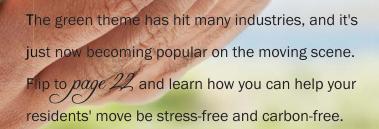




What makes a chapter truly thrive? Get a glimpse of how the Oahu Chapter makes their meetings and events a success.



RESIDENTIAL Resource Infrom The Official Monthly News Magazine of the National Association of Residential Property Managers





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Chris Hermanski, NARPM's 2003 President, started his business in 1981 with 21 properties. Being cutting edge back then meant using tenant cards and a fax machine. Today, Chris's company manages over 1100 properties and employs more than 20 people. Chris still has a fax machine, but his new technology is AppFolio Property Manager.

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"With AppFolio we can grow and do more without adding more people."

Chris Hermanski, President and Master Property Manager, Mainlander Property Management (2003 NARPM President)



IN THIS ISSUE March 2009

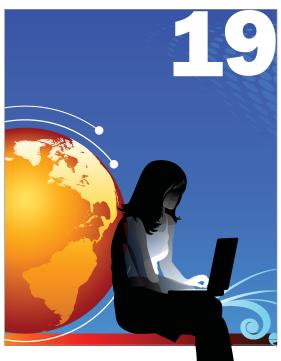
FEATURE ARTICLES

- **p7** Membership+Participation=Benefit: Your Success Formula You possess some of the skills and knowledge essential to the future of NARPM[®]. Consider that now is the time for you to contribute your unique talents to the association.
- **p10** Magical Chapter Memories: Travels with Minnie It was a busy holiday season for Minnie Mouse and Nancy Jackson, RMP[®]. Take a peek at some of the great chapter events they witnessed.
- **p12** New Monthly Column! Chapter Spotlight Each issue a new chapter or chapter that has achieved Chapter Excellence will be featured in this monthly column. This time we feature one of our largest chapters—Oahu.
- **p14** Aiding in Profitability: Setting Minimum Fees Rob Massey, Jr., CPM[®], gives us a few pointers on how setting a minimum management fee can reduce rental issues while encouraging management of more upscale homes.
- **P19** Expanding Your Business: Find the Right Technology Find out why Web-based solutions may be the answer when considering expanding your property management business from NARPM[®] member Randy Halsne.
- **p22** Safer, Cleaner Environments: It's Easy Being Green Moving companies are finally doing their part to save the planet. See how this NARPM® affiliate is making home a better place and how it ties into the property management industry.

MONTHLY COLUMNS

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EDITORIAL MISSION

Since 1989, the NARPM[®] news magazine has been a key focal point for the organization. The *Residential Resource* keeps members up-to-date on association events, and provides valuable industry advice and insight. NARPM[®] members receive the *Residential Resource* as part of their membership, included in their annual dues.

The *Residential Resource* is published monthly, with one combined issue for September/ November. Articles can be submitted by e-mail to either publications@narpm.org or communications@narpm.org. Items mailed in for publication cannot be returned. Address changes may be forwarded to NARPM[®] at 638 Independence Parkway, Suite 100, Chesapeake, VA 23320. The Communications Chair and Graphic Designer reserve the right to edit or refuse all publications for content and selection.

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638 Independence Parkway, Suite 100 Chesapeake, VA 23320

P: 800-782-3452 F: 866-466-2776 www.narpm.org

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OFFICERS

Treasurer

Fred Thompson, MPM® RMP® President president@narpm.org 407-571-3650

Vickie Gaskill, MPM® RMP® CPM® President-Elect presidentelect@narpm.org 800-755-5397

REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS

R. Scott Corbridge, MPM® RMP® southeastrvp@narpm.org 941-377-8400

> Cary Efurd, MPM[®] RMP[®] southwestrvp@narpm.org 972-572-5656

Stephen Foster, MPM® RMP® CCIM® southcentralrvp@narpm.org 210-340-1717 Jayci Grana, RMP[®] northeastrvp@narpm.org / northcentralrvp@narpm.org 407-629-6643

Candice Swanson, MPM® RMP® pacificrvp@narpm.org 707-745-0924

Tony A. Drost, MPM[®] RMP[®]

Betty Fletcher, MPM® RMP®

pastpresident@narpm.org

501-907-7091 x 101

treasurer@narpm.org

208-321-1900

Past President

James Emory Tungsvik, MPM® RMP® northwestrvp@narpm.org 253-852-3000

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Marc Banner, MPM® RMP® Long Range Planning longrangechair@narpm.org 208-377-8889

Michele A. Brassard, RMP® Communications communications@narpm.org 407-629-6643

Susan E. Melton, MPM® RMP® Professional Development profdevelopment@narpm.org 303-985-4670 Anne B. McCawley, MPM® RMP® Member Services memberservices@narpm.org 480-969-1818

John Parker, MPM® RMP® Governmental Affairs govtaffairschair@narpm.org 253-581-5199

Steve Stein, CRS® GRI Governmental Affairs govtaffairschair@narpm.org 540-434-1173

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Gail S. Phillips, CAE Executive Director executivedirector@narpm.org

> Cher Leadbeater Administrative Assistant info@narpm.org

Mark H. Dunlap Chapter Support Manager chaptersupport@narpm.org Kristi A. Dunlap Communications & Graphic Designer publications@narpm.org

Carla Earnest, CMP Conferences & Conventions Coordinator conventioninfo@narpm.org

Barrett Stork Governmental Affairs Director legislativeinfo@narpm.org







PRESIDENT'S Message

In the near future, I look forward to reporting on a great mutual alliance with IREM[®] to further voice our association as the leader in residential home management.





AS WE ENTER MARCH, we see that more and more the economy is on a slow turn and most management companies are increasing inventory. Foreclosures, short sales, and the tightness of funds has started the turn in our markets to grow our management company or weed out bad accounts and replace with more solid investors.

For the professional NARPM® member, they are qualified to make sure that the new client is strong and in need of our quality service. Many of the managers I talk to throughout the country are challenged with ensuring that they find quality tenants for their properties in a timely manner. This is the time to look to our affiliate members who can help in finding tenants and also doing a proper background screening. It is very important that you pull a nationwide credit, criminal, and eviction search since times are tight and more tenants are moving from state to state.

This year, it is also imperative that you attend each and every one of your local chapter meetings, and state, regional, and national conferences to stay ahead of the curve as our markets come out of the fog and into a viable and profitable center for all of us to take advantage of. The education and networking that these meetings provide is invaluable to your future success in our industry.

Have you implemented a new service or changed the way you do business from a class you took last year? Our office started to use a free system to allow our staff to share their calendar and forms with each other on the Internet. Now, our office is more efficient when showing properties, and scheduling vacations and meetings. This was just one benefit that a property manager in my office found out by attending the 2008 Convention on Kauai.

Are you following your business plan that you created during the last quarter of 2008? March is always a great month to review how you are doing on your business plan to ensure that you have implemented the services or tools to make 2009 the best year for yourself and/or your company. Constant quarterly follow-up is critical to staying on track and achieving the goals you set.

Have you attended one of the webinars that we are having this year? In January, the first of many e-Chapter meetings was hosted with over 100 members in attendance. The responses were overwhelming and we look forward to providing more of these to keep our members on the cutting edge and deliver additional member benefits to those that are unable to attend a chapter meeting or conference. Continue to check the e-Chapter page in Members Only for upcoming webinars and information.

