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Next Meeting

Tuesday, April 21, 2009

5:30 p.m. Granny Schaffer's Restaurant

Protecting Yourself Against Identity Theft Detective William Davis

Our next meeting will be this coming Tuesday, April 21, 2009. We will have our buffet at 5:30 p.m. with our program to start at approximately 6:15 p.m. Cost of the meal is \$10 per person. Reservations are not required and guests are always welcome.

Speakers this month will be Detective William Davis, Prosecuting Attorney's Office speaking on protecting yourself from identify theft.

How to Avoid and Deal With Fair Housing Complaints

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In spite of our best efforts, sometimes someone thinks we might have possibly meant something else when we spoke to them and that offended them. Besides, there are scam artists out there who are trying to make a quick buck off landlords by claiming the landlord said something that the landlord did not say.

April is Fair Housing Month!



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HUD-934.3 (1-80)

rentlinx
January Stats

16 properties listed
75 units
210 property views

How to Screen Tenants in 5 Easy Steps

Landlord Protection Agency

I always say that “95% of your tenant problems can be eliminated in the screening process.” If you are like me, you probably find it difficult to relax when you have vacancies. So getting your unit rented is the main idea, right? Well, from now on, lets say “getting it rented to a **properly qualified tenant** is the main idea.

Below is what I call The 5 Steps of Screening Tenants

Step 1: First Contact

From the very first contact with the tenant, the screening process has begun. Whether you are the landlord, real estate agent or property manager, the same still holds true.

First contact is usually by telephone, so you need to ask the right qualifying questions in order to decide if you should proceed to step 2. Ad-

vised customers of your up-front rent and security deposit requirements and other important facts regarding the rental that may help disqualify the prospect.

I suggest you make a list or prospect card of questions to ask and have it handy while you conduct your first contact interview.

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Association Coverage Area

According to MAA, our Association covers a large area of southwest Missouri, southeast Kansas, northeast Oklahoma and northwest Arkansas. These are the counties which are in our Association’s area:

Missouri: Barton, Jasper, Newton, McDonald

Kansas: Linn, Bourbon, Crawford, Cherokee

Oklahoma: Craig, Mayes, Cherokee, Ottawa, Delaware, Adair

Arkansas: Benton, Carroll

If you know someone who is a rental owner or manager or who is considering becoming an owner/manager, tell them about us and all we can do for them!

Associate/Preferred Vendor List
RentGrow—Tenant Screening
800-736-8476
First American Title Co.
417-623-1553
Apartment Finder of Springfield
Sarah Luce Reeder & Associates

RentLinX
List your properties
Here for on-line
Search of available
Housing units
Www.RentLinX.com

Southwest Missouri Rental Housing Association
Minutes of Regular Membership meeting
Tuesday, March 17, 2009 Granny Shaffer's

Meeting called to order by President David Enke

Present: 20 members, and 2 speakers.

Visitors Present: None.

New Members Present: None.

Treasurer's Report: None available.

Membership Report as of March 3, 2009: Total-to-Date; 49/858 & 4 Associates.

Upcoming Speakers: April- Detective William Davis, Investigation Division (Office of Prosecuting Attorney)

Tonight's speakers were: Keith Stammer (Jasper Co.) and Gary Roark (Newton Co.) Emergency Management Directors.

They gave a slide presentation and useful emergency preparedness information to the group.

Tonight was the first drawing for the 50/50 raffle. Helen Coggin took home \$69.00.

Reminders:

Next Board meeting will be April 7, at Keller Williams office at 6:00 p.m.

Next membership meeting will be April 21, at Granny Shaffer's.

Meeting adjourned 7:15 pm.

Lyn Enke, Secretary

This publication is designed to provide informative material of interest to its readers. It is distributed with the understanding that it does not constitute legal, accounting, or other professional advertising. Although the published material is intended to be accurate, neither we nor any other party will assume liability for loss or damage as a result of reliance on this material. Appropriate legal or accounting advice or other expert assistance should be sought from a competent professional.

Any advice you may receive from any Director or Officer of the Association is simply our experience or willingness to help and is not to be construed as legal advice. Our intent is to network and to share our experiences with other members. We are not responsible for the legal content of any forms we provide our membership.

