



BLOOMINGTON RENTAL HOUSING COLLABORATIVE NEWSLETTER FOR RENTAL PROPERTY OWNERS AND MANAGERS

May 2015
Bloomington HRA

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THE NEXT MEETING IS IN MAY!

All rental housing owners, managers, leasing agents, maintenance staff and other interested parties are encouraged to attend this free Bloomington Rental Collaborative Meeting. This next meeting will take place on **Tuesday, May 12, at 10 a.m. at Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road in the Haeg Room.** If you have any suggestions for future newsletter or meeting topics, please contact Kathy Warren at 952-563-8942; TTY 952-563-8740 or e-mail kwarren@bloomingtonmn.gov.

Meeting Topic: *Watching for Illegal Activity in your Community.* A detective with the Bloomington Police Department will discuss current activity, what to watch for, how to help and when to call the local police department.

SPRING CLEANING FOR PROPERTY MANAGERS

After a long winter, spring has finally arrived with a hint of green quickly replacing the brown that we have seen at for the past several months.

Those long months of rain and snow have taken a toll on most properties. If you're ready to undertake some much needed spring cleaning, there are some suggestions to rid your properties of the last signs of winter:

1. Remove all of the dead branches that have fallen due to excessive moisture or snowfall. These are a major distraction as well as a potential liability to both residents and employees. This also a great time to trim tree limbs and bushes.
2. Plant a tree or several trees. The addition of trees in strategic areas can increase curb appeal tremendously. They will also help to provide shade in key areas of the complex, as well as providing a more appealing environment for your residents.
3. Plant some flowers...nothing says spring like a burst of colorful blooms! Flowers are especially eye catching around the major property signage, but adding a few rose bushes around the leasing office can provide a quick burst of spring color with limited upkeep needed. Nothing is more

attention getting than a burst of color around the entrance.

4. Consider replacing your signs. If your signs have fallen victim to the cold winter months, consider updating signage around the property as well. A sparkling new sign surrounded by spring blooms can often pay better dividends than advertising.
5. Consider adding a barbeque area or a gazebo to encourage residents to get outside and enjoy your property.
6. Your building needs a spring cleaning as well. Well-tended landscaping will serve little purpose if the buildings themselves appear neglected. By adding a fresh coat of paint, or even simply power washing the complex, the buildings themselves will sparkle along with your landscaping.
7. Don't forget the leasing office. Your signage and landscaping have driven in a host of new applicants. You don't want them to be disappointed when they enter the leasing office. Clean those carpets, polish those floors, and paint those dingy walls. Add some new artwork or plants to bring the signs of spring indoors as well.

Portions reprinted from Property Manager Newsletter April 2015

WATER CONSERVATION IN APARTMENT BUILDINGS

As a landlord, some of your biggest property expenses are utilities such as electric, gas and water. While some landlords have the tenants in each apartment pay their own bills, other communities chose to include utilities in the rent.

Either way, the amount of water used at the building can become costly, even if the landlord pays just for shared spaces, lawn care and related water-using areas. By keeping that in mind, it is easy to see that water conservation can become a hot topic for a landlord, in order to save on utilities and make the apartment building profitable.

Fortunately, there are a number of ways in which landlords can conserve water. These include:

Install Low-Flow Fixtures. One of the best ways to conserve water in an apartment building is to make sure all of the apartments and every common, public area has low-flow fixtures. Toilets, sinks and shower heads that use less water are excellent choices, because they reduce how much water gets used automatically, without having to think about it. There is no need to warn tenants or keep reminding them about water usage, and that can keep tensions and frustrations lower. These fixtures are generally not

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EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

much more expensive than others, but they can save a lot of money in the long run.

Limit Lawn Watering by Using Native Plants. If you choose plants and grasses that are native to your environment, they won't require as much water to keep them alive and healthy. That's great news when it comes to water conservation, and can also save you a lot of money over time. These kinds of plants also often cost less, because they are common to the area and don't have to be imported. That makes it a money-saving win on two counts.

Avoid Water Features such as Pools and Fountains. The more water features you have for tenants and guests, the more water you're going to have to use. It's a much better choice to eliminate those kinds of things. You can still have a great apartment community without a big community pool, and it's not necessary to have fountains in the lobby or go out front in order to impress potential tenants.

Rather than focus on those things, conserve water and focus on other ways to make the complex and the community areas great.

Recycle Rain Water and "Gray" Water. With barrels and other collection devices, you can use rain water and "gray" water – the water from sinks, bathtubs and washing machines – to water the lawn, and other landscaping features. This water doesn't cost anything, and it's safe to use for many different types of applications. It will help you spend less on the landscaping, while still having it look good. With so many ways to conserve water in an apartment building, it's surprising that more landlords aren't making it a priority. If you add it to the list of important ways to save money, you'll be ahead of many other complex owners.

Portions reprinted from American Apartment Owners Association Newsletter February 2015

HENNEPIN COUNTY OFFERS RECYCLING GRANTS

Are you a business that wants to start recycling? Maybe improve the recycling program that you already have? Hennepin County is offering grants of up to \$50,000 for businesses to start or improve programs to divert recyclables and organics (food and non-recyclable paper) from the trash.

Nearly two-thirds of waste created at businesses is recyclable. Having a strong recycling program conserves natural resources and reduces greenhouse gas emissions, can help a business's bottom line, and demonstrates their commitment to sustainability to their customers.

Most businesses and non-profits in the country – from large office buildings to small churches, restaurants

and apartment buildings – are eligible to apply. These grants can help with the purchase of containers, equipment purchase and installation, hauling service charges and minor improvements to loading docks and waste enclosures.

Hennepin County has staff available to answer questions about the grant application, review project ideas, evaluate potential costs and savings, and offer resources to start and improve recycling and organics programs. Applications are solicited three times a year, and are due March 15, June 15 and October 15.

For more information and application materials, visit www.hennepin.us/businessrecycling or call 612-543-1316.

FIND US ON THE WEB!

For more local information about housing, check out our website at BloomingtonMN.gov, and search by keywords "Rental Housing Collaborative." Updated Bloomington Rental Collaborative meeting times and topics can always be found here.