

# Kenosha Landlord Association

## A Local Chapter of the Wisconsin Apartment Association

Volume 29, Issue 2 February 2016

### In this issue

The 2016 Property **Management Office** Page 2 Do You Screen Your Contractors? Page 3 **Rental Inspections Targeted** Page 4-5 Landlord/Crime Free Page 5 5 Ways To Keep Your **Financial Information** Safer From Hackers Page 6-8 Wisconsin Legal Blank Page 8 **5 Tips For Attracting Great(Better) Residents** Page 9 **Property Managers Emphasize Time Efficiency** Page 10

#### **BOARD of DIRECTORS**

Page 11

Page 12

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### Kenosha Landlord Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 1505, Kenosha, WI 53141 www.kenoshalandlordassociation.org www.waaonline.org



### To Our Members

The reviews are in and the holiday party at Circa on Seventh was a hit. We would like to thank everyone that attended. A special thank you to our Associate members who donated wonderful gifts for the raffle.

Our next meeting is, Wednesday, February 17th, at the Fireside Restaurant & Lounge, 2801 30th Ave. The speakers will be Brian Hervat and Mike Meyer, who will be giving a presentation on technology that can be of value to landlords and property managers. Come and get a valuable introduction to using tools such as:

• Google Drive for Business

• Trello

• Zillow Rent Manager

**Reminders:** KLA Membership renewals are due. If you have not sent in a renewal please do so. You can apply online at our website or pay by mail. Applications can be found on the KLA website and on our Facebook page.

If your dues are not are not paid you will no longer receive your KLA newsletter and will not have a membership to the WAA. You can renew your dues at the next meeting. If you do not renew your dues you will be charged the \$20.00 nonmember fee to attend.

DISCLAIMER: The Kenosha Landlord Association publishes this newsletter to create awareness of issues relating to the rental housing industry. Information is compiled from a variety of sources and the views and concerns expressed by the contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or the Association. When necessary, we suggest you consult an attorney.



### The 2016 Property Management Office

Source: http://www.propertymanager.com



In 1985, the life of a property manager was primarily driven by paperwork. Tenant applications, move-in forms, move-out forms, leases, leasing bonuses, move-out forms, rent receipts, maintenance requests, and work orders; everything required a piece of paper of some kind.

Fast forward 30 years, and many property managers and residents may marvel at the tools available for the property management office. Things such as online applications, tenant portals, and electronic maintenance requests have made the property management office more efficient and eliminated a lot of that paperwork.

What about your office? Are you closer to the modern office, or do your piles of paperwork indicate a kinship with the property management company of 30 years ago? If you're closer to 1985 than today, here are a few reasons to consider a technology upgrade for your office to prepare you for the new year.

- People use their smart phones, laptops, or tablets for everything. Whether it's paying the electric bill, making a hotel reservation, or leasing an apartment, the majority of people under age 25 run their lives with their phones. Providing potential residents with an easy way to find and lease an apartment is in your own best interest. Make your website mobile-friendly; and conversely, accessing your property management software from your mobile device can improve your response time and thus bring more residents in faster.
- Tenant Portal makes life easier for everyone. Tenant portals have been around for awhile, and today's version offers convenience for both property managers and renters alike. Residents love portals because they can pay rent online, submit general maintenance requests, and ask questions. Property managers love portals because they make collecting rent easier, and easier usually means timely. While chronically late payers will likely always be late payers, the majority of residents will find it much easier to pay their rent online. And property managers no longer have to save envelopes and search for post mark dates in order to determine if rent was paid on time. Portals are a win-win for all parties involved.
- Electronic maintenance requests have taken the place of the old, antiquated system of residents submitting a maintenance request and the property manager or maintenance manager filling out a work order, assigning it to maintenance personnel, and later waiting until the request has been completed to close the work order. Today, residents can request maintenance electronically, with the request automatically assigned to a maintenance worker. Once that work order has been completed, maintenance simply updates the status, and the work order is closed. No delayed response. No lost maintenance requests. No lost work orders. And no unhappy renters.