This year, your national Board, committees, and staff are working on strategic alliances with similar associations that will bring more member benefits to NARPM[®]. Last month, your Executive Committee had its first face-to-face meeting with the executive's of IREM[®] in Chicago, and we are very pleased with how the meeting proceeded. In the near future, I look forward to reporting on a great mutual alliance with IREM[®] to further voice our association as the leader in residential home management.

Our national Convention Committee is hard at work with the NARPM[®] management staff to make sure this year's convention offers the best education and networking possible. Convention Chair Shawn Beard and his committee have an outstanding program underway to *Let The Magic Begin* the week of October 19th at the Buena Vista Palace in Orlando. If you have not already, I encourage you to take a moment and secure your reservation. The convention being on Walt Disney World Property makes it a great family vacation.

Don't forget about working toward your Chapter Excellence Award for 2009. The date for qualifying is from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009. It is never too late to secure a RMP[®], MPM[®], or Ethics course for your chapter to gain additional points toward this award. Should you have any questions, contact your RVP or NARPM[®] National.

As I continue to travel across the nation, I look forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming regional and state conferences.

Fred Thompson, MPM[®] RMP[®] 2009 NARPM[®] President





Gail S.Phillips, CAE

I am truly honored to have been part of what NARPM[®] has become, and I am sure each member of the original group of founders will say the same. **I HAVE BEEN DOING RESEARCH** into NARPM[®] history. The past presidents have filled in a lot of blanks; they are a great source of experience and knowledge. I was referred to a book NARPM[®] published, *A Box of Chocolates for the Property Manager*, by Karen Ebert, MPM[®] RMP[®]. What a refreshing book! It reinforces that if not for these early members' persistence, NARPM[®] may not be as strong as it is today. I want to share a few areas of this book in my next few articles.

In 1987, Ralph Tutor was appointed the first president of NARPM[®]. Ralph stated in the book, "I am truly honored to have been part of what NARPM[®] has become, and I am sure each member of the original group of founders will say the same. When those of us that founded NARPM[®] look back at where the business of real estate managers was and where it is today, I am sure each of us would agree it is simply staggering." This comment was written in 2003 when NARPM[®] had 1,500 members. Today, with over 2,500 members and still growing, NARPM[®] has made an even larger impact on the industry. The networking and sharing of information is tremendous!

1993-94 NARPM[®] President Dave Holt, MPM[®] RMP[®], stated he was on the track of "I am too busy and it's too expensive to join NARPM[®]." Then one day he decided to stop and attend a NARPM[®] convention. That event made a great impact on him and the way he ran his business. He shares a story by Tony Robbins that I thought was very fitting, "There was an old man sitting on the beach. A young man came up and wanted the spot on which the older man was sitting. He confidently asked the older man to leave. 'This is my spot,' he said to the old man. The old man smiled and said, 'If you want this spot you have to race me for it.' The young man, confident as ever, accepted the challenge. The young man got up, turned to the young man and said, 'One more thing, you have to run backwards. Ready? Go.' As the young man stumbled to the end of the finish line well behind the old man, he exclaimed that the race wasn't fair. The old man wisely replied, 'If I run the race like everyone else does, I will surely lose. However, if I can create the rules, I can always set myself up to win.'" Take this ability to create your own rules in your business and life and make sure you get involved in NARPM[®], whether it is attending a meeting or just participating in the list serve. You will receive bountiful rewards for doing so.

1999-2000 President Ray Scarabosio, MPM[®] RMP[®], stated, "I personally have never looked back once I became involved in this fine organization." San Francisco already had an established property managers group, but Steve Urie, MPM[®] RMP[®], and the late Rocky Maxwell, MPM[®] RMP[®], came and showed the group how NARPM[®] could benefit them. Ray states that if anyone had ever told him he would be national president one day, or an instructor and author of classes, he would have chuckled. Ray, thanks to NARPM[®], now has many great friends throughout the country, and his involvement continues to be a positive influence in his life.

After hearing stories from these past presidents, have you gotten involved in NARPM[®]? Let me know if you want more information, or contact one of the past presidents and ask them how this organization makes a difference in their business. I will share more from *A Box of Chocolates* next month.

Jai S. Shillips

Gail S. Phillips, CAE Executive Director



Membership+Participation=Benefit Your Success Formula

Active participation in NARPM[®] takes on many forms and evolves over time. Every single member has a skill or experience that will help strengthen and grow NARPM[®], and also help increase the benefit of every member. You possess some of the skills and knowledge essential to this association's future. Consider that now may be the time for you to contribute your unique talent to the NARPM[®] Board of Directors. Qualifications to serve and the application can be found at www.narpm.org/ members/get-involved/apply.html. (*Note: You will need to log into the Members Only section to view this information.*)

Participation was made easy with the creation of the NARPM[®] list serves. Here members can pose questions to and receive answers from their colleagues all across the country. Discussions cover everything from the pros and cons of portfolio vs. department management styles to the best way to handle a foreclosure in your portfolio. This list serve is open to every NARPM[®] member. The NARPM[®] Business Owners/Leaders list serve is open only to the owners and/or decision-makers of the business. If you are not participating in one or both of these list serves, get started now by visiting www.narpm.org/members/ resources/list-serves.html. (*Note: This page is also located in the Members Only section.*)

Participating members mark their calendars so they never miss a local chapter meeting. They sit with someone they don't know to continue increasing their network of professional relationships. They agree to help out with tasks when asked and sometimes even volunteer! Members receive additional benefits when they serve on a chapter committee or as a chapter leader. Skills gained from leadership experiences easily translate into skills used to build and run a successful business.

Because of the relationships developed by serving on various committees and in a leadership position in NARPM[®], I am no longer alone in my business. I have an amazing list of experienced professionals spread across the country who are willing to help me devise a plan of action or even a business plan. I have added profit centers to my business, improved processes, and increased efficiencies by implementing lessons learned from them. We all do the same thing manage rental property—however, each one of us has a unique spin on the way we do business. Participate as much as possible, be open to new ideas, and be willing to investigate another way or method of doing the same thing.

Participate by earning one of the professional designations offered by NARPM®. Have your staff join and encourage them to work towards becoming a Certified Support Specialist (CSSsm). Set the standard for your staff and your local chapter members by earning your Residential Management Professional (RMP®) or Master Property Manager (MPM®) designation. Then take your company to the next level of professionalism by becoming a Certified Residential Management Company (CRMC®). Use a press release (available at www.narpm.org/members/ resources/documents-forms.html in the Members Only section) to announce your achievement. Add the designation to your business cards, to your website, to your presentation materials-to every promotional aspect for your company. Then, explain the benefits of using a company who is committed to the industry and their client's success enough to earn a designation.

One of the most beneficial areas of participation for me personally has been my service on the national Board of Directors. Your level of active participation will grow and evolve over time. Today and every day, NARPM[®] needs your participation and your unique skills to ensure a future of increased benefits for every member. Please consider sending in your application to serve on the 2010 NARPM[®] Board of Directors and *Let the Magic Begin* in your NARPM[®] career!