First Winner in 50/50 Raffle

We had the first drawing from our 50/50 Raffle at the March meeting. Helen Coggin won \$69!!!! Congratulations Helen!



Emergency Management Directors Speak at March Meeting



Here are six ways to keep yourself out of trouble, and/or protect yourself if you have a complaint filed against you.

Make sure everything you do is documented.

Everything — from ads to notices to tenants to conversations with tenants and applicants. That means keep copies of all ads and flyers as they are printed in the newspaper or online with the dates attached to the advertising or some kind of proof that they ad or flyer was available on the date it was published.

Make notes of every phone conversation you have, both from prospective tenants and current tenants.

These would include both tenants who are from protected classes and who are not from protected classes. Put a date and time at the top of every note. The notes would tend to show that you are treating all people equally. How are you going to remember something that happened on a specific date if that date was three or four months earlier. Going to your notes taken on that date will provide you with specific information — information that the complaining tenant or would-be tenant probably will not have.

Write out scripts for interviews with prospective tenants.

Write answers to questions you are most likely to be asked. Do not improvise. You might want to have your attorney look at the script and the answers, or even other landlords at an apartment or landlord association meeting.

Create clear-cut rules—in writing—for all tenants.

Write out clear-cut requirements for each property, and date them. These are the requirements that must be met by all people applying to rent from you. Then follow those standards to the letter.

Read everything you receive from a tenant applying to rent from you, especially if you are going to reject that tenant.

There is little worse (and more embarrassing) than saying you rejected a tenant on the basis of a credit report when you have not read it.

If you have a complaint filed against you:

- Call your lawyer immediately.
- DO NOT ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS from HUD, Legal Aid, Fair Housing enforcers or attorneys. These people are not there to “help you,” “get to the bottom of the problem,” or “get your side of it.” They are representing the tenant and trying to trip you up. Many Fair Housing enforcement agencies depend on fines from landlords and other businesses for operating expenses. How fair do you think they will be with you? Make them call your attorney. If they persist in calling you after you have told them to leave you alone, ask your lawyer what to do.
- Keep thorough notes of everything that happens, including dates and times.
- Send letters confirming conversations.

“Robert Cain is a nationally-recognized speaker and writer on property management and real estate issues. For a free sample copy of the Rental Property Reporter call 800-654-5456 or visit their web site at www.rentalprop.com.”

5 Easy Steps to Screening Tenants

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For example:

Name	Phone #
Reason for moving	# of People
# of children & ages	Occupancy date
Pets	Smoking
Credit	Landlord reference?

Please note that anyone who has a problem answering your questions (as long as you ask them politely), probably will not qualify for your rental. Serious customers want to make a good impression on you and should be happy to answer your questions. This process can save you and customers a lot of time and trouble.

Step 2: Showing the Property

From landlords to real estate agents, we all have our own style in showing the rental. I think we all need to be aware of certain telltale signs to watch for while evaluating your prospective new tenants.

1. Appearance. Is the prospect neat and clean? Did he or she make an attempt to make a good impression? In most cases, an unkempt person keeps an unkempt lifestyle *and home*.
2. Car. Does the prospect have a nice car? Is it clean? Although we can't judge people by their car, we should take note of it along with other details.
3. Attitude & Manners. Does this prospect behave respectfully? Does he or she show indications of being difficult to deal with in the future? Did the prospect wipe his or her feet when stepping into the house? Did the prospect walk into the rental while smoking? You can learn a lot about people even before speaking to them. Sometimes it helps to pay attention to details.
4. Criticizing the Property. Are the prospects pointing out legitimate concerns, or are they trying to come up with items to negotiate price?
5. Yes or No? Can the prospect make the decision now or will they have to think about it? If they know now that they want your rental, did the prospect come ready to give you a deposit and fill out an application?

Step 3: The Application Process

The first thing you need is a **quality rental application**. Let the applicant know that his or her application will be considered along with others, and you will notify the applicant once a decision is made. Advise the applicant(s) that it is very important to fill out the application as completely as possible. If you (and I recommend you do) run a credit report on the applicant, I suggest you be sure to collect a screening fee.