It's time to leave the '80s behind and enjoy the tools of today, which are guaranteed to make your life much easier going into 2016 and beyond. Who knows? You might not even need an office in 2016—you'll be able to do your work from anywhere!



### Do You Screen Your Contractors?

Source: http://www.propertymanager.com/



While many property management companies have a maintenance staff that is able to handle most tasks, there will likely be a time when a job will need to be outsourced to an outside contractor.

Most property managers carefully screen job applicants when making hiring decisions to ward off possible issues, and carefully screen renters before leasing an apartment to them, are you being that careful when choosing a contractor to perform services on your properties?

Finding an honest, reliable contractor is no easy task – but the property manager must be conscious of the vulnerability of their renters, and the legal ramifications of allowing an untrustworthy contractor to have access to renters and their belongings.

Here are a few things that you can do when hiring an outside contractor for the first time to ensure that you are doing your best to provide honest and reliable service.

Research the company thoroughly. Are they brand new, or have they been in business for years? While a new business without a track record may cause some hesitation, don't just assume that a company in business for years is honest and trustworthy. If possible, talk to others who have used the business in the past, and get their experience not only of the business owner, but about the employees as well.

Ask if the employees are bonded. Is the company insured? Bonding employees protects business owners against fraud or loss from an act committed by their employee. Business owners that bond their employees typically run a background check on their employees prior to hiring them – meaning more protection for you and your renters.

Check the Better Business Bureau for a rating. While this may not provide much information on the quality of their work, you'll be able to see if prior complaints have been filed against the company. Also check for online reviews by Googling the business name. While a negative review is a red flag, there can be several reasons behind that review. Take them with a grain of salt, and continue your own research. Word-of-mouth reviews from people you know and trust are the best kind of reviews.

Ask if the employees are licensed contractors. While this may seem like a no-brainer, you may be surprised at the number of businesses that send employees out on jobs without a license. If you're hiring a plumber, make sure that the employee that shows up at your tenant's doorstep is indeed a licensed plumber, not just an employee of the plumbing business.

While this screening may take some additional time up-front, you'll be reassured at the end of the process that the people entering your renters' homes are reliable and honest, and your renters will appreciate your thoroughness and careful selection process, too.



### **Rental Inspections Targeted**

Source: http://www.pressreader.com/usa/milwaukee-journal-sentinel By Tom Daykin / 17 Jan 2016

Milwaukee's program that requires an additional level of inspections for apartment buildings near the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and other neighborhoods could be eliminated under a bill pending in the Legislature.

Supporters of the residential rental inspection program say it helps uncover building code violations, leading to improvements for older apartments that shore up property values.

Opponents say it gives city building inspectors too much power, which they say can be used arbitrarily. The Common Council and Mayor Tom Barrett approved the program in 2009. It requires apartments located mainly near UWM and in the Lindsay Heights area, on the north side, to be certified by city building inspectors before they can be rented.

Well-maintained buildings receive a four-year certificate. Buildings with units that have what the city calls "disqualifying violations" receive a one-year certificate after the violations have been corrected.

Apartment building owners said the ordinance unfairly imposes additional inspection fees, which are \$86 for each apartment unit. They said building inspectors should instead focus on a relatively small group of bad landlords.

Supporters said the ordinance is needed to better deal with problem landlords. That includes building owners who create hazardous situations by illegally putting too many tenants into apartments.

The program initially affected around 3,700 units in Lindsay Heights, bounded roughly by I-43, N. 29th St., W. Galena St. and W. Wright St., and in a neighborhood near UWM, bordered by N. Cambridge Ave., N. Hackett Ave., E. Newberry Blvd. and E. Edgewood Ave.

It was expanded in 2015 to another part of the city — a small neighborhood west of Lindsay Park. That area is bordered by W. Congress, W. Marion, N. 87th and N. 92nd streets.