Betty Fletcher, MPM®

RMP® is currently the 2009 Nominating Committee Chair and a NARPM® designation class instructor. She has served in various positions on the Board and committees. She joined NARPM® in 1999, and is the founding president and an active member of the Central Arkansas Chapter. Betty's company, Fletcher Property Management, Inc., is the first CRMC® in Arkansas.

Apply for the 2010 Board of Directors at www.narpm.org/ members/get-involved/ apply.html.

LEGISLATIVE Scoop

KEEPING OUR MEMBERS CURRENT ON THE NEWEST INDUSTRY LAWS AND POLICIES NATIONWIDE.



Carolyn Rogers, MPM® RMP® has managed properties in Colorado Springs since 1983. She is past president of the Colorado Springs Chapter, and is serving on the National Governmental Affairs Committee and the Long Range Planning Committee. All Seasons, LLC currently manages approximately 400 doors.

Fannie Mae Ruling

The below article was written in January for the March issue of the *Residential Resource*, therefore, by time of publication, there could be many answers and solutions to some of the thoughts below.

BACKGROUND

Sometime in mid-December there was an announcement from Fannie Mae that they were suspending foreclosure sales on occupied single-family homes and halting evictions on those properties through January 9, 2009. Renters would be allowed to stay in their homes even if their homes were foreclosed on. They estimate that 4,000 renters live in properties currently foreclosed on by Fannie Mae. Fannie Mae owned 67,500 properties in foreclosure at the end of September, and most of those were owner-occupied. Under the new policy, former owners will most likely not be eligible to rent homes they lost in foreclosure.

Per the *Washington Post*, apparently the rule comes after Fannie Mae caved under pressure from a Connecticut legal aid group to end efforts to evict tenants who are able to pay their monthly bills but whose landlords have lost their buildings to foreclosure. At that time, Fannie Mae placed a moratorium on evictions until January 9, 2009, and planned to issue a policy to reach out to tenants in foreclosed properties, either by signing new leases or by helping them relocate. The details could vary by state and property.

The date of January 9, 2009 was extended until the end of January which would allow for the new National Real Estate Owned (REO) Rental Policy to be fully operational prior to the suspension concluding. This policy will cover not only residents of singlefamily homes, but also two- to four-unit properties, condos, co-ops, and manufactured housing. Eligible renters will be offered a new month-to-month lease with Fannie Mae or financial assistance for their transition to new housing should they choose to vacate the property. The properties must meet state laws and local code requirements for a rental property. The plan is that Fannie Mae will manage the properties through a real estate broker or a property management company. The renters would be offered a month-to-month lease or financial assistance to move. Renters would be asked to pay market rent, but would not be required to pay security deposits in connection with this program.

A spokesman for Fannie Mae said, "While it may be sometimes tougher for us to sell a property when people are in it, we understand that lots of people are in tough situations right now. If the tenant wants to stay in their home, we'll make that happen. If they want to move out, in many cases we'll help them pay for the move."

Last year, the House passed a measure that would require the new owner of a foreclosed property to inform renters at least 90 days before an eviction. That bill failed to pass the Senate. Law enforcement officers in some states have refused to evict residents of foreclosed properties.

So far, every state varies on how long the foreclosure process takes and what tenant rights are in a foreclosure. Some states have already passed legislation giving renters a grace period, ranging from 30 days or more to stay in a property after it has been sold in foreclosure.

NARPM® INVOLVEMENT

As you may or may not know, NARPM[®] President, Fred Thompson, MPM[®] RMP[®], immediately sent a letter to the Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae) and other interested parties to promote NARPM[®] as an industry leader in residential property management nationwide, and to offer our support and counsel as they develop their program to avoid the displacement of renters in foreclosed properties. As of mid-January, Fred has not had a response, but has been assured that the right person will get the letter to review.

I think a good portion of NARPM[®] members have a policy that, upon notification of foreclosure, the tenant is given notice and the security deposit is returned in full and, in many cases, help is given to re-locate these tenants. I have even heard of forgiving the last month's rent to allow them extra money to find another place. Of course, this would all need to be in the property management agreement, or at least something in writing from the owner signifying their approval.

MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

Below are some opinions on the above from a quick poll taken in January with some members from the Colorado Springs Chapter.

"I believe that once Fannie Mae becomes the legal owner of the property they have the right to do what they want with it. This would include leasing the property to the existing occupants while they are trying to sell. It is probably in Fannie Mae's best interest to retain any existing tenants for cash flow and for the protection of the property until it is sold, given current marketing conditions."

"Tenants can vacate the property without any liability when title transfers since the foreclosure wipes out any leases that have not been recorded prior to the lien that has been foreclosed." (It would be rare to find a recorded lease, and very rare to find one that was recorded prior to the trust deed that secured the foreclosing lien.)

"If you believe in private property ownership rights, then I think you have to say that Fannie Mae can make its own rules once they own the property. Their fiduciary responsibility is to their bond holders, not to any existing occupants' management companies."

"I see nothing but new possibilities for all of us. Fannie Mae may be creating a new precedent with banks as an alternative to selling homes under market and creating a cash flow that they never considered in the past."

"I'll take a few hundred to manage."

"According to the NARPM[®] blast that just came through, they will be working with a property manager and not requiring deposits, but I think I would still suggest that my tenants move on."

"It would be nice if the current management company continued with the property on Fannie Mae's behalf. We have an existing relationship with the tenant, knowledge of property condition at move-in, and possess a security deposit to protect Fannie Mae's interest. Fannie Mae wouldn't have to set up a temporary entity to manage the properties. If they set up a temporary branch it would probably cost more than our fee." (Once set up, this quasi-government entity would never go away). "I am not sure what you are asking, but these are my current thoughts on the foreclosures. The property would be for sale so it would be a month-to-month rental; it doesn't do a whole lot for the tenant as they would have to move as soon as it is sold. Based on the postings, they would have 2-3 months to move and find a new place. I will personally still suggest that they do so. We don't know who the listing agent will be or who they will be paying rent to. The landlord would be Fannie Mae. I cannot see that they [Fannie Mae] will sign contracts with us to manage the properties. With that said, if they have been good tenants I will do my best to help them find a place. That way I can return their deposit and be done with the property. I do not think it will be easy for the tenant to get deposits back from Fannie Mae, and don't want to put a tenant of mine in that position. It's bad enough that the foreclosure happened on my watch."

"I think it is just plain wrong. It is further eroding private property rights. I certainly sympathize with those tenants that, through no fault of their own, find themselves suddenly evicted from their home; however, this legislation is NOT the way to deal with the problem."

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

By the time this article comes out, it is very likely most of us will have experienced this new Fannie Mae ruling to one degree or another, especially if Freddie Mac follows suit. It is also possible that the below concerns/questions will be answered by then as well, but nonetheless, here are some questions to ponder:

• Initially, how would we even know if a property we are managing is on a Fannie Mae loan?

Continued on page 23.



For additional information on Fannie Mae and press releases relating to foreclosures and the rental industry, continue to check out the Legislative area of www.narpm.org.

Updates will also be sent out to the membership by e-mail. Be sure your preferences are set to always allow incoming e-mails from legislativinfo@narpm. org.





