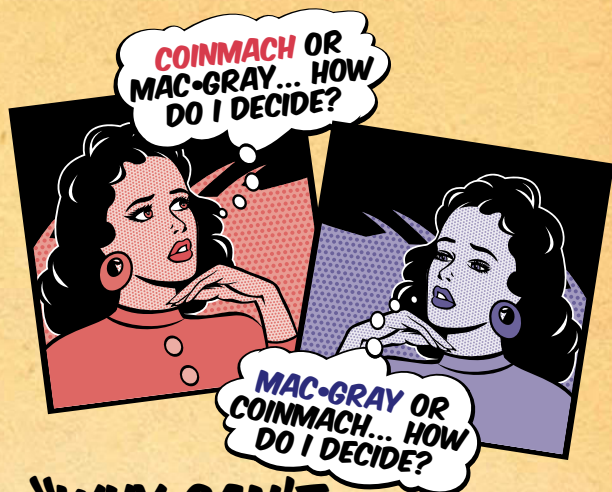
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WEST PARK VILLAGE

Options for Every Lifestyle at Convenient, Close-Knit West Park Village

BY MARY LOU JAY

Located in the upscale Tampa suburb of Westchase, West Park Village invites people to “Rethink the way you live.” The active and convenient lifestyle it promises begins with the 40,800 square feet of retail space at the community’s entrance. Residents and visitors can stroll along the brick paver sidewalks to window shop or stop in at one of the 23 dining and service businesses that include a Starbucks, several restaurants, two salon/spas, a bakery, a dry cleaner, and a pet store.

“West Park Village is a unique community: The way you live plays off the retail center. Once you come home at the end of the day, you don’t have to leave the community,” said Jimmy Chestnut, regional property manager for Georgia-based Carroll Organization. Carroll is a privately held owner and operator of high-quality multi-family real estate that purchased the apartment community last May.

West Park Village includes three distinctive apartment styles. The 60 loft units above the retail stores provide a more urban experience, while the 238 garden apartments, tucked away off small, picturesque courtyards, offer the convenience of one-floor living. Prefer multi-floor living? West Park Village has 319 three-story townhomes.

These are not cookie-cutter units. There are 16 different floor plans, everything from a comfortable 815-square-foot one-bedroom unit to a spacious, 2,046-square-foot, three-bedroom home. “Even the same floor plans in different buildings can have nuances,” Chestnut said. Some apartments, for example, have bonus rooms off the foyer or kitchen with a built-in desk for a computer. Most townhomes have attached garages, but there are separate garages available for rent to garden apartment residents as well.

There are touches of elegance throughout; the garden apartments, for example, have a French Quarter feel, with wrought iron entrances over the courtyards, fountains and gazebos, or swings





for seating. These help make the apartment buildings an attractive and integral part of the greater West Park Village. “There are single family homes, condos, and other town-homes for sale, all mixed in,” said Chestnut. “You can’t tell immediately tell what is for rent and what is for purchase.” For those who can stay only a short time, Carroll Organization offers a few short-term rentals.

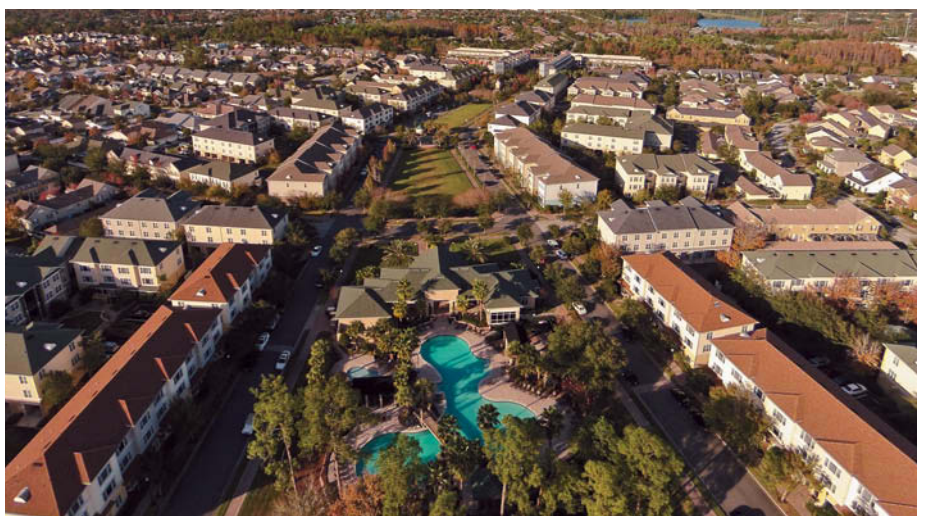
The heart of the community is the village green, which spreads out from the retail area. Residents can gather for special events at the band shell and nearby interactive fountain, which are located in the middle of the green. If they’re looking for more active entertainment, they can enjoy the amenities of the community pool and newly remodeled fitness center at the green’s far end.

“One of the first things we did after we bought the property was to renovate the entire

office and clubhouse,” said Chestnut. “We gutted the building and installed floor-to-ceiling storefront glass all along the back wall of the building.” As a result, residents using the treadmills and other exercise equipment in the 2,500-square-foot fitness center are now treated to wonderful views of the large, curving pool just outside.

The remodeling also added a small yoga room and a 1,500-square-foot resident lounge, which also overlooks the pool. The lounge has all the amenities for a comfortable conversation or impromptu get-together, including coffee bar, pool table, large screen television, computer stations, and conference table. Both the pool and the clubhouse have free WiFi, and the fitness center and lounge are open 24/7 to residents.

Carroll Organization hasn’t limited remodeling at West Park Village to public areas,



however. “We are doing a renovation of the apartment interiors in the community to increase value and improve the experience for new residents of the community,” said Chestnut. The company is working on 15 to 20 units each month, installing plank flooring in the living room/dining areas and new stainless steel appliance packages (refrigerator, dishwasher, stove, over-the-range microwave) in the kitchens. It’s upgrading lighting with brushed nickel fixtures and window treatments with faux wood blinds.

The convenience of living at West Village Park is evident in its proximity to the Tampa International Airport, to downtown Tampa, to the Gulf beaches, and to the Citrus Park Mall and International Plaza. But there’s no need to go out of the community for entertainment. The community hosts a movie night on the first Friday of every month and holds

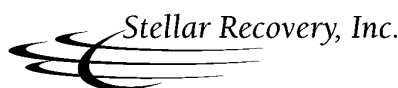
events like a Halloween Spooktacular, complete with hayride and costume contests, and the annual Westchase Santa Parade. For runners, there are the nationally certified 10K and 5K Great West Chase races, which start at the Village Green. There’s even an annual West Park Village resident appreciation week, when residents can take advantage of happy hours, free massages, burger night, and a special day dedicated to four-legged friends. (West Village Park is very pet-friendly, allowing up to three dogs per unit.)

It all adds up to an outstanding, tight-knit community.

“West Park Village was one of the larger purchases for Carroll Organization last year,” Chestnut said. “They deem it one of their flagship properties and look forward to a long-term hold.” ▲



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- Kitchen Island – 69%
- Alarm System – 68%
- Double Vanity in Master Bath – 61%

MAINTENANCE COSTS ARE DECLINING

According to the National Apartment Association's *2014 Survey of Operating Income & Expenses in Rental Apartment Communities*:

- On average, maintenance costs declined to \$434 per unit in 2013, versus \$449 per unit in 2012 and \$490 per unit in 2011.
- For individual metered and recovery system properties, repair and maintenance costs average \$446 per unit annually and 48 cents per square foot annually.
- For master metered properties, repair and maintenance costs average \$651 per unit annually and 73 cents per square foot annually.



A RECORD-HIGH REMODELING MARKET INDEX

The National Association of Home Builders' (NAHB) Remodeling Market Index (RMI) posted a record-high result of 60 in the final quarter of 2014. A reading of 60 indicates remodelers' confidence in the



quarter-over-quarter improvement in the remodeling market. The overall RMI averages ratings of current remodeling activity with indicators of future remodeling activity.



MIAMI METRO AREA HAS THE HIGHEST OPERATING COSTS

In NAA's National Apartment Association's *2014 Survey of Operating Income & Expenses in Rental Apartment Communities*, the Miami Beach-Kendall, Fla., metro area had the highest operating costs in metro areas around the country based on a per unit basis at \$6,950 (\$6.62 per square foot).



AN ALMOST \$10 BILLION INDUSTRY

The 2013 report *The Trillion Dollar Apartment Industry* produced by the National Apartment Association and the National Multifamily Housing Council stated that the industry spent \$67.9 billion on apartment operations. Repairs and maintenance were at 14.3 percent of those operations costs, or \$9.7 billion.

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