Also, apartment buildings designated as nuisance properties by the Milwaukee Police Department are inspected under the program, said Erica Lewandowski, special enforcement manager for the Department of Neighborhood Services.

### Bill has been altered.

The pending legislation, Assembly Bill 568, initially included a provision that would prohibit Wisconsin Communities from operating such programs.

Some of those programs charge building owners annual fees while doing inspections only every five years, said Sen. Frank Lasee (R-De Pere), a co-sponsor of the legislation.

Lasee also said the programs in Milwaukee and other communities place an unfair focus on buildings in certain neighborhoods.

The bill was recently revised by co-sponsor Rep. Robert Brooks (R-Saukville).

It now gives communities the authority to do regularly scheduled apartment building inspections that are not initiated by tenant complaints.

But it also says those inspections must apply to all residential rental properties, barring a city from focusing on certain neighborhoods, said Brenda Wood, a lobbyist for the City of Milwaukee. "We would either have to expand the program citywide or abolish it," Wood said.

Apartment building owners, such as Milwaukee landlord Orville Seymer, say the regular system of building inspectors responding to complaints from tenants works well without an additional level of scrutiny.

Continued on page 5

### Rental Inspections Targeted—con't



The city should instead focus on landlords who are overcrowding their apartments with too many students, said Carole Wehner, who operates rentals near UWM.

Wehner said the program has led to inspectors writing orders for minor improvements, such as painting the floor of a front porch, for her properties.

However, Pamela Frautschi, who lives near UWM, said the program has uncovered a large number of building code violations in her neighborhood.

Students are often first time renters, and are "often unaware that certain conditions they are living with are legally substandard," Frautschi wrote in a letter to legislators.

#### **Actions of renters cited:**

Some renters, including students, knowingly violate apartment capacity rules to reduce their rent, according to the Department of Neighborhood Services. Renters also fear being evicted for complaining to building inspectors.

Poorly operated apartment buildings can affect nearby homes, and eliminating the program would hurt Wisconsin property values in those neighborhoods, said Jennifer Gonda, the city's director of intergovernmental relations.

Another provision in AB 568 would prohibit communities from designating a building as historic if the property owner objects. That is opposed by historic preservationists and officials from Milwaukee and other cities.

The legislation's registered opponents include the cities of Milwaukee and Madison, and Legal Action of Wisconsin Inc., which represents low-income tenants in litigation involving landlords.

Supporters include the Apartment Association of Southeastern Wisconsin Inc., Apartment Association of South Central Wisconsin and Realtors Association.

### Landlord/Crime Free Multi-Housing Rental Seminar

Saturday, May 14th (9am-2pm) Saturday, May 21st (9am-2pm)

Location: Boys and Girls Club 1330 52nd St. Kenosha. WI 53140

The KPD Crime Prevention Unit and the Kenosha Landlord Association designed this Seminar to help landlords make better decisions when managing their rental units.

#### The following topics will be discussed:

**Property Maintenance Codes** 

- Crime Prevention Techniques
- Applicant Screening
- Leases and Evictions
- Crime Free Lease Addendums
- Process Serving
- C.P.T.E.D. (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design)
- Fire Safety
- Waste and Disposal



To register for the seminar Please call:

Crime prevention Unit at 657-3937 or e-mail: watch@kenoshapolice.com.

# This seminar will help landlords and property managers in the following ways:

- Satisfied tenants build stable neighborhoods
- Active management leads to less turnover
- Stabilized property values and rents
- Lower maintenance and repair costs
- Everyone is safer
- Peace of mind from spending less time on crisis control.

Come and learn about all of the new laws!!!!!



