



A Condominium Management Company

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Please Join the Downtown Holiday Kick-off Festivities

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A Condominium Management is proud to host its fourth annual Hospitality Tent during the lighting ceremony of the “Big Bright Light Show and “Lagniappe” in downtown Rochester. Lagniappe (pronounced *LAN-yap*) is a small gift given to a customer by a merchant at the time of a purchase (such as a 13th doughnut when buying a dozen), or more broadly, something given or obtained gratuitously or by way of good measure. It’s always a great time to participate in the downtown Rochester merriment, chat with your property manager, and meet the new members of the A Condo office staff.

The event takes place on Monday, November 26th. Our Hospitality Tent will be located at our office on the corner of Fourth and East Streets, and will be hosted from 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. During this event, we will provide hot chocolate to keep everyone toasty warm as they peruse the local shops snapping up free goodies and taking in the beautiful display of Rochester’s “Big Bright Light Show”. While the hot chocolate and merriment are free, any donations received are provided to the Rochester Neighborhood House. This wonderful charity provides food, clothing, and financial assistance to needy local families all year long.

Santa Claus is Coming to Town....

Rochester’s Holiday Parade is set for Sunday, December 2nd, and starts at 1:45pm.

This annual parade has taken place for decades and is always a main attraction. You won’t want to miss out on the fun of this wonderful event.



New Faces, New Names



Carrie Smeznik
Management Coordinator

As with all companies, staffing changes are inevitable. Although we are sad to see him go, we are excited for Robert (Robbie) Vrooman in his new endeavor as a Certified Public Accountant. He has done his fair share of homework, and is joining an Accounting Agency where his years of schooling will lead him to expanded professional horizons. We also bid a fond farewell to Jerri Belavy; though her tenure with A Condo was limited, she added much value to our organization.

However, we would like to introduce to you, Carrie Smeznik, Management Coordinator. Carrie has an extensive administrative background, with more than 20 years of experience in customer service and office management.

Please join A Condo in extending a warm welcome to Carrie. We are impressed with her credentials, and believe that you will be also.

Was Your Home Built Before the Year 2000?

If you live in a home that was built in the 1990's, 1980's, or is a conversion of an older apartment building, many of you have 80% efficient furnaces within your home that are original to the construction of your building. As the furnaces originally installed within your home are approaching the end of their life expectancy, you may already be considering purchasing a replacement furnace sometime in the next few years. With the upcoming change in federal law, you may want to consider replacing your furnace now, especially if you live in a building that has two or more levels of ranch style homes stacked upon another.

Effective May 1, 2013, federal law will no longer permit the sale of 80% efficient furnaces in northern states, including Michigan. When this law becomes effective, the minimum efficiency requirement for furnaces in Michigan will be 90%. While upgrading your furnace to save energy while heating your home may be a good financial move, you need to keep in mind that the location of the furnaces within some condominium homes are not on perimeter walls, and 90% efficiency (or greater) furnaces require direct venting to the outdoors, making installation more difficult. The original 80% efficient furnaces and water heaters are vented through a flue to the roof that is typically shared by the homes that are stacked upon one another. In the future, if you need to install a 90% efficient furnace there will be complications with the installation as you will not be able to use the existing flue. In order to install a new 90% efficient furnace, you will need to install PVC intake and exhaust tubes. If you live in a building that has homes stacked on top of one another, this becomes even more complicated if you live on the first floor of your building, as you will need to vent the furnace horizontally to the nearest perimeter wall.

To do so, the ceiling will likely need to be removed to allow access to chases between the joists to install the necessary intake and exhaust tubing to the side of the building. Further complicating the issue is the fact that the new PVC tubing needs to be pitched 1/4"/foot, making the space above ceiling even more limited.



"The good news is, homeowners are actually reading our association newsletter. The bad news is, they are starting to ask questions."

Additionally, anytime you penetrate the common area walls, penetrate the building exterior, or change the exterior look of the building, you are required to request and receive advanced permission from the Association Board of Directors to ensure that the aesthetic and structural integrity of the building is maintained.

As this change in federal law is not well known at this time, I bring this to your attention so that you can do your own research, and make an informed decision on whether or not to purchase a new 80% efficient furnace before the May 1, 2013 deadline.

The Importance of an Educated Board

~ excerpt from Mariah Page, CMCA, AMS, PCAM article in Community Association News

Whether you live in a 40 unit community, or a 400 unit community, as a Board Member, it's imperative to understand your community and your role as a Board member. Each community has unique needs as well as specific Master Deeds and Bylaws for which each owner is to abide by. It's up to the Board to enforce those rules equally, fairly, and fully. It's also important to understand the needs of the community, as the demographics play a large role in how easy it will be to enforce the rules and policies.

For instance, if you live in a community where many residents have pets and the community documents don't clarify the rules regarding pet ownership, then restrictions to owning a pet would not be in the best interest of the owners of the community. However, defining what is expected of pet owners, including

pet maintenance, clean up, pet registrations, limits on the number of pets and how to handle aggressive pets is extremely important, not only in maintaining harmony within the community, but also making sure the pet owners and non-pet owners concerns are all taken into consideration.

It's also important to understand the maintenance needs of your community. It's the Board's fiduciary responsibility to maintain the common elements of the community to the best of their ability. Even when the current economic climate may not be favorable for an increase in assessments, it's important to create a budget that balances the maintenance needs of the community and not the financial needs of the owners. This is a difficult decision for any Board member; after all, it's their money too. But, if

you manage your community like a business, and don't look at it on a personal level, it's much easier to make tough decisions for the benefit of the community as a whole.

No matter how large your community, or how long you've been on the board, it's always helpful to educate yourself. Contact your local Township or City for condominium education classes. Community Associations Institute offers some excellent classes, books, articles and seminars for new or seasoned Board members alike. The more knowledge you have, the more prepared you will be to manage your community with the confidence and ease.



'Tis the Season...Happy Holidays!

With the Holiday season fast approaching, it is a good idea to be well prepared for your festive celebrations.

The last thing you want is for your heat to go out, your fireplace excreting toxic fumes, or your holiday lights not lighting.

It's good advice to have your furnace checked and cleaned, ensure your smoke detectors are working properly, and complete regular fireplace maintenance (i.e., cleaning, chimney sweeping, fire extinguisher check and/or replacement).

Other factors to be considered to ensure a safe holiday season are:

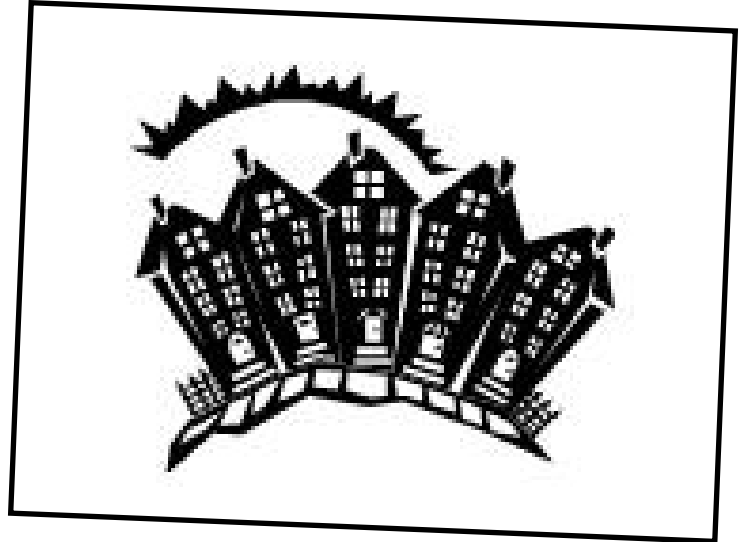
- * Make sure to water fresh trees frequently, and check their water level daily to prevent drying and premature falling of the needles
- * Do not leave menorah or dinner centerpiece candles unattended
- * Regarding lighting, never overcrowd electrical outlets; make sure to follow the manufacture's specifications and always check for frayed wires.

A Condominium Management Company wishes you the best of the best for the 2012 Holiday Season and the upcoming New Year!



P. O. Box 81561
Rochester, MI 48308-1561
Office: (248) 650 - 8983
Fax: (248) 453 - 5771
Email: Info@ACondoMgt.com

www.ACondoMgt.com



Your Management Team Members:

Jason Carey
Owner

JCarey@ACondoMgt.com

(248) 453-5798 Direct Dial

Devlin Carey
Property Manager

DCarey@ACondoMgt.com

(248) 453-5794 Direct Dial

Carrie Smeznik
Management Coordinator

CSmeznik@ACondoMgt.com

(248) 650-8983 Main Office

Bylaws Corner: Am I Covered?

Our office receives many calls from both new, potential buyers and long time residents regarding insurance. Is this covered by you? Does the coverage go to the drywall, the primer, or the paint? What happens if there is a fire?

The answers are not something we can give you over the phone. Your best bet when purchasing a condo-

minium insurance policy is to read the Bylaws for your community. These documents state what is and is not covered by the Association. And, each Association's rules vary, so it is practically impossible to summarize what you should and should not have covered.

The best advice we can offer you is to take your Bylaws to your preferred agent and

have them decipher the legal-ease. This way you obtain the best, most comprehensive, and most affordable insurance for your unit.

When living in a condominium unit, there is always the chance that when you share a wall, pipes, or live under another resident, accidents can happen. Better to be safe than sorry!

What Else Does A Condominium Management Offer?

In addition to managing association properties, A Condominium Management Company caters to individual investment properties as well. This includes handling monthly rent receipts/deposits, property maintenance, paying invoices on behalf of the property owner, and other informational correspondence. Please contact one of the team members listed above if you are interested in having your rental property managed by us.