Nancy Jackson, RMP[®] is the broker/owner of Salefish Properties in Boynton Beach, FL. She joined NARPM[®] in 2004, before signing up any clients, and took as many educational courses as possible. She has attended every national convention since Baltimore, and received her RMP® designation in Scottsdale. Recently, Nancy joined the Long Range Planning Committee. She is an alumnus of University of Florida.

Magical Chapter Memories Travels with Minnie

Hello everyone! Minnie Mouse here with edition two of my travels (see last month's issue in the Members Only area of www.narpm.org for the first edition). I hope you had a lovely holiday and hope that 2009 is off to a fantastic start for you and your business. I am learning a lot about property management tagging along with Nancy to various appointments and property visits. I could go on and on about that, but I would rather tell you about my social calendar!

During December, Nancy and I attended a REALTOR[®] gathering and a Toys for Tots event. I steered clear of the toy collection area because I was afraid I would end up getting adopted by the Marines. As it was, many people kept asking why Nancy was carrying me around instead of putting me in the collection area. This was a great introduction and gave Nancy an opportunity to explain our mission and inform real estate sales agents about your organization—NARPM[®]. Nancy and I posed with many of the people we spoke with—have you ever met a shy REALTOR[®]? They just love to get their picture taken!

Nancy and I also attended the Treasure Coast Chapter's holiday luncheon where we met up with many friends that we hadn't seen since the Kauai Convention. It was delightful! After we had a tasty morsel, the chapter allowed Nancy a few minutes to share our story—how Nancy came to be my handler, and how much fun it is to attend a national convention. We encouraged everyone to block their calendars now for the Orlando Convention in October.

We have many opportunities to share the NARPM[®] magic in the coming months, so stay tuned for more of my travels!



Annette Gray and Debra Baumann from Toys for Tots.



Candy Brueggemann, Kim Stevens, and Barb Sieker from Toys for Tots pose with Nancy and Minnie



Treasure Coast Chapter of NARPM® Holiday Luncheon



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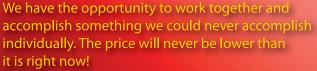
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As more and more of us subscribe to Rental Home Pros, search engine rankings improve and we will experience several additional benefits:

- 1. It's becomes a destination site; A very inexpensive and effective way to lease your properties.
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- 3. Access to reliable market data enables us to recognize the market conditions and make adjustments more quickly than others
- 4. NARPM's published marketing updates generate public awareness, creation more demand for services of NARPM members
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is a comprehensive database of available rental properties and property managers throughout the United States. Work together with us to make it the best investment in your business that you ever made.

CHAPTER Spotlight

SHEDDING SOME LIGHT ON THE EXCELLENT NARPM® CHAPTERS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES.



Linda C. "Dusty" Woodstock, RMP[®] has been a REALTOR® in Hawaii since 1979, forming Woodstock Properties, Inc. in 1990. She holds a BA from the University of Hawaii, and has obtained CRB, CRS®, GRI, and RMP® designations. Dusty has a passion for many areas of real estate, and believes that you can hone your skills in anything that you have a passion to do your best. She currently oversees the management of over 200 properties on the island of Oahu.

For ideas on topics and guests to speak at your chapter meetings, have your chapter leaders visit the Chapter Leader section of the Members Only area on www.narpm.org.

Oahu Chapter

December is a month of social events, parties given by your company, your friends, your personal organizations, and your family and relatives. You look forward to seeing the people you have not seen all year, and sharing stories and laughter. On the island of Oahu in Hawaii, the NARPM® Oahu Chapter's Christmas Party is one you don't want to miss. With over 100 members in attendance, the Christmas Party Luncheon Committee makes sure that everyone will have fun. Each year, this committee comes up with at least ten games for everyone to play before, during, and after the luncheon, and everyone goes home with at least one gift.

This year was no different, except that we had Tatiana Montez of Nakamoto Realty, LLC as emcee. Anyone who knows Tatiana knows that this gal has absolutely no inhibitions and packs a wallop of a performance when it comes to impromptu speaking. For three hours, this lady had us in stitches. When part of the room hollered that she wasn't calling on the hands that went up in their sections, she announced, "No, I have eyes in the back of my head *and* on both sides... I see all hands!"

Everyone who walked into the ballroom was given a packet and told to walk around to the different tables and start playing the games. Every table had a decorated Christmas tree, made by different NARPM[®] members, and people were to judge the best tree. Another game had teams of two people blowing through straws to move little felt balls across white padding (to look like snow) into little colored cups or little mailboxes in a 2-minute event. In another game, people sat with a clipboard of paper balanced on their heads with one hand and a pencil in the other. They were commanded to draw (in the following order) a Christmas tree, a fireplace with a mantle on the left side of the tree, a star atop the tree, flames in the fireplace, presents under the tree, stockings hanging from the mantle, etc. Raffle tickets were continuously drawn for prizes. As table numbers were called, people would go to the tree and choose a gift. (All party attendees were encouraged to bring a gift valued at \$20 to place under the tree, three cans of

food for the Hawaii Food Bank, and small toiletries for the River of Life Mission.)

The final highlight of the day was when each table was given newspaper, toilet tissue, and tape, and were told to choose a member at the table who would agree to be made into a human snowman. By this time, the crowd was in hysterics and when we were told it was time to go home, no one wanted to leave! There is something wonderful about Christmas time—being with friends, expressing your joy, and experiencing the gift of sharing.

Aside from our annual Christmas party, each month the Oahu Chapter hosts a luncheon meeting with a guest speaker who will give us either educational or motivational lectures, or call-to-action legislative concerns. (For ideas on topics and guests to speak at your chapter meetings, have your chapter leaders visit the Chapter Leader section of the Members Only area on www.narpm.org. There is a wealth of resources available to you!)

Our chapter was formed in 2004 with a few members that had attended the national conventions and saw that there were speakers with professionalism in our industry. This was a new concept. The property managers in our state were familiar with the local real estate association and their Board seminars, conferences, and professional speakers, but for the most part, all the speakers had an emphasis on sales and listings. Now, for the first time, we were being presented with speakers from around the country who were speaking our language!

I am sure that I speak from a common base when I say that, once we found out about NARPM[®], we embraced this organization with outstretched hands! As REALTORS[®] in Hawaii, we have friendly competition, but it is as though we are all in a small town and most of us know each other from many years in the real estate industry. And, now that we are part of NARPM[®], those of us in property management know who we are and readily call on others if we have a concern. We feel like we have a home where we belong. No wonder the Oahu Chapter is the largest chapter in the nation!



































Rob Massey, Jr., CPM[®] has served as a local chapter president for NARPM[®], the Institute of Real Estate Management, and the Apartment Association in his hometown of Louisville, KY. He has taught several property management classes and managed nearly 1,000 apartments and houses before scaling back his property management company to pursue the national Internet listing service he founded known as RentalHouses. com. He served as vice president of industry development for Rentals.com for one year subsequent to the acquisition of RentalHouses. com by Consumer Source in January of 2007. Currently, he serves as a consultant for Rentals.com, focusing his efforts on industry and association relations for the company. Rob can be reached at rob.massey@rentals.com.

Aiding in Profitability Setting Minimum Fees

I can't remember how long it took, but it was definitely longer than it should have been before I realized how much less profitable lower-end rental houses are to manage. Understandably, when one is new to the industry and hungry for revenue, many are less choosy by necessity than perhaps when their companies become more established. Setting geographic boundaries for properties to manage such as limiting locations to certain zip codes can assist with reducing management accounts in undesirable areas, but even this technique does not eliminate lower priced rental houses.