### 5 Ways To Keep Your Financial Information Safer From Hackers

Source:http://www.clarkhoward.com / January 2016

Hey, do you mind if I try to guess one of your passwords? No? Okay, how about "123456" or "password"? Maybe "Max123" or "Bella2011"? Although I hope no readers are using any of these passwords currently, "123456" and "password" are among the most common passwords chosen. "Max" and "Bella"? Those are some of the most popular pet names and pet names are commonly used too as passwords. I am no hacker, and I spend very little time thinking about hackers. I wouldn't hack into someone else's information, so why would anyone think about hacking into my information?

It happens. Every day, it happens to ordinary citizens. Tomorrow it may be you or me. Are we being as smart as possible online to protect our financial information? While these tips will not always refer specifically to keeping your financial information safe, I want you to consider something: The more information hackers can learn about you, the more they can guess. If you act carelessly with your Facebook account, you could be indirectly compromising your sensitive information, which could possibly include your banking relationships.

### **Basic street smarts in cyberspace**

In real life, most of us shy away from rough neighborhoods. We lock our cars and install security systems in our houses. But we're strangely lax when we're online.

Let's review a few basic guidelines.

- \*Use a security code for your smartphone or tablet and a password for your computer.
- Don't send personal or financial information via email.
- Don't click on links you didn't expect in pop-up windows or what could be phishing emails.
- \*Don't share your password or username.
- •Keep current with the latest software updates which are often released to patch some holes.

### 1. Pay attention to your passwords

Now that we have the basics out of the way, let's talk about passwords. If you are using "123456" as a password, it's got to go now! A few years ago, I naively contributed to its popularity too (oops!). Then I found a statistic somewhere that said up to 50 percent of Internet users use "123456" for their pass phrase, so I changed it to something with words and one number. To help me remember, I also used that password for almost all of my online surfing. Not much better. I can't find that statistic today, but I mention it because it did cause me to change what I was doing.

Here's how to make your passwords tough to crack:

- \*Do not use the same password for multiple sites or logins.
- Do not use your name or other commonly known information or anything else that could be easily guessed or researched. This could include names of family members or pets. How could hackers find out that information? More on that in a minute.

\*Use combinations of upper- and lower-case letters, along with numbers and special characters if allowed. Make the password as long as possible. Hackers use programs to guess your password, so longer passwords take longer to guess. Make them tired so they move on to someone else.

We violate the above rules for good reason: it's hard to remember one password, let alone many complicated passwords, isn't it? While you can allow your browser to store your logins to websites, this isn't the most secure option either. If your computer is hacked, those passwords may also be accessed.



### 5 Ways To Keep Your Financial Information Safer From Hackers (Con't)

There is another solution. Password managers encrypt your password database and create random passwords. Everything is hidden behind a master password that you must key in and the master password is not stored on the password manager company's servers. Examples of these password managers include Last-Pass, KeePass, and 1Password — and there are others.

### 2. Keep your information private when using public Wi-Fi

I wonder how much of your private information has been viewed while you're sipping your latte at Starbucks. That brings a whole new meaning to the term "Latte Factor®," right?

\*First, , avoid visiting any websites that are sensitive until you are at home on a more private Internet connection.

When using public Wi-Fi, specify the connection as a public connection so your computer doesn't share information. (If you specify a private connection, your computer may become discoverable and accessible.)

\*Don't allow file- or printer-sharing. Also turn off network discovery or Bluetooth capability for devices to keep your files safer. (For PCs, turning off Bluetooth and network discovery is done through the Network and Internet portion of the Control Panel.)

Also, make sure your firewall is on. (This is checked under System and Security under the Control Panel for PCs.)

To be extra safe, you can use a virtual private network (VPN) to increase the privacy and security of your computer's Internet connection.

### 3. Surf safely

After all your precautions, you want to be able to visit websites safely too. First of all, don't store your credit card details on websites. And when you visit websites, make sure to look at the browser's address bar. You want to see "https" instead of "http," especially if you are purchasing something or sharing information.