Inform your prospective tenant that the applicant must be returned as soon as possible to avoid the risk of losing the rental to a competing prospect.

Review and verify the application thoroughly and look for inconsistencies and “red flags”. When you are satisfied, you will proceed to approving your new tenant in step 4.

Step 4: The Approval Process

This is usually a fun part, but keep in mind that you are still screening the applicant while preparing him or her for the next step. I like to congratulate the applicant on being approved and let them know they came in 1st place. Also, let them know if you made any special concessions just for them such as overlooking minor credit infractions, etc.

This process is also an opportunity for you to make sure the applicant can and will deliver. Set the time, date and place for your lease signing. Instruct the applicant(s) to bring the proper amounts of monies, identification (if you don't already have it), and how you prefer to be paid (check*, money order or cash).

- Be sure to tell your new tenants that possession or keys will be given only after checks have cleared.

Step 5: The Lease Signing

It is very important that you have a quality residential lease. You'd be surprised at how many people would just sign a lease without reading it! And, I don't just mean tenants! I believe it is crucial to read the entire lease with the tenants at a lease signing. It is your agreement with them. Shouldn't you both know what is really being agreed to? As you read the terms of the lease with the tenants, you will be able to conduct your 5th and final step of screening. Does the tenant argue on every item? Is the late charge an issue? And so on.

Of course, if you are unhappy with how your prospect responds to you and/or your lease, you must not rent to this person. I believe: “It is better to have NO tenant than it is to have the wrong tenant.”

John Nussolese

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'NO CALL' LIST

You may sign up for the Missouri Attorney General's "No Call" List. Call toll-free 1-866-NOCALL1 or log on to:

www.moago.org.

04/07/09
Current Membership
Count:
49 Members Managing
858 Properties
4 Associate Members

Each member of this Association shall:

- Strive continually to promote the education and fraternity of the membership and to promote the progress and dignity of the apartment/rental housing industry.
- Maintain and operate our apartment/rental housing projects in accordance with fair practices and in compliance with the By-Laws of the Association.
- Promote and maintain a high standard of integrity in the performance of all rental obligations and services in the operation of our apartment/rental housing projects.
- Establish high ethical standard of conduct with suppliers and other doing business with the apartment/rental housing industry.
- Endeavor to expose all schemes to misleads or defraud the apartment/rental housing residing public and to aid in the exposure of those responsible.
- Seek to provide better values in apartment/rental housing.

Purpose

- The purpose of this Association shall be:
- To advance the general welfare of the rental housing industry.
- To participate for the purpose of mutual benefit in an interchange of information and experience with all state and local affiliated associations of the National Apartment Association.
- To encourage within the apartment/rental housing industry a high appreciation of the objectives and responsibilities of apartment/rental housing owners and operators in providing adequate privately owned housing.
- To promote the enactment and enforcement of local, state and federal laws beneficial to the apartment/rental housing industry and free enterprise.
- To disseminate useful information to all members and inspire them to further educate themselves in the practical features of their apartment/rental housing operations.
- To advocate a code of ethics to maintain high professional standards and sound business methods among its members for the best interests of the industry and the public.

Upcoming Events and Dates to Remember

April 21 regular membership meeting 5:30 p.m. at Granny Schaffer's Restaurant.

June 2 Board of Directors meeting at Keller/Williams Realty, 7th & St. Louis, Joplin, 6:00 p.m.

July 21 regular membership meeting 5:30 p.m. at Granny Schaffer's Restaurant.

May 5 Board of Directors meeting at Keller/Williams Realty, 7th & St. Louis, Joplin, 6:00 p.m.

June 16 regular membership meeting 5:30 p.m. at Park, location TBD.

August 4 Board of Directors meeting at Keller/Williams Realty, 7th & St. Louis, Joplin, 6:00 p.m.

May 19 regular membership meeting 5:30 p.m. at Granny Schaffer's Restaurant.

July 7 Board of Directors meeting at Keller/Williams Realty, 7th & St. Louis, Joplin 6:00 p.m.

August 18 regular membership meeting 5:30 p.m. At Granny Schaffer's Restaurant.