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To join or e-mail RAA, go to

www.rockfordapartmentassociation.org

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Attention all members!

It's here already!

The Rockford Apartment Association's
Year End Banquet!

When: **May 15th, 2012**

Where: **Lino's 5611 East State St.**

Time: **6:00PM-9:00 P.M.**

Guest speaker **Dr. Robert Willis**

District 205 Interim School Superintendent

Come join the fun!

Cocktails from 6:00-7:00 P.M. (cash bar)

Dinner at 7:00 P.M. (Pasta Fest incl. meatballs)

Dr. Willis to speak at 7:30 P.M.

Members & spouses free (non members \$20)

Limited seating- First come first served

All must RSVP to

Julie @ Terra Creek 397-3320

See you there!

Message from the President:

It has been a great season for RAA. This month will be our final meeting before we take a break to enjoy the summer. Thanks to all our members for your participation in RAA and to the members of our Board of Directors for their hard work. RAA is an organization operated by volunteers. Through their effort RAA provides education to property managers on responsible business practices. Also, the strong support of members has allowed RAA to effectively advocate for the interests of housing providers at both the state and local level. I hope RAA is an organization that you can all be proud being a part of. I consider it an honor that I can serve as President.

Paul Arena

HB5646 and HB5523 IRPOA proposals to respond to Crime-Free Housing

This session IRPOA attempted to accomplish in legislation what we have stated in the past. There are two options; either give us the tools we need to remove criminal occupants or stop imposing the obligation to deal with crime on landlords. In HB5646 we attempted to find a purpose for the mandated Crime-Free lease language that was put into the law last year and to encourage the necessary communication between the property owner and government in order to successfully evict a tenant engaged in criminal conduct. In HB5523 we only proposed that the mandated lease language be removed from the law. Language that only restates existing law provides a landlord with no additional power but puts the obligation to control crime on the landlord through lease enforcement. HB5523 was never assigned to a committee and so was not considered by the legislature.

IRPOA has taken the position that we oppose Crime-Free housing concepts. The purpose of these laws is to force evictions by imposing penalties on landlords when they do not evict tenants accused of a crime. None of us want crime in our properties and if there were an easy way for us to deal with criminal behavior then government would not have to use intimidation to force evictions. The "Feel Good" name given to these laws suggest they have a positive effect on crime when they do not. The fact is we should not be expected to manage criminal conduct at all. Controlling crime is the government's responsibility. We manage property, not people's lives.

Section 120 of the forcible act is the section that the mandated lease language refers to. In order to use it, a landlord has to prove the criminal case. It is similar to conducting a criminal trial and very complicated and expensive to attempt. We have not found many landlords who have successfully used this section to respond to criminal behavior, yet this is the section we are being directed to use with the mandated lease language.

HB5646 passed out of the Judiciary committee with an agreement continue to work on the bill. IRPOA

made many suggestions to improve the criminal eviction laws. We asked that the mandated lease language serve as notice to the tenant so we did not have to wait five days to file for eviction. The tenant does not have the right to correct the problem during the five day waiting period and avoid eviction in these cases. If the activity is criminal and dangerous, why would we want to wait to file the case? We asked that when we receive notice from government about a crime, the notice should include the information we would need to file an eviction. We asked that if we make a request for assistance, the government should be required to respond to that request. We asked in these cases, that the court also consider other lease violations that present a disruption or danger to neighbors of property. Speaking on behalf of municipal government, the City of Chicago opposed all of these ideas and never offered any alternative to improve the system. They did offer an alternative to say that if we first prove we have no code violations and don't owe the city any money, we can only then request assistance but that they never have to respond to that request or actually help us.

When it became clear that we were not going to get any help we proposed to include in the law a provision to offer property owners some protection. This provision stated that if we are sent a notice by government advising us of a crime that should not permit government to impose penalties and force eviction. Quoting from the City of Chicago's response, they said: "This strikes down every one of the crime free ordinances that the City and other Municipalities use". At least we now have documentation that the purpose of Crime-Free housing laws is to force evictions. That policy only displaces crime so that other neighborhoods will be ruined.

Due to the opposition from the City of Chicago, the sponsor abandoned the effort to move the bill forward. Please meet with both your Senator and Representative and ask them how they can justify imposing the liability to manage crime and deny us any assistance to do so.

Court Tightens the Rules for Landlord Liability

In a 4-3 decision, the Court of Appeals of Maryland last week ruled that owners of pit bulls, or mixed breed pit bulls — and landlords who allow tenants to have such dogs — are strictly liable for damages resulting from the dog's attack.

The decision modifies the state's previous laws relating to pit bull attacks. It is no longer necessary in these cases to prove that a pit bull is dangerous. The presence of the animal on the premises is enough to establish a case for damages.

The victim in this case, a 10-year-old boy mauled by a pit bull, was seriously injured in the attack. He spent seventeen days in the pediatric intensive care unit, had additional surgeries, and spent a year in rehabilitation.

His parents filed a complaint seeking money damages against the dog's owners, and their landlord, alleging negligence and strict liability. The dog's owners subsequently declared bankruptcy.

At trial, the court ruled that there was insufficient evidence that the landlord knew of the vicious nature of the dog. But an appeals court later reversed that decision. The landlord's insurer appealed to Maryland's highest court, which upheld the appeals court's imposition of liability against the landlord.

In modifying the law, the justices conclude that pit bulls and cross-bred pit bulls are "inherently dangerous", and the state is justified in imposing greater duties to hold owners and landlords liable for any attacks.

According to the attorney for the victim, experienced litigator Kevin Dunne with the Ober|Kaler law firm, the court's decision is already stirring debate between animal rights groups and organizations that advocate for stronger laws to protect people from dog attacks. "In the end, however, pit bull owners and their landlords must be liable for the actions of these dogs," he explains.

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Illinois home prices halt 20-month price descent

by Justin T. Hilley

Median home prices in Illinois snapped a 20-month streak of price declines in March, a turnaround coinciding with the start of the spring selling season.

The statewide median price in March came in at \$130,000, even with March 2011, according to the Illinois Association of Realtors. It's the first time the state's median price hasn't decreased since June 2010.

"There's no doubt that these are strong numbers to open the spring selling season," said IAR President Loretta Alonzo. "To see such good sales numbers, coupled with a measure of price stability is encouraging news no matter what side of a real estate transaction you happen to be on."

Illinois home sales posted the best March sales numbers since 2007. Home sales (including single-family homes and condominiums) in the month totaled 9,575, expanding 21.1% from 7,904 home sales a year earlier.

In the nine-county Chicago Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area, 6,590 homes were sold in March, up 23.8% from March 2011 sales of 5,323 homes. The median price in March was \$151,850 in the Chicago PMSA, down 3.9% compared to a year earlier when it was \$158,000.

"Sales volumes are up, time-on-the-market levels are down significantly from a year ago and prices appear to be stabilizing in Illinois although continuing to fall in Chicago," said Geoffrey Hewings, director of the Regional Economics Applications Laboratory at the University of Illinois.

"Further, in the last month there was a more even spread of sales prices compared to previous months where homes sold for less than \$200,000 dominated the market," Hewings added.

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Copper Theft

Concerned about theft of your copper plumbing pipe? Rick Davis of Stateline Rental Properties suggests you paint your copper pipe so that it does not look like copper when the thieves are looking for targets. Air conditioner units can be boxed in with fencing. Remember the A/C needs ventilation to work so build your fencing to allow air circulation.

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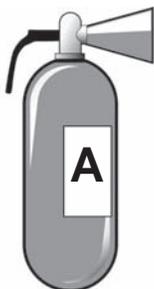
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Great Things Happen!™

Help support our lobbying effort

The Rockford Apartment Association is a member of the Illinois Rental Property Owners Association (IRPOA). IRPOA is a coalition of groups like RAA from cities across Illinois. The purpose of IRPOA is to protect the interests of rental housing owners in state legislative issues. IRPOA retains a lobbyist in Springfield to monitor legislation that would affect your business. We fund this lobbyist through donations from our member groups and individual members. In order to provide additional value for individuals who donate to our lobbyist fund, IRPOA has established a subscription web site.

A member of RAA can subscribe to the IRPOA web site for \$14.95 per year. All money raised through subscriptions goes to our lobbyist fund. The web site provides access to information on new legislation that you need to follow. In addition, through our discussion forums, you will be connected to landlords from across Illinois. Forum topics include, maintenance, leases, evictions, collections, new laws, tenant screening, or you can introduce a new topic that interests you.