You'll definitely see "https" when you're doing online banking. If you want to log in to your online savings account, for example, you should make sure that you're actually logging in to a secure site. If you verify that "https" appears in your browser bar whenever you log in, you can feel confident that you're not landing on a fake banking page.

### 4. Be smart with social media

Haven't we all rolled our eyes when a friend shares too much on Facebook? Well, everyone should know that oversharing on social media has more sinister side effects too. You really don't know who is watching. If you would shred the paper version, don't post the electronic version, you know?

\*Don't accept social media invites from people you don't know.

\*Don't participate in any of the "10 Things You Don't Know About Me" posts either. Why? Some of the answers are answers to security questions that are supposed to secure your financial questions.

•Periodically check your security settings on social media and tweak them if necessary.

\*Social media scams exist and try to get you to click on URLs that install malware or take you to phishing sites as well. You don't have to eliminate social media from your life, but maybe don't be so click-happy.

\*Customize your posts to control what is seen. Never share pictures of your paycheck or driver's license, for example.

Turn off geo-tagging on Facebook of when you will be home or when you won't be home — or turn off social geo-tagging.

### **5 Ways To Keep Your Financial Information Safer From Hackers** (Con't)



### 5. Keep your email secure

Even if your email account hasn't been hacked, I'm guessing you have received emails from a friend's account that has been hacked. Try these tips to keep your information safe (and your friends' inboxes safe too).

\*Consider using more than one email account. Share one with your family and friends, use one for online shopping and newsletter sign-ups, and another one for sensitive information, such as retirement accounts or credit card accounts. Why a separate one for online shopping or newsletter sign-ups? Your information is bound to be sold at some point, so why not have a junk email address to give away?

You may want to change your email address from time to time, or if it has been compromised.

\*Change your email password periodically.

\*Use an email service that offers two-factor authorization. An example of two-factor authorization is: If you are logging in to your Gmail account on a computer that you have never used before, a 4-digit PIN is sent to your phone that you have to input after you have put in your actual password.

This seems counter-intuitive, but don't unsubscribe to newsletters to which you have never subscribed. Sneaky people blast unsuspecting email users and, by unsubscribing to these newsletters, you'll actually get more spam. Instead, use the report-spam feature of your email provider if there is one. (Personal note: I used to just delete suspicious emails, but I have an itchy report-spam finger now.)

\*Signs of phishing: misspelling, suspicious links, asking for personal information or suggesting you give out your personal information (as in, they need your login information because something has changed). Security questions deserve special attention. When I worked at a bank years ago, one of our customers had his mother's maiden name printed on his checks. That's making it way too easy for someone to answer your security questions and reset your passwords. You don't want that.

So make it as hard as you possibly can.

•Answer the security questions incorrectly.

Or better yet, create some randomized set of numbers, letters, and special characters.

Whatever you do, do not answer the question with something you just posted on Facebook.

Your online information is like a puzzle. Facebook is one piece. Your email account is another. If you make it too easy to put some of the pieces together, hackers can start to see the whole picture of your life, including your financial accounts.

Yes, you need to be careful online. No, you don't need to go analog in a digital world. But you do need to be very careful. Start by evaluating these five areas of your digital life and fill in the gaps where needed. Once you have made some improvements with these areas, there is more to learn, including more about how to increase the security of your home Internet connection



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### 5 TIPS FOR ATTRACTING GREAT (BETTER) RESIDENTS

Source: 2016 MrLandlord.com

Good residents come to you not by accident, but by design. There are good residents in every price range and in every neighborhood. A professional landlord will attract quality residents. An unprofessional landlord will attract troublesome residents. Your rental property is only as secure as the residents who live in it.

**Tip #1: Appearance Matters.** Do you use checklists and professional forms for the leasing process? The resident assumes that if the landlord is a professional who takes care of every detail, then every detail in the apartment will be covered as well. Good residents feel comfortable around a landlord who is organized.

**Tip #2: Don't Show An Unfinished Property.** Most people cannot envision what an apartment will look like once you're done with the painting, cleaning, and fixing.

