



IOWA LANDLORD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER
www.iowalandlord.org

February 2008

ILA LEADERSHIP AND CONTACT INFORMATION

President and Director
David Sollenbarger
(515) 274-1628
sollenbarger@iowalandlord.org

Treasurer and Director
Dennis McDonald
(515) 270-2796
mcdonald@raccoon.com

Legislative Committee Chair
Pat Knueven (515) 278-2821
legislative@iowalandlord.org

Public Relations Committee Chair
Beth McDonald (515) 284-8112
publicrelations@iowalandlord.org

Vendor Committee Co-Chairs
Jamie Papian (515) 988-5989
Stephanie Bates (515) 288-1383
vendor@iowalandlord.org

Education Committee Chair
Steve Burgett (515) 226-9394
education@iowalandlord.org

Membership Committee Co-Chairs
Kent & Beverly Lehs (515) 279-4699
membership@iowalandlord.org

Newsletter Editor: Connie Huff
ilaservices@iowalandlord.org



From the Desk of Your Directors

February ILA Membership Meeting

The General Membership Meeting for February will be held at Okoboji Grill in Johnston. It will start at 5 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 21, with a "Social Hour" complete with free snacks and beverages.

\$10 gift cards will be given to each regular member in attendance as well as a drawing for a \$50 cash gift card and two \$50 Okoboji Grill gift cards. **This is a very important meeting.** Nominations will be taken for the election of Officers to the offices of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

LANDLORD DAY ON THE HILL

We as landlords and rental property managers are greatly effected by the

laws that are passed by our legislature. Landlord Day on the Hill is your opportunity to help our legislatures understand the type of legislation that helps our industry. Just as important, our legislature needs to understand the impact of bad laws that hinder our industry. This is your chance to let your voice be heard and influence legislation. Please see more details about the "Day on the Hill" on page 3.

ILA Charity Walk

Image is important to the success of landlords and property managers. With that in mind, you are being given the opportunity to join the ILA Charity Walk team. Proceeds from this walk will go to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's "Walk to Cure Juvenile Diabetes." More information about this very worthwhile event appears on page 2 of this newsletter as well as in the e-bulletins. If you are not receiving the ILA e-bulletins, simply send an e-mail to services@iowalandlord.com with "want E-bulletin" in the subject line.

Welcome, New Members

Kent Pownas, President - Legacy Properties - Indianola

Keith Stewart - J & K Properties - West Des Moines

Congratulations, New Managers!

Anne Neessen is the new Manager of Rosemont Place Apts. in Des Moines.

Steve Schleicher is the new Manager at Bristol Apts. in Urbandale.

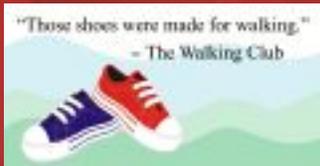
Hallie Fitzgerald and Lindsey Ritland are the new Managers at Somerset and The Post Club Apts. in Des Moines.

Happy Valentine's Day

Charity Walk

Walk to Cure Diabetes

Saturday, March 1, 2008 is the 2008 Central Walk to Cure Diabetes at the Downtown Des Moines Skywalk. Registration begins at 8 a.m. The walk will kick off at 9 a.m., followed by staggered start times (TBA). The 2-mile route begins and ends at the Polk County Convention Complex at 5th & Grand. With a leisurely pace, walkers usually finish in about two hours. More information about the Charity Walk will be presented at the Feb. 21 General Membership Meeting. You may sign up for the walk at the meeting or by e-mailing Beth McDonald at publicrelations@iowalandlord.org. Join ILA's Charity Walk team. Let's help find a cure!



Maintenance Corner

Deep into an Iowa winter and under the thumb of record-high utility costs may prove to be a better time to evaluate our heating efficiencies.

"Back in the day" when utility costs were comparatively low, lack of insulation, inefficient heating equipment and cold air leaks had little impact on our bottom-line operational costs. Not so today. The high cost of utilities can affect our profit margin in more than one way. It can affect vacancy rates, whether we are paying the utility bills or the tenant pays.

If we are paying for utilities, the effect is obvious by our checkbook balances. If the tenant is paying heating costs and the rental

unit is not efficient, they are less likely to be your tenant, therefore adversely affecting your vacancy rate.

There is no room for short-sightedness in the solution. The costs of installing efficient heating equipment, upgrading insulation (to include thermal pane windows, better insulated siding and doors) is high, but not as high as the cost of utilities and vacancies over the long run.

Hopefully we have taken advantage of Energy Saving Tax credits that were available in 2006 and 2007. If not, there is still some relief in the way of rebates from utility companies and energy-efficient equipment manufacturers.

Most utility companies provide some sort of "energy audit" at no charge. At least one company provides a do-it-yourself online version of the audit.

(www.midamericanenergy.com/homeaudit)

Today is a good day to plan for tomorrow's high cost of heating!



If you missed the opportunity to receive your Iowa Landlord Association Information and Membership Directory at the membership meeting in January, you will have another chance to pick one up at the Feb. 21 Membership Meeting at Okoboji Grill. This directory will be helpful in searching for other landlords and vendors that can assist you in your day-to-day business. Attend the membership meeting and get your book now!