Follow us on Facebook

Please follow the Rockford Apartment Association and Illinois Rental Property Owners Association on Facebook. Facebook is a great tool to increase awareness of our groups and the issues that we are working on.

WELCOME new members:

Larry Schlomann & Hank Teague

Hillshire Investments

Rick Nieders

RN Plumbing

RAA Email Group

One of the benefits of membership in RAA is our email group. By joining the group you can interact with other RAA members on a daily basis. Great information is shared on issues like management questions, referral for service providers, and postings for people looking for rentals. If you are not currently taking advantage of the RAA email group and would like to see what it has to offer just send an email with the name your membership is under and the email address you want added to the group to arenacnst@charter.net.

ITALIAN TOMATO GARDEN

An old Italian lived alone in New Jersey . He wanted to plant his annual tomato garden, but it was very difficult work, as the ground was hard.

His only son, Vincent, who used to help him, was in prison. The old man wrote a letter to his son and described his predicament:

Dear Vincent,

I am feeling pretty sad, because it looks like I won't be able to plant my tomato garden this year. I'm just getting too old to be digging up a garden plot. I know if you were here my troubles would be over. I know you would be happy to dig the plot for me, like in the old days.

Love, Papa

A few days later he received a letter from his son.

Dear Pop,

Don't dig up that garden. That's where the bodies are buried.

Love, Vinnie

At 4 a.m. the next morning, FBI agents and local police arrived and dug up the entire area without finding any bodies. They apologized to the old man and left.

That same day the old man received another letter from his son.

Dear Pop,

Go ahead and plant the tomatoes now. That's the best I could do under the circumstances.

Love, Vinnie



Rockford Mayor Larry Morrissey and City Administrator Jim Ryan speak with RAA members at the April Meeting.

Great Ad Rates for Your Rental Units!

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			*Legal Counsel (Board Advisor) Tom Wartowski	815 978-1572

Rockford Apartment Association Code of Ethics

We, the members of the RAA, recognizing our duty to the public and the intimate nature of the relationship between the apartment resident and the owner, or manager, and being aware of the vastly increasing role of the apartment industry in providing the home of the future, and in order to provide the apartment-residing public with the maximum in quality and service upon the highest standards of honest and integrity, do hereby bind ourselves, with each and every member, together and alone, agreeing that, so long as we remain members of the RAA and so long as nothing contained herein shall be unlawful, we shall:

1. Promote, employ and maintain a high standard of integrity in the performance of all rental obligations and services in the operation of our apartment communities.
2. Maintain and operate our apartment communities in accordance with fair and honorable standards of competition, ever mindful of the purposes of the Rockford Apartment Association and in compliance with the by-laws thereof.
3. Strive continually to promote the education and fraternity of the membership and to promote the progress and dignity of the apartment industry in creating a better image of itself in order that the public may be better served.

4. Seek to provide better values, so that an even greater share of the public may enjoy the many benefits of apartment living.
5. Establish high ethical standards of conduct within the apartment industry in the business relationship between the owner, managers and suppliers of products and services to the apartment industry.
6. Maintain property standards of the appropriate governmental authority.
7. Ensure that every qualified individual, regardless of that individual's race, color, religion, gender, disability, familial status or national origin is afforded the same opportunity to rent an apartment and enjoy the benefits of apartment living.

Financial statement available upon request to members in good standing.

The content and opinions expressed in the RAA newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of, nor are they necessarily endorsed by, the Rockford Apartment Association or its board.



YEAR END BANQUET

Tuesday, May 15, at 6 P.M.

Guest speaker **Dr. Robert Willis**
District 205 Interim School Superintendent

Come to a meeting!

Join and save!

Free to RAA members

\$15 non-members

**Rockford Area
Association Of Realtors**

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RAA rental forms for members only

Forms are available at the following locations. Please call in advance to be sure someone will be available to help you.

RAA Meetings	6776 E. State St.	1-800-RAA-6676
Hurd Properties II LLC	124 Water Street Suite 204	1-815-519-5583
State Line Rentals	6952 Rote Rd. Rockford, IL	1-815-398-8886
Terra Creek Apartments	375 Bienterra Trail	1-815-397-3320

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