We have two Ford assembly plants in my hometown market of Louisville, Kentucky. Since Ford workers are paid very well, companies seem to freely extend credit to these workers. A lower-end rental house that I managed for years in close proximity to a Ford assembly plant frequently resulted in a plant worker applicant, but interestingly the credit history was usually marginal at best. Many times the applicant would have been employed there for years with substantial income but with a bankruptcy in their past. The experience of managing this house and other similar ones was very frustrating for me. It caused me to review the disadvantages of handling lower-end homes. Upon closer scrutiny, my strong suspicions were confirmed. My findings about the management of these homes were as follows:

- Significantly more rejected applications. Rejecting an applicant is never a fun thing to do, not to mention its counter-productivity for getting the property leased. The rejection rate was several times that of our more upscale homes.
- Significantly more evictions. In addition to it being an admission of a management misstep, everyone usually loses with an eviction. The resident is unhappy. The owner is unhappy. The neighbors to the house are usually negatively impacted and it places an extra burden on the

management office—not to mention the sour taste it leaves in our client's mouth about our company. Can it get any worse? Yes!

- Funds available to properly manage and makeready the rental house, especially after an eviction, are typically scarce with this type of owner. Without the funds to properly prepare the property for rent, our ability to seek a new resident is crippled or, worse yet, we may now have an owner who owes us money that he or she doesn't have.
- The neighborhoods tend to be less desirable. This brings into the picture another set of possible difficulties including personal safety issues to ourselves, our personnel, and our residents. Vandalism tends to run higher, and getting qualified applicants is a greater challenge.
- The fees are typically lower. Most management companies base their monthly commission on gross rent received. So after all the time, expense, and bullets to our egos we are going to get paid less! What's wrong with this picture?

The opposite is true with the management of more upscale homes. We have fewer rejected applications, a lesser number of evictions, fewer issues with owners, a more desirable area of town, and we usually receive higher fees.

So, how do we best encourage the management of more upscale homes and discourage the lower-end ones? The answer that I found was by the setting of a minimum management fee. Once that is established, we can easily determine the break-even rent, below which the minimum management fee kicks in. Arrive at the break-even rent amount by taking what you consider to be your minimum desired management fee and dividing your percentage rate by that number. For purposes of an example, if your normal manage-

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Move Out Notes	condition unchanged vs move in 2 dings on outside of door			
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beige Move Out Notes	Faint smell of dog by north window			
wove our wores	Showing wear			
Walls	Good	Repair, Poor	Charge	
Move Out Notes				
Windows - screen	Good	Good		
and storm Window Treatments	Clean, Good	Good	+	
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Outlets	Good	Good	1 1	
Kitchen - Eating Area				
Flooring	Fair	Fair		
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Cary Efurd, MPM[®] RMP[®]

is a licensed broker in the state of Texas with over ten years in the property management profession. Cary is one of the top 15 listing agents for Keller Williams Realty, is part of the Million Dollar Club, and was named Property Manager of the Year in 2007. Team Efurd has won Top Producer Awards in Units Listed and Gross Commissioned Income categories at Keller Williams. Cary served as 2007 vice-chair and 2008 chair of the MetroTex Association of REALTORS® Leasing and Property Management Committee. He is a past president of the Greater Dallas Chapter of NARPM® and, in 2005, received the President's Award.

The RVP Bulletin

In this article, I wanted to share with you the attitudes and steps that the Greater Dallas Chapter took to go from a chapter in denial to achieving Chapter Excellence in 2005, 2006, and 2007, and finally Chapter of the Year in 2008. It can happen for your chapter too! One person is all it takes to get the ball rolling.

My mentor in NARPM[®] is Eddie Davis, MPM[®] RMP[®]. Without Eddie, our chapter may have died. This article is dedicated to one of the truest men and friends I have known in my life—"Fast" Eddie.

- Begin by doing all of the work yourself if you have to. If you are it, you are it. Accept the challenge and don't worry. Others will come along as your efforts take form and revitalization begins.
- 2. Have meetings that people want to come to.
- 3. People like recognition and praise. Give it to them!
- 4. Never criticize, condemn, or complain. It doesn't help. You become just like the complainers if you do.
- 5. Plan six months in advance who will speak or teach at your meetings.
- 6. Send out e-mail blasts to let the members know you have something going on at all times. Be creative with your announcements, and add a photo or two of the speaker and/or topic.
- 7. Promote every chapter event a minimum of four weeks prior to the event.
- 8. Be the chapter voice without mentioning yourself. With all of your might, try to take the words "I" and "me" out of every e-mail, every conversation, and every other form of communication you make. It can be done. Don't even sign your name on an e-mail. They know who you are and if they don't, they will soon track you down to meet you out of wonderment.
- The only time to use "I" and "me" are when you are offering yourself in service. It should sound something like, "I will do it." Or, "Let me do it."
- 10. As you do your work and give sincere recognition and praise to others, you will soon be recognized

and praised in more ways than you can now imagine. You will be a star in everybody's eyes. That is a promise!

- 11. Again, it is important to think and plan ahead. It doesn't take much. Find potential speakers and call them. They will come. Get topical speakers on such things as foreclosures, the rental market, how to buy and sell property management accounts, and more. Have a panel of experts from the general membership and use a moderator to ask topical questions of the experts on topics like building a company from scratch or how to enforce hard-to-enforce lease clauses.
- 12. Remember, when members are called upon to be an expert, they will perk up and feel important. That is how you want them to feel! NARPM[®] members *are* experts!
- 13. Reiterating, you may be the only one working, but don't worry. More than one will step up and say, "Hey you! How can I help?" People will want to be around you. They will support you.
- 14. Do it for others. Because of you, others will gain new energy. They may not even recognize what spurred their new energy, but you will know and feel good about it.
- 15. Use the NARPM[®] Chapter Excellence Checklist. It will give direction, relieve stress, and give you ideas. It will also keep you on the road to revitalization and chapter recognition.

All of this and more is what our 2008 chapter president and 2005 Rocky Maxwell Award recipient, Dave Christensen, RMP[®], did for us. He practically did it single-handedly in 2008, but would never admit to it. Dave is a perfect example of giving others recognition, taking none for himself, and staying focused though he was often alone at the helm.

If you follow these helpful tips, sooner rather than later, every meeting you have will be full. Each meeting will be rewarding. You will be esteemed beyond belief having never called out your own name. Southeast: R. Scott Corbridge, MPM[®] RMP[®] Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi.

Southwest: Cary Efurd, MPM[®] RMP[®] Utah, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico.

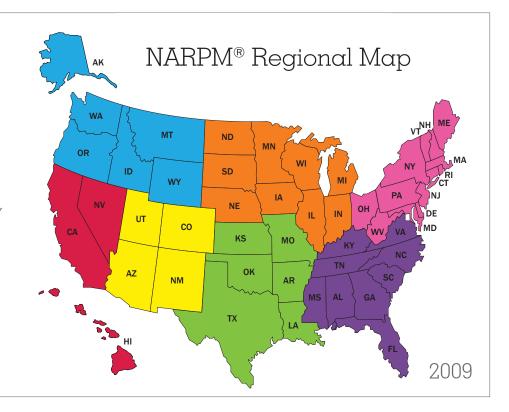
South Central: Stephen Foster, MPM® RMP® Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana.

Northeast: Jayci Grana, RMP[®] Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Washington DC, Ohio, West Virginia.

North Central: Jayci Grana, RMP[®] North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana.

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Expanding Your Business Find the Right Technology

When it comes to expanding your business, there is much to consider—the right market, the right team, but what about the right technology?

NARPM® affiliate, DIY Real Estate Solutions, talked to Randy Halsne, NARPM® member and president and CEO of Edmond Premier Real Estate Services, LLC, about his experience expanding his business and how the right technology is helping him prepare for future growth.

Why did you decide to expand your business?

I was in the construction and development field for more than thirty years. About five years ago, while watching my 401k decline, I decided to aggressively invest in real estate to reach my retirement goals. I began to actively research the nation for the best areas to buy single-family residences. I looked for areas with growing communities, a good rent ratio, and steady appreciation, and settled on greater Oklahoma City. I also teamed up with my son, Nat Halsne. Together, we grew the business from the 40 properties I owned to 160 under management. Now, with the right tools and team in place, I am ready to grow my business to three times that.

Why is the right technology important?

Nat and I are not accountants or technology experts. We're investors; we're salesmen. We had to replace our generic accounting solution with a property management system, but we didn't want to add new hassles like software maintenance and data conversion. We had to find something simple so we could get up and running quickly. In the end, we went from ground zero to fully operational in a few days because we had the right technology in place from a provider that understood the importance of a quick conversion.

Ultimately, as technology advances, our own systems have to advance as well. Not only because competitors will be moving in that direction, but more importantly because clients expect it. They expect immediate answers and online communication and integration.

Why did you decide to transition from installed software to a Web-based solution?

I knew I would be on the road 80–90 percent of my work day. I wanted to be able to get the data I needed at the airport, at Starbucks, in any city, from any computer. The Web is crucial when you are in the business of responding to owners. The Web gives you total control, anytime, anyplace. All you need is an outlet and a connection. The Web is universal.

How does a Web-based solution work?

We're all used to installing software on our computer; we're comfortable with that. But once you do that, you can only access your data from that computer. The appeal of the Web is that you can get your data from any computer. All you need is an Internet connection. Think about it: you're on the Web anyway—accessing your e-mail, credit screening, Internet advertising, even Mapquest. Your business is already plugged into the Internet in so many ways. A Web-based solution simply brings it all together.

Were you concerned about security?

I gave it serious thought, but let's look at the reverse. If you have installed software, what do you do when the power goes off in your office, your computer breaks, or your laptop is stolen? You could easily be without your data for 24 hours, maybe even 48, if that happened. With a Web solution, all you need is to get to another computer, which is easy enough to do these days, and your data will be right there.

Do your due diligence of course; look at the history and commitment of your vendor. They should keep a back-up copy of your data "off-site" on





Randy Halsne has over 30 years of experience in construction and development. Today, he serves as president and CEO of Edmond Premier Real Estate Services, LLC, based in Edmond, Oklahoma. His son, Nat, is the group's broker/agent. Their company uses DIY Real Estate Solutions Web-based software.

TECHNOLOGY Matters

SHEDDING SOME LIGHT ON THE MANY MYSTERIES OF OUR FAST-PACED HIGH TECH WORLD.



Kerry Meade is COO of PropertyBoss Solutions, a provider of property management software solutions that empower your business through increased occupancy rates, reduced operating costs, and improved management visibility. He has over fourteen years experience working with technology firms focused on improving the profitability of high growth businesses. For more information about Kerry or PropertyBoss Solutions, visit propertyboss.com or call Kerry at 864-297-7661 x25.

All Accounted For

The start of a new year is often the time we stop to take inventory of our business, our lives, and what lies ahead. And, as much as we may want to ignore it, it is also a time to close out the books on the previous year. Depending upon how well you've been accounting for your business throughout the year determines just how arduous this process will be.

One question I hear time and time again from property managers is, "How can I reduce the headaches that come with maintaining my books?" Fortunately, today's property managers have some very powerful options at their disposal to do just that. Now don't get me wrong, I'm not suggesting you'll become giddy about debits and credits if you avail yourself of these resources, but you can certainly transform the accounting side of your business from a burden into a tool that can make your business both stronger and more agile.

ONE DECISION, MANY IMPLICATIONS

The choice of an accounting solution has many far reaching implications. If you are like most property managers, this is not the type of decision you want to reevaluate on a regular basis. It takes a lot of time, energy, and effort to get up to speed on an accounting solution and, once you get your internal systems running smoothly, the last thing you want to do is rip it out and start all over again. In fact, it is common for most property management companies to stay on the same accounting platform for three to seven years or longer after the initial decision is made. Change for the right reasons can be great, but change for the sake of change can be both painful and expensive, which makes this decision all the more important.

One of the first decisions a property manager is faced with regarding their accounting platform is whether they want what is referred to as a "best in breed" accounting solution such as QuickBooks, that is focused primarily on accounting, or an "internal system" that is a component of another system—such as their property management software. Based on my experience, there are three key areas property managers should evaluate when making this decision.

0 NOT YOUR FATHER'S ACCOUNTING PACKAGE

For property managers that are part of a growing and actively-managed organization, manual ledger accounts, whether on paper or in a spreadsheet such as Excel, just don't make the cut. With all the complexities of multiple legal entities, varying ownership percentages, and a seemingly endless flow of requests to know "where we are with the numbers," nonautomated solutions are truly not an option. So, the first question I recommend property managers ask themselves is, "What functionality do I need to support my business?"

Particularly when comparing between an internal system and a best-of-breed solution, be certain to take a hard look at the flexibility of the system. Key questions you should ask include:

- What do I need to run my business?
- What would I change about the way I run my business if my accounting solution supported it?
- Does this solution truly make it easier for me to run my business?

In general, internal systems tend to offer accounting features that reflect the business processes reflected in the primary property management application. Given that they were developed as part of a single solution, there should be fairly good integration between property management and accounting functionality.

Best-in-breed solutions, however, tend to have greater depth in functionality, particularly as it applies to different ownership structures, classes, and detailed tracking information. By focusing on the accounting function, best-in-breed solutions generally handle a much wider range of business types and needs.

ACCOUNTING, REDEFINED

Another key area we recommend property managers consider is what other areas of the business could be improved through the choice of an accounting solution. Particularly in the current economic environment, there is a definite trend to reduce unnecessary costs and increase efficiency within the organization. One area that both internal and best-of-breed solutions should be able to improve is the tracking and collecting of rents and payment of vendors, owners, and other parties. In addition to tracking these items, check to see whether the solution you are considering can integrate online with your financial institution and perform online payments. Best-of-breed solutions also tend to offer the capability to handle payroll for your employees, track vendor and employee timesheets, and even process, track, and manage shipments from your organization. In addition to reducing costs, many of these extended services can also allow you to spend more time focused on growing your business rather than just accounting for it.

