



IOWA LANDLORD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER
www.iowalandlord.org

February 2009

ILA LEADERSHIP

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From the Desk of Your Directors

It is with great pleasure and excitement that the officers, directors and staff welcome Karen Sol as your new Association Executive Director to the leadership team of the ILA. Karen's background as an Event Planner, Marketing Director, Property Manager, Development Director and past President of one of the Des Moines Chamber of Commerce affiliates will bring additional services, events and value to you as a member of the Iowa Landlord Association.

Planning for the annual Spring Educational Seminar and Trade Show has begun. One timely topic will be **How to**

Market Rentals in This Economic Climate, and a **Legal Workshop** will be conducted, complete with questions and answers. These are only two of many important topics that will be covered. These most valuable biannual seminars are designed to improve our skills as property managers and owners. We build these programs on what you need to know and want to hear, so let us know what knowledge you seek to gain and by whom. Also, please keep in mind that our good Vendor Partners help to make these seminars possible. By our utilization of their products and services, they find reason for their continued support.

Please watch for your e-bulletins for further information on the Legislative Day on the Hill and General Membership meetings. Other important last-minute News Flashes are also communicated by way of e-bulletins. You don't have e-mail? Let Connie know at (515) 255-0675. We will get important information to you by mail or a phone call so that you may continue to receive maximum value as an ILA member.

Welcome New Members

Midprairie Properties, LLC—Dean Madsen—Grimes, Iowa

Colleen Carruthers—Bondurant, Iowa

New Vendor Partner

Housewatchers Plus—Peter Welch—(See details of their services on page three of this Newsletter.)

Happy Valentine's Day



Welcome



Executive Real Estate Services (ERS) maximizes value for real estate investors, owners and tenants by offering a full array of real estate services. In addition to our multifamily and commercial property management services, we assist our clients with the development of raw ground, build-to-suit construction, leasing, acquisitions, dispositions, consulting and investment opportunities. Whether you are a real estate investor, property owner, business owner or looking into some new opportunities—we work hard to find the most equitable solution to fit your needs. Call us today at (515) 273-9400 to see how we can provide a solution for you. Visit our web site at www.executivers.com to see our portfolio of properties managed and sales and lease listings.

ILA's Annual Landlord Day on the Hill

If you'd like to get a close-up view of how the legislature works, why don't you join us for "Landlords Day on the Hill?" The date is Wednesday, Feb. 25. We will begin at 10 a.m. in the Lucas Building Cafeteria, 6th floor, 321 E. 12th St., in Des Moines. We'll have some guidance on how to lobby effectively. Then we will have a legislator come over to talk to us about important issues. After lunch, landlords will go over to the Capitol to visit with their local legislators.

Our lobbyist, Joe Kelly, with the assistance of Pat Knueven, ILA Legislative Chair, have put together this important event. Joe will preside and help to lead you through the exciting "Day on the Hill." If you are new to this kind of activity, don't worry. There will be landlords in attendance who have done this for years who will be very helpful. We would like to have an idea of how many we will be seating, so please R.S.V.P. to Pat Knueven, ILA President and Legislative Chair, at: (515) 278-2821 or email him at PatKnueven@aol.com.

Eleven Inexpensive Ways to Spruce Up Your Rentals

Are you trying to fill a vacancy? Although you may not want to overdo improvements, you may need to spruce up your properties to appeal to prospective residents. Nice rentals attract nice tenants. The following are 11 inexpensive ways to improve your properties with little cash.

- 1) **New Switch Plates.** This is minor, yet an overlooked improvement.
- 2) **New or Improved Door.** For a rental, consider changing at least the first floor doors.
- 3) **New Door Handles.** For about \$20, you can update with modern finished handles.
- 4) **Paint Trim.** If the entire interior does not need a paint job, consider painting the trim, or add crown molding.

Tips on Contacting Your Legislator

When contacting your Iowa legislator, either your representative or senator, remember these points when writing to them.