**Tip #3: Check Out The Competition.** Most landlords do not check out what other area landlords are offering. You do not want to grossly underestimate or overestimate the amount of rent you could charge for your rental. The best property managers constantly monitor the trends in the local rental market.

### Tip #4: Return All Phone Calls Within Three Hours.

**Tip #5: Offer Other Payment Options,** such as credit cards and direct deposit. Good residents often like to use their debit or credit cards to pay rent, or they may want to use an automated clearinghouse (ACH) transaction via their bank. They may receive frequent flyer miles or cash back from their credit card issuer.

Sudoku										
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9	4		5			7				

Solution on page 11



### **Property Managers Emphasize Time Efficiency**

Source: http://www.propertymanager.com/



All of us in the business of property management wish there were more hours in the day to complete our work. Yet as the old saying goes "Time waits for no one..." and few have time to waste. Yes, more time is often what we want most, observed William Penn, "...but what we use worst." By carefully managing the time that we have allotted to, we can at least make the most of each hour.

First, examine carefully how you're currently using each hour of your day. Do you notice any patterns where you're using a large amount of time and getting the least amount of productivity? You may have heard of The Pareto Principle, also known as "The 80/20 Principle." In essence, it suggests that 20% of our time is employed producing 80% of our accomplishments.

There are many variations of this principle, but the main idea implies that on average we're only using 20% of our time to create 80% of our results in life. (For a complete understanding I encourage you to read the book *The 80/20 Principle: The Secret of Achieving More with Less* by Richard Koch). Realize that 80 percent of all our results in business and in life derive from just 20 percent of our efforts. That's why the 80/20 principle is one of the great secrets of highly effective people and organizations.

No wonder many time management consultants believe that when we increase the amount of time we spend doing activities that are the most worthwhile to us, our success will soar exponentially! This usually means spending less time each day reading emails, answering text messages, or dealing with tedious management tasks that could easily be delegated to an assistant. Capture those extra hours to do what brings us the most satisfaction and the best outcomes. It's a big leap forward in your quest to use your time more efficiently.

Next, talk to companies that sell or lease the latest, most effective time management technologies for property managers. Ask colleagues, professional acquaintances or local businesses for referrals as well. Rental property management software is evolving rapidly. The best ones let you automate countless time consuming tasks, so you have more time to spend on activities that really matter.

What would you rather be doing, coordinating routine property maintenance or prospecting for more clients? Do you really want to be involved with screening prospective renters? Wouldn't you rather have the time to stay in touch with your owner clients, key personnel and be available to approve important projects? Your answers partly depend on your personal priorities. It's easy to be distracted with minutia and time-wasters. Drill down and be aware of what and who are your biggest time-wasting activities and people. Then decide you don't have time to waste! Do you find yourself frequently procrastinating on this vitally important topic? Don't be afraid to ask for help. A trusted family member, friend or associate can be a great source of objective impetus.

As Benjamin Franklin once asked, "Do you love life? Then do not squander time, for that is the stuff that life is made of." You'll accomplish more, feel happier, and surprise yourself along the way.



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7	6	9	3	2	1	4	5	8		
6	9	4	8	1	3	5	2	7		
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2	5	6	1	3	7	9	8	4		
8	1	7	2	4	9	3	6	5		
9	4	3	5	$\infty$	6	7	1	2		



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### **Committee Members**

Mark Nausieda

Jeannette Marchetti-Hamm

Michele Krause Dee Dee Kruse Mike Myer

Melissa Gaglione

### **Next Meeting**

# Fireside Restaurant & Lounge

2801 30th Avenue (262) 764-0601

**February 17, 2016** 

6:30 p.m. networking 7:00 p.m. meeting

Appetizers & Beverages Provided
At Meetings

Kenosha Landlord Association

Technology for Business
With
Brian Hervat
&
Mike Meyer

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