❸ A LITTLE HELP FROM YOUR FRIENDS

Clients have repeatedly told me that the one area that they greatly underestimated during the decision process surrounding the selection of an accounting solution was availability of outside resources to assist them as they run their business. Whether you manage your own accounting or rely on a professional accountant, you can probably appreciate that there is tremendous value to having a knowledgeable resource available when you have accounting-related questions. If you are just looking for advice, your choice of solution probably won't have that large of an impact as long as it can properly account for your business. However, if you want to be able to turn your books over to an accountant at year end, get assistance with taxes, or use a part-time resource on a regular basis, many property managers find it advantageous to have an accounting solution that accountants are already familiar with. For example, there are over 400 Quick-Books ProAdvisor accountants located within 100 miles of Atlanta alone!

BEST-OF-BREED OR INTERNAL?

There is no single "right" decision when it comes to selecting an accounting solution. The benefits that a best-of-breed solution provides along one set of criteria may be negligible if it doesn't seamlessly interface with your property management solution, or the single interface of an internal solution may not matter if it can't meet both your accounting and property management needs. In the end, you are best served by objectively looking at your requirements, your business, and the resources available to assist you. Making the best decision for your business can be both a satisfying and profitable endeavor!

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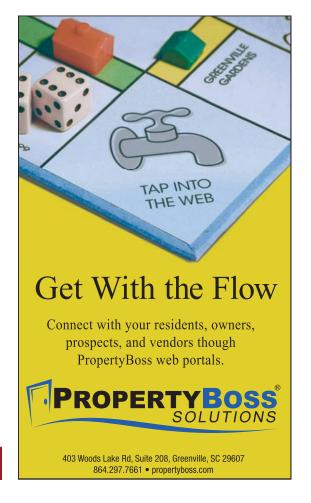
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Safer, Cleaner Environments It's Easy Being Green

Moving residents in and out of a condominium is a constant challenge for a property manager. And, in today's climate, there are other requests and concerns to consider—cost and environmental impact.

Fortunately, there are a few entrants in the moving arena that will not only cater to your every need, but also do it with the smallest carbon footprint possible without any additional costs.

When you hear the term "green moving," it might invoke images of packing your things in grass and bamboo baskets. Green moving simply means being conscientious of the environment and using methods that are not harmful to the earth. This alleviates any need to leave vehicles idling.

Other steps moving companies can take to lessen their carbon footprint are to use moving boxes made of 100 percent recycled materials, re-use boxes, install skylights and extra windows in warehouses and offices to provide natural light sources, eliminate unnecessary electrical use, and improve insulation to reduce the need for air conditioning and heating. In every business, employees should embrace the green movement recycling bottles, cans, and other materials in the office.

You may now question why a green moving company is a concern to property managers. Your

Set the right "green note" for your residents to use those recycling containers and help keep your sanitation bills with the city low.

The green theme has hit many industries, but it is just now beginning to become popular in the moving industry. And, the demand for green moving is sure to increase.

So why is it important for a moving company to be green, you might ask? Diesel fuel emits harmful toxins into our air and is responsible for the majority of cancer risk from outdoor air pollutants. Diesel particulate matter also contributes to more than 2,000 premature , deaths, asthma attacks, and other

deaths, asthma attacks, and other respiratory problems each year. These problems are exacerbated when large vehicles are left idling.

With biodiesel becoming more readily available, an important step for moving companies is to convert their fleet to run completely on biodiesel fuel. It is a cleaner burning fuel made from natural renewable sources such as vegetable oils. In addition, if batterypowered lift gates are installed on all trucks, movers can turn off vehicles while the lift gates are still in use. biggest assets are your buildings and your residents. When using a moving company that takes the extra steps to be more environmentally-friendly, you are also gaining a moving company that goes the extra mile. A property manager that provides the latest expertise to ensure their residents' move is stress-free and carbon-free will result in a great start to a new relationship. It will also set the right "green note" for your residents to use those recycling containers and help keep your sanitation bills with the city low.

So, the next time you are qualifying a moving company, check to see if they are taking any of these green steps and help grow the demand for green movers. We should all be looking for novel new ways to lessen our carbon footprint and make eco-conscious decisions. It's one easy step.



founder and president of NorthStar Moving Corporation, recently voted Citysearch "Best Mover" and "A" rated by the Better Business Bureau. NorthStar Moving Corporation has been moving residents in and out of buildings for over a decade. The company has redefined the moving industry as the first to offer eco-luxury moving services, elevating basic moving and storage services to a new, unparalleled level of customer service, customized care, and environmental consciousness.



Continued from page 14.

ment fee rate is eight percent (or .08) with a minimum management fee of \$100 per month, then your break-even rent is \$1,250. In this example, we are encouraging owners of properties that rent for \$1,250 per month or greater to be our clients. Understandably, some owners who have properties with lowerend rents may still want you to manage their properties, but at least you will be better compensated if you do.

To further encourage the establishment of new accounts from more upscale rental home owners, you could also impose a minimum leasing fee which is consistent with your break-even rent amount. This example assumes that your management fees are a percentage of the gross rents and that you charge a leasing fee that is somehow tied to the rent amount.

It is true that some portfolios are primarily made up of lower-end rental properties and the property managers are quite successful at managing these types of properties, but if your experience was like mine then I encourage you to analyze how much more you could be making by focusing on higher-end, easier to manage rental houses with the establishment of minimum fees.

The views expressed in this article by the author are his own and do not necessarily reflect the views of Rentals.com or its affiliates.

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Continued from page 9.

- What criteria would be required to be "the management company"?
- What would the management commission be?
- Is there a management agreement with Fannie Mae?
- Who is going to pay for repairs? If the property manager is required to pay for them up front, how long would it take to be reimbursed?
- What if the tenant won't allow showings?
- Will HVAC and major systems be checked?
- What would prevent the previous owner from putting in a family member as a tenant, allowing them to continue living there, and eventually get paid to leave?
- Will there be a standardized lease?
- Who carries the insurance, both property and liability on the property?
- What kind of authority would the property manager have if there are major repairs needed or habitability issues?
- Would the property manager be expected to pay out-of-pocket and, if so, what is the turn-around time for reimbursement?
- Whose name will be on the utilities?
- What if the tenants don't pay their utilities, creating frozen pipes, etc.?
- What is the pet policy? How detailed will it be? Pit Bulls? Ten cats?

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Never before has government gotten involved in the actual "rental" of private homes. We are entering unprecedented waters and there is much to be considered.

If the goal is to keep the properties rented, then paying tenants to re-locate only *creates* a vacancy. Of course tenants will stay until Fannie Mae owns the property because then they will be paid to move. Anyone would do the same.

If the goal is to alleviate stress on tenants for moving out of a property they can afford but is in foreclosure, what is the difference in giving them the 30-day notice at the foreclosure (or before if possible), or giving them a 30-day notice when Fannie Mae sells the house, and—using our tax dollars pays them to leave. I just don't see the rationale here. The tenant will have no vested interest in the property and no reason to maintain it because, eventually, they will have to move. The tendency would be to not allow sale showings because it only means they would need to move sooner.

In my opinion, Fannie Mae is opening up a Pandora's Box that will spiral into new scams and fraud. I think it will further hinder the recovery of the housing market. How sad that Fannie Mae did not confer with the professionals in the rental industry.

Continued from page 19.

another server and have many redundancies built into their system. That's what they're in the business to do. For me, I want to focus on growing my business instead of technology maintenance.

Do you have any other advice for those considering a business expansion? Talk to other people in the industry. Being a part of NARPM® has been great because it keeps me excited about my business. I really enjoy the Business Owners/Leaders list serve that NARPM® offers. It gets me going in the morning. The other owners are very helpful and responsive to questions. Talking to others in the industry inspires me.

MEMBERSHIP Growth

A WARM WELCOME TO ALL THE NEW MEMBERS WHO JOINED FROM DECEMBER 18 - JANUARY 21.



PROFESSIONAL MEMBERS

Nikki Amy Cole A.T. Smith & Company 8790 W Colfax Avenue, #103 Lakewood, CO 80215 303-233-3976

John Bailey Elite Properties of Maryland 1101 - B S Hanover Street Baltimore, MD 21230 410-332-0662

Kathy Bailey All Family Real Estate Inv., LLC 1624 Grove Street DI Marysville, WA 98270 360-691-9992

Jacob A. Beeson Beehive Property Management 1911 S Lindsay Road, #104 Mesa, AZ 85204 480-981-1430 Kristina Blair T-Square Properties 18500 156th Avenue NE, #104 Woodinville, WA 98072 425-485-1800

Jerusha Bookhamer Details Property Management 237 6th Street Bremerton, WA 98337 360-535-8104

Linda Boyd Advanced Realty Concepts 3520 Galley Road Colorado Springs, CO 80909 719-596-2121

Gordon Carpenter Rancho Mesa Properties 4550 Kearny Villa Road San Diego, CA 92129 858-531-1919

Federico O. Castillo, Jr. Western Real Prop. Mgmt. & Inv 728 Sands Way Folsom, CA 95630 510-367-7560

Shirley Copenhaver Century 21 Duncan & Assoc. 908 SW Gatlin Boulevard Port St Lucie, FL 34953 772-878-6131

Krista Craig Realty Mgmt. Assoc., CRMC[®] 4290 Chinden Blvd., Suite A Boise, ID 83714 208-377-8889

Susan Creedon Rincon Realty & Investment Co. 4703 N 1st Avenue Tucson, AZ 85718 520-721-7711

William C. Davis Monte Davis Realty, Inc. 9020 58th Drive E, #101 Lakewood Ranch, FL 34202 941-727-4422 Krisla W. DuPonte RE/MAX Honolulu 1357 Kapiolani Blvd., #870 Honolulu, HI 96814 808-951-3227

Amy Getz Professional Prop. Mgmt., Inc. 2685 Palmer Street, Suite B Missoula, MT 59808 406-721-8990

Ruby Gonzalez A.T. Smith & Company 8790 W Colfax Avenue, #103 Lakewood, CO 80215 303-233-3976

Margaret Good M.E. Good Realty, Inc. 1231 SE Port St. Lucie Blvd. Port St. Lucie, FL 34952 772-398-3232

Charles S. Goss Goss Management Co., LLC PO Box 22693 Little Rock, AR 72221 501-225-7968

Richard Greenwood Affordable Management 23811 Washington Avenue Murrieta, CA 92562 951-308-1917

Deryk Harper Key Locations Property Mgmt. 1035 Lake Windward Overlook Alpharetta, GA 30005 770-722-6922

Kenneth Hubert AIM Realty Management 5250 Pacific Street Rocklin, CA 95677 916-624-4000

Bobbi L. Huntington RE/MAX American Dream 620 S Main Street Bel Air, MD 21014 410-803-0900 Mary Hurd Summit Property Management PO Box 8975 Missoula, MT 59807 406-549-3929

Leland James Ohio REO Realty, LLC 5603 Darrow Road Hudson, OH 44236 330-528-3931

Marcy Kline Tucson's Choice Group, LLC 6885 N Oracle Rd. Bldg11 Ste B Tucson, AZ 85704 520-229-2050

Melissa Lofton Birdy Properties, LLC 601 NW Loop 410, #390 San Antonio, TX 78216 210-524-9400

Joshua S. Mitchell Realty Mgmt. Assoc., CRMC[®] 4290 Chinden Blvd., Suite A Boise, ID 83714 208-377-8889

Andrew L. Propst Park Place Property Mgmt. 5513 W Kendall Street Boise, ID 83706 208-377-3227

Sheri Reynolds New Horizon Realty & Prop. PO Box 5 East Lake, CO 80614 303-776-4922

Antoinette W. Russell Prudential Tropical Realty 2331 4th Street St. Petersburg, FL 33704 727-822-8686

Steven P. Schuster Metroplex Management 8708 Sumter Way Keller, TX 76248 817-431-3508 Christina Shaffer Residential Prop. Mgmt. of ID 8310 W. Ustick Road, #100 Boise, ID 83704 208-322-7979

Loree Smith LH Residential, LLC 4200 Express Way Missoula, MT 59808 406-327-1212

Mike Steward Long Term Rental Group PO BOX 953 Gulf Shores, AL 36547 251-967-1018

Jennifer Stock-Plum Missoula Property Mgmt. PO Box 17312 Missoula, MT 59808 406-251-8500

Robert A. Thomas PLT Property Management 9245 Laguna Springs Dr., #200 Elk Grove, CA 95758 916-217-9180 Michael Treadway Prism Realty, Inc. 8480 E Orchard Road, #1100 Greenwood Village, CO 80111 303-663-2426

Laura Wanca Absolute Realty 225 S Academy Boulevard Colorado Springs, CO 80910 719-201-5312

Tanya Watson Performance Realty Network 9951 Atlantic Blvd., #410 Jacksonville, FL 32225 904-992-0588

Justin T. Whitlatch Latta Real Estate Services, Inc. 1954 NW South Outer Road Blue Springs, MO 64015 816-228-3310

Laurel Wolf Century 21 IRP Realty 3300 NE Sugar Hill Drive Stuart, FL 34957 772-232-2100 J. Andrew Woodruff Stainless Properties 1740 Marion Street Denver, CO 80218 720-270-5511

SUPPORT STAFF

Cynde Cantorna Hawaii Kai Realty 377 Keahole Street, #211D Honolulu, HI 96825 808-395-8698

Cindy G. Loya Capital First Management 1070 N Cole Road Boise, ID 83704 208-378-1616

Whitney Perry Realty Mgmt. Assoc., CRMC[®] 4290 Chinden Blvd., Suite A Boise, ID 83714 208-377-8889

Kelli Rogers Austin Property Mgmt., Inc. PO Box 6497 Boise, ID 83707 208-336-5927

AFFILIATES

Tammy Moore Imeridian Corporation 2910 Enloe Street, Suite 105 Hudson, WI 54016 715-377-7644

Guy Seeklus e-Renter USA 4200 Meridian Street, #208 Bellingham, WA 98226 360-332-0078

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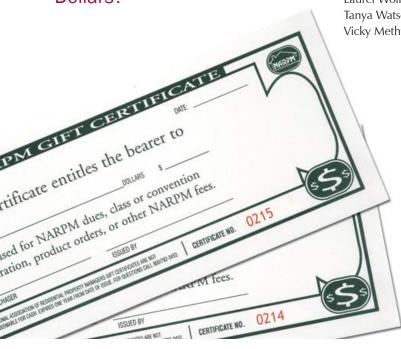
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