- 1) Be as brief as possible, but tell your story.
- 2) Do not worry about typing unless your handwriting is unreadable.
- 3) Always ask the legislator to answer your letter.
- 4) If the action you are asking for is something you have pursued elsewhere, tell the legislator what you have tried and if you were helped or ignored.
- 5) Offer to give or to obtain more information, if applicable.
- 6) Keep a copy of the letters you write and the responses you get.
- 7) If you have an issue for which you do not know if the state can help, do not hesitate to write to your own congressman.

- 5) **Paint Front Door.** Paint it a bold color using a high-gloss paint.
- 6) **Tile Foyer Entry.** After the front door, your next impression is the foyer. A nice tiled area of 12" tiles can cost you less than \$150.
- 7) **New Shower Curtains.** Simple way to definitely add appeal to the bathroom.
- 8) **Paint Kitchen Cabinets.** You can also add new cabinet knobs.
- 9) **New Kitchen Faucet.** Modern faucets look great.
- 10) **Add Window Shutters.** They come pre-primed and are easy to install.
- 11) **Add a New Mailbox.** It's a nice way to make rentals stand out from others.

ILA Legislative Report

Joe Kelly
ILA Lobbyist



The 83rd General Assembly has convened. Legislators, in the first year of a two-year assembly, normally get paid expenses for 110 calendar days. This year, because of the dire economic conditions, legislative leaders have promised to adjourn at least 10 days early. This action will save the state money. Legislators also figure that they might as well leave early because they really can't afford to pass laws that would require spending money.

What's in store for landlords in 2009 at the legislature? As we all know, there's offense and there's defense. For the past several years, we've spent a great deal of our efforts in combating proposals we didn't like. We're sure there will be more of the same this year.

As for advancing proposals, there will be some talk about property tax reform in the legislature. The main crux of this issue is that there will be efforts to give local governments more ways to tax local residents. In exchange, there is a promise for property tax relief. However, early analysis of the proposals indicates that many lowans would wind up paying more in taxes, after a reduction in property taxes. Also, given economic conditions, there will be strong resistance to any proposals that can be viewed as a tax increase.

There will be another plumbing bill this session. It will be our opportunity to offer language to allow landlords the ability to do certain plumbing work without the need to either obtain a license or hire someone

with a license to do the work. It will be comparable in concept to the routine maintenance language the legislature approved for us in 2008 in the electricians' law. Rep. Brian Quirk (D- New Hampton) is the key legislator on this bill. Rep. Quirk has authorized language already to take care of our concerns for exemptions for certain kinds of work. Landlords will have an opportunity to make further suggestions on this important issue.

We will also be working on passing a law that would disallow local governments from placing restrictions on the number of renters who can live in a rental property based on family status. Cities such as Des Moines, West Des Moines, Windsor Heights, Ames and Cedar Falls restrict the number of unrelated persons who can live in a dwelling. The most logical way to address this issue is to use the size of the home. The Ames Rental Property Association took the issue all the way to the Iowa Supreme Court. The high court ruled in favor of the city on a 4-3 vote in 2007. Senator Jeff Danielson (D- Cedar Falls) will be introducing legislation on behalf of landlords.



All of you received a list of ILA Vendor Partners in the January Newsletter. We would like to thank you for your continued support of all our vendors!

Preferred Vendors

NEW VENDOR

Housewatchers Plus

Housewatchers Plus Management is a firm assisting commercial property owners with their day-to-day operations—collecting rent, eviction procedures, handling emergencies, contacting professional services, i.e., plumbers and electricians, and overseeing that the job has been completed. We'll clean apartment lobbies, hallways and laundry rooms of trash, dirt and debris. We also offer professional services outdoors—tree/shrub trimming, litter pickup, planting, small mowing projects, hauling, gutter cleaning and power washing. Have we forgotten something? Ask us! Short on time? Then this service is just for you! Insured, bonded, references, member of Urbandale Chamber of Commerce. Contact Pete Welch, (515) 208-8004, website www.housewatchersplus.com or email us at hwatch4658@aol.com.



February 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 
15	16 Presidents' Day	17	18	19 General Membership Meeting - 5 p.m. Okoboji Grill - Details to be Announced	20	21
22	23	24	25 ILA Annual Day on the Hill - 10 a.m. - Lucas Building Cafeteria	26	27	28



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