Summer Breakfast Meetings!

The ILA Breakfast meetings have been scheduled for this summer. Mark the dates on your calendars now! They are: June 17, July 15 and Aug. 19. All meetings start at 7:30 a.m. and last approximately 1 hour. We are still putting together speakers for these meetings. If you have a suggestion of who you would like to have speak, let us know. Contact Connie at (515) 255-0675 or ilaservices@iowalandlord.org. This is a great opportunity to get a quick update on those issues important to landlords. Check future newsletters for speakers and registration information.

ILA Legislative Report

Joe Kelly
ILA Lobbyist



Let's review the legislative scene for 2008. It's the second year of the 82nd General Assembly. The second year part has meaning. All the bills introduced last year are still alive for 2008. Most of the time, if a bill didn't pass the first year of a General Assembly, it won't pass the second year, unless there are changes made to the bill. Another factor to be considered is when the bill was introduced. Sometimes, the bill was just introduced too late in the session, and there wasn't time to deal with it. There are times when a bill passed one chamber and not the other. In any event, the second year tends to get moving faster.

For landlords, there is one big bill to deal with, SF 445. This bill passed the Senate on a vote of 35-14. SF 445 passed out of the House Judiciary Committee with the minimum number of votes for passage. As you may recall, SF 445 would change the legal standard for imposing punitive damages against landlords in security deposit retention cases. The current law is that it must be proven that the landlord in bad faith withheld the security deposit from the tenant, when there was no reason to withhold it. SF 445 would change this legal standard to wrongfully withheld. SF 445 would also give the judge discretion to grant punitive damages up to one and a half times the amount of the security deposit. The current law allows \$200, and the judge has no discretion. The full amount must be awarded.

SF 445 was not considered on the floor of the House last year and was returned to the House Judiciary Committee. Be prepared to help in the effort to stop SF 445 from passing. Proponents of this bill will not give up after they got the bill halfway through the legislative process.

Rep. Tom Schueller (D-Maquoketa) will be introducing another version of HF 783 this session. As you know by now, HF 783 was vetoed by Governor Culver. Rep. Schueller has stated that his new bill will not have any new deposits available to local municipal utilities. That was the piece of HF 783 that caused the veto. Current law already allows municipal utilities to get up to three months' deposit on the water bill. Of course, not having access to deposits on the new services exempt from liens will give local governments more ammunition to lobby against the new bill.

The property tax interim committee met three times in 2007. The committee will be hiring an outside consultant to help finish the recommendations which aren't due until the beginning of the 2009 session. SF 604 passed the Senate last year with the minimum number of votes needed for passage. SF 604 would have provided for a seven-year reduction of taxes, after which time apartments and manufactured housing communities would have been taxed at the same rate as single-family, residential housing.

SF 604 is not likely to see any action this year. If the legislature does anything on property taxes in 2008, it would be to allow certain cities and counties to have a pilot project of allowing for alternative means of raising money, with the idea that the local governments would reduce property taxes. Many Republican legislators are stating that this move could eventually allow local governments to spend even more money.

House Majority Leader, Christopher Rants, is also pointing out that, unless action is taken quickly, property taxpayers will see their taxes rise by \$500 million over the next five years. Speaker Murphy has responded that something has to be done with commercial property taxes. Whether his answer is allowing the pilot project to go into effect this year or whether he has other ideas is not known at this point.

What we do know is that property tax reform is not off the table and could have a huge political impact if taxes do rise by \$500 million in the coming years.

Day on the Hill

Calling all Landlords!
Landlord Day on the Hill is Tuesday, Feb. 19, 2008. We will meet at 10 a.m. in the Lucas Building, 6th Floor Cafeteria, 321 E. 12th Street.

Agenda includes:

10:00-10:15 Welcome

10:15-10:30 Joe Kelly, Lobbyist

10:30-12:00 Legislative Speakers

12:00-1:00 Lunch (on your own)

1:00 - Lobby Your Legislator

Landlord Day on the Hill is a joint effort sponsored by your "Iowa Landlord Association" and "Landlords of Iowa"; however, we welcome and strongly encourage all Iowa landlords to join us for this important event.

Please R.S.V.P. to Pat Knueven, (515) 278-2821 or legislative@iowalandlord.org.

February 2008						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	

- 2 Groundhog Day
- 14 Valentine's Day
- 18 Presidents' Day
- 19 **Day on the Hill** - 10 a.m. - Lucas Building, Lunch Room
- 21 4 p.m. - **Vendor Meeting** - Okoboji Grill - 8481 Birchwood Court, Johnston followed by **General Membership Meeting** at 5 p.m.
- 29 Leap Day

March 2008						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

- 1 ILA's Charity "Walk to Cure Juvenile Diabetes" 8 a.m. Polk County Convention Complex - 5th & Grand
- 17 St. Patrick's Day
- 20 **Vendor Meeting** - 4 p.m. - Okoboji Grill - Johnston
- General Membership Meeting** - 5 p.m. - Okoboji Grill - Johnston



IOWA LANDLORD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER