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Seattle Rents Have Bottomed Out

First Increase in Many Months Offers Hope

RENTAL HOUSING JOURNAL

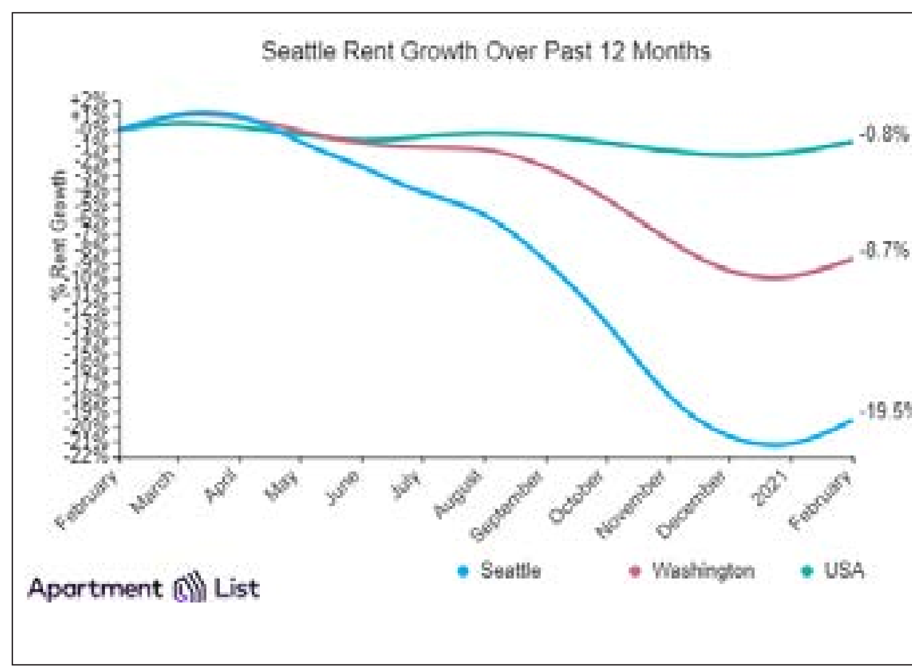
Seattle rents were up 2.1 percent over the past month, the first increase in many months, as Seattle rents appear to have bottomed out, according to the latest report from Apartment List.

While rents year-over-year are down 19.5 percent, the curve back upward on rents has started.

Igor Popov, Chief Economist for Apartment List said, "Though I don't have a crystal ball, I do think we've seen rents in Seattle proper bottom out. In our last rent report, we noted that cities with the most severe rent drops had started to plateau, so I wouldn't be surprised if Seattle started to rebound as we get into the busier search season of spring.

"We're seeing a pretty sharp divergence in rents across central cities (i.e. Seattle proper) and suburbs. So, in the Seattle

See 'Rents' on Page 6



More Charts for Area Cities on Page 6

Removing Tenants Who Damage Your Rentals

BY HANK ROSSI

Dear Landlord Hank: A rental home has been occupied by the same tenants on a month-to-month rental agreement for 13 years. The tenants do not keep the home clean or taken care of. As a result, it badly needs a renovation or demolition.

The home must be vacant to do this extent of work.

I would not rent to these people again, as they are extremely destructive to the property. They are all living on disability, and they have a child who is handicapped (which may carry different laws of protection for them?)

See 'How to' on Page 11

Some Bright Spots in Market Emerge

RENTAL HOUSING JOURNAL

Some bright spots in the housing market and the economy are beginning to emerge, writes Yardi Matrix in its January multifamily report, but it cautions there is a long road ahead.

"Nationally, rents remained relatively flat in January, declining by 0.2 percent on a year-over-year basis. On the market level, some gateway markets appear to have hit bottom, while low-cost tertiary and secondary markets continue to see strong rent growth," the report says.

- Overall rents increased by $3 to $1,392. In January, Yardi Matrix "expanded its methodology to include all 130 matrix markets in our national average calculation."
- "As our market penetration continues to grow and we collect more data, we feel it appropriate to add new markets to our national calculations," the report says.
- Some gateway markets that have struggled for months have begun to show signs of bottoming out. San Jose (-13.0 percent) and Washington, D.C. (-4.5 percent) both saw month-over-month gains.

"The U.S. is continuing the effort to roll out COVID-19 vaccinations nationwide, the number of workers that filed for unemployment declined for the week ending Jan. 23, and consumer spending held up well in December," the report says.

The report points out there may be more government stimulus on the way, though the size of the package is still to be determined.

However, "the big question for many gateway markets remains how permanent out-migration trends will be. Some industry sources are speculating that only about half of the moves out of the gateway markets that occurred during the pandemic are permanent," the report says. The smaller markets continue to provide lower-cost rents compared to their denser nearby urban cities.

Of the top 30 markets, more than half (16 out of 30) "are still experiencing declines in year-over-year rents. While there are some promising signs in San Jose and Washington, D.C., among other markets, many metros still have a long road ahead."

Yardi Matrix is a business development and asset management tool for investment professionals, equity investors, lenders, and property managers who underwrite and manage investments in commercial real estate. Yardi Matrix covers multifamily, industrial, office and self storage property types. Email matrix@yardi.com, call 480-663-1149 or visit yardimatrix.com to learn more.

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Understanding Debt Structures Prior to Investing

By The Kay Properties Team

Individuals who are investing in real estate through a 1031 exchange – or investing after-tax dollars – will need to consider investing either in property that has a mortgage or property that has no long-term financing (debt-free).

For clients in a 1031 exchange (per the current IRS code), a property with debt may need to replace the debt obligation in order to fulfill the 1031 equal-or-greater-purchase-price requirement.

We have found through the years that investors may not actually understand the various debt structures that they are investing in and that each loan may have different terms and agreements. There are pros and cons of debt.

Cash Flow

Often times, cash flow can potentially be higher when you use a debt within your investment strategy. High cash flow can be very attractive to investors, but high cash flow is only attractive until it is not … and this is where investors need to understand how a higher cash flow is being achieved and the risks associated with it.

We typically have seen sponsors use interest-only financing in order to get a higher potential cash flow, risking the large balloon mortgage payment that will be due. There would be no principal paydown in the loan and investors could potentially be stuck with a large loan balance that they will need to replace in their future 1031 exchange.

Cross-Collateralized Loan Obligations

Within the DST marketplace you will find that there are DSTs that have a single asset and there are DSTs that can contain upward of 20+ properties.

It is important to understand the loan structure when considering investing in a DST with multiple properties that has a debt component. There are two types of debt structures that can be on a portfolio:

1. Each property within the portfolio has its own loan, or
2. All the properties are connected under one loan, otherwise known as a "cross-collateralized loan."

A cross-collateralized loan is considered more risky, as it can potentially put a lot of restrictions on cash flow for investors and substantially limit the sponsor's ability to sell the portfolio on behalf of investors. The DSTs might have multiple properties, providing diversification for investors, but if all the properties are under one loan this does not necessarily provide the diversification that most investors think they are getting.

For instance, there could be clauses within the loan that can significantly affect an investment, such as when a certain amount of properties stop paying rent or go bankrupt, the lender can call the loan or do a cash-flow sweep (meaning that because of one portion of the portfolio having problems, the entire investment is at risk).

Credit-rating clauses allow a lender to sweep cash flow for a period of time should a certain tenant or a percentage of tenants' credit ratings drop. For example, you could have a portfolio of net-lease corporate-backed properties that do not go out of business and do not stop paying rent, but maybe there is a recession or something else affecting the corporate level of your tenant that temporarily drops their credit rating. This gives the ability for the lender to lock all the current cash flow in the lender's lock box, taking away an investor's current cash flow.

We also have seen sponsors place a few properties within the portfolio that are not officially investment grade-tenants per Moody's Standards and Poor's ratings, and this is misleading to investors, as a non-investment-grade tenant can have a significant default risk.

Lastly, when you have a portfolio of properties under one loan it can potentially limit the ability to sell the portfolio, as in most cases you will need to sell all the properties at the same time. What if a buyer only wants to buy a portion of the properties because they do not like three of the 20 properties included? The sponsor may be forced to reduce the price to make it more attractive to that buyer.

Some sponsors have a strategy of a 721-exchange, which has its own sets of pros and cons. (Please request or refer our 721 Exchange Whitepaper for more information.)

If a portfolio is debt-free or not cross-collateralized, it can provide more potential exit strategies for the sponsor.

In short, investors that have the ability to stay debt-free can mitigate risks that a loan can bring on a property and its exit strategies. If investors need to take on debt or are comfortable with the risks of debt it is important to understand the pros and cons of the different debt structures available.

About Kay Properties and www.kpi1031.com

Kay Properties is a national Delaware Statutory Trust (DST) investment firm. The www.kpi1031.com platform provides access to the marketplace of DSTs from over 25 different sponsor companies, custom DSTs only available to Kay clients, independent advice on DST sponsor companies, full due diligence and vetting on each DST (typically 20-40 DSTs) and a DST secondary market. Kay Properties team members collectively have over 115 years of real estate experience, are licensed in all 50 states, and have participated in over 15 Billion of DST 1031 investments.

This material does not constitute an offer to sell nor a solicitation of an offer to buy any security. Such offers can be made only by the confidential Private Placement Memorandum (the "Memorandum"). Please read the entire Memorandum paying special attention to the risk section prior investing. IRC Section 1031, IRC Section 1033 and IRC Section 721 are complex tax codes therefore you should consult your tax or legal professional for details regarding your situation. There are material risks associated with investing in real estate securities including illiquidity, vacancies, general market conditions and competition, lack of operating history, interest rate risks, general risks of owning/operating commercial and multifamily properties, financing risks, potential adverse tax consequences, general economic risks, development risks and long hold periods. There is a risk of loss of the entire investment principal. Past performance is not a guarantee of future results. Potential cash flow, potential returns and potential appreciation are not guaranteed. Securities offered through Growth Capital Services, member FINRA, SIPC, Office of Supervisory Jurisdiction located at 582 Market Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, CA 94104.

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Publisher/General Manager
John Triplett

Editor-in-Chief
Linda Wienandt

Associate Editor
Diane Porter

Vice President/Sales
Terry Hokenson

Accounting Manager
Patricia Schluter

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Website
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Mailing Address
4500 S. Lakeshore Drive, Suite 300
Tempe, AZ 85282

Email
info@rentalhousingjournal.com

Phone
(480) 454-2728 - main
(480) 720-4385 - ad sales

Opinion

Rent Vouchers, Not Moratoriums, are the Answer

By Jeremie Dufault

Government shouldn't be able to give away something it doesn't own. But that's what happened when Washington Gov. Jay Inslee stopped property owners from evicting nonpaying tenants. He took something of value from the landlords and gave it to the tenants.

Who should pay for this new social policy?

Right now, the governor is forcing property owners to foot the bill, but is that fair, or even legal? Shouldn't social policy be funded through taxes? Especially during short-term emergencies? After all, government doesn't force grocery stores to give away food or day-care facilities to give away child care — also necessary parts of everyday life. Instead, it provides prepaid vouchers for those services to the people who need help.

Why doesn't the state do the same thing for tenants who — through no fault of their own — have been financially affected by COVID-19? Why doesn't the government give them rent vouchers?

The governor and legislature need to either do this or otherwise craft a plan that reimburses property owners who are serving the public good by housing nonpaying tenants during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is the smart and moral thing to do.

Rent vouchers not only keep tenants from falling behind on their payments but they provide property owners the income they need to pay their mortgages and other bills. An eviction moratorium does neither.

A word about rental-property owners. Did you know that most of them own just a handful of units? Or maybe just one? And that most single-family rentals are long-term retirement investments that take years to produce a nickel of profit? That may not be true in much of urban Washington, but it is definitely true throughout the rest of the state, including in the Yakima Valley, where I live.

Another consideration: Both the federal and state constitutions prohibit government from interfering with private contracts and taking property away from citizens without compensation. The eviction moratorium ignores both of those prohibitions and leaves our state open to expensive litigation down the road.

The governor and the Democratic majorities of both houses of the legislature have shown they care more about tenants than property owners — a bias made obvious over the last two sessions as they enacted an assortment of laws that made it harder to collect rent from and evict nonpaying tenants.

But this is different. This is not a tenant-versus-landlord issue. It is about fairness. Should the governor be allowed to use the emergency powers granted during a pandemic to require private businesses to provide a service for free?

The answer is clearly no.

State government needs to provide extraordinary services during these extraordinary times. But it needs to do so legally and fairly.

Contact your legislators and encourage them to work on a bipartisan basis to create a rental-voucher program for people affected by COVID-19. And ask them to vote to end the eviction moratorium that is bankrupting property owners and burying tenants under a mound of debt.

Jeremie Dufault is a Republican member of the Washington State House of Representatives, representing eastern Yakima County (15th District).


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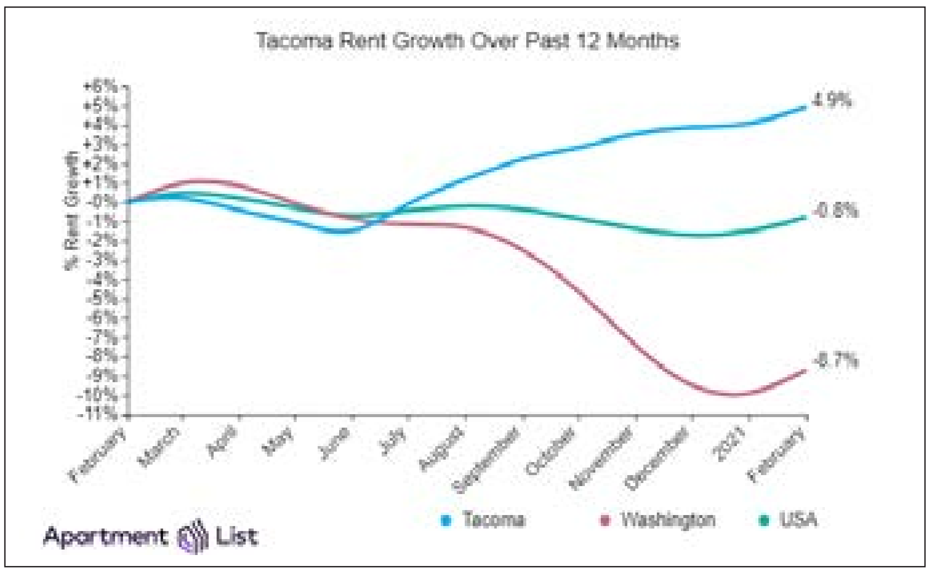

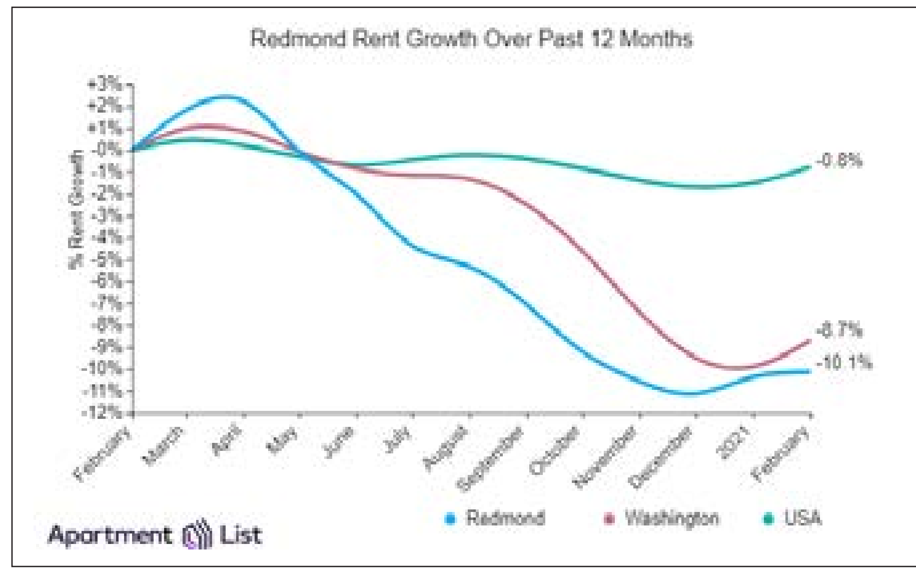

Rents May Have Hit Bottom

Continued from Page 1

metro, rents in Seattle and Bellevue are down significantly while rents in Tacoma, Everett, and Auburn are actually up. This is a pretty common 2020 trend across the country - we wrote about this in the fall when Seattle rents were negative but the average pandemic rent change in Seattle suburbs was positive," Popov said.

"Finally, a more broad point, is that the market-wide estimates are informative, but every unit is different.

"There may be opportunities to raise rents due to the desirability of a particular asset, or the opposite, even if that market as a whole is moving in a different direction. For any particular property manager, the name of the game is balancing rent growth with vacancy risk," Popov said.

Currently, median rents in Seattle are $1,366 for a one-bedroom apartment and $1,704 for a two-bedroom.

Across the Seattle metro:

- Lakewood has the least expensive rents in the Seattle metro, with a two-bedroom median of $1,411; the city has also experienced the fastest rent growth in the metro, with a year-over-year increase of 6.1 percent.
- Over the past year, Seattle proper has seen the biggest rent drop in the metro, with a decline of 19.5 percent.
- Redmond has the most expensive rents of the largest cities in the Seattle metro, with a two-bedroom median of $2,114; rents grew 0.3 percent over the past month but decreased 10.1 percent over the past year.
- Washington as a whole has logged -8.7 percent year-over-year decline, while other cities across the state have seen rents sharply on the rise.
- For example, rents have grown by 7.2 percent in Spokane and 6.2 percent in Vancouver in the Portland Metro area.

City	Median 1BR Rent	Median 2BR Rent	M/M Rent Growth	Y/Y Rent Growth
Seattle	$1,370	$1,700	2.1%	-19.5%
Tacoma	$1,100	$1,440	0.8%	4.9%
Bellevue	$1,910	$2,040	1.6%	-10.0%
Everett	$1,180	$1,470	0.2%	1.5%
Kent	$1,260	$1,610	-0.8%	-0.9%
Renton	$1,400	$1,840	0.5%	-2.7%
Federal Way	$1,350	$1,590	0.9%	3.6%
Auburn	$1,220	$1,490	1.1%	2.9%
Lakewood	$1,070	$1,410	-0.1%	6.1%
Redmond	$1,880	$2,110	0.3%	-10.1%
Kirkland	$1,780	$2,060	-0.4%	-5.1%
Lynnwood	$1,190	$1,470	-0.7%	-0.7%
Bothell	$1,650	$1,900	1.3%	-2.7%
Issaquah	$1,640	$2,160	-0.2%	-3.9%

711 Powell Ave. SW, Suite 101
Renton, WA 98057
Ph. 425-656-9077
Fax. 425-656-9087
admin@wmfha.org

Washington Multi Family Housing Association

Recognizing Difference-Makers

The past twelve months have been unbelievably challenging for everyone. A year ago, we learned of a world-wide pandemic increasing its scope and breadth throughout our state and across the nation. Most of us did not realize the far-reaching ramifications of COVID-19.

Confused and afraid, we stood together as a state, a country and an industry. We allowed our beliefs and our values to steer our efforts: to be safe, to care for our family, to help others, and to serve the residents of our rental communities.

How we did business changed almost overnight. Working from home - a new thing for most of us. Don't go out unless you have to – but we like going out. Restaurants, bars, theaters, music venues, cruises, all closed for public health reasons. Job losses and loss of connectivity and social activity was the new normal.

The rental housing industry and WMFHA remained steadfast in our service to a higher goal – to help promote housing choices for those who call our rentals their homes. Member businesses and their employees banded together to protect jobs, employee health and well-being, and resident needs.

Now one year later, and still enduring the devastation the pandemic has brought to all of us, we look back not with gloom or despair, but with pride and optimism. We learned a lot, about ourselves and the world we live and work in.

We learned new ways to keep connected. We learned new tools that allowed us to do our work efficiently. We figured out how to maintain work-life balance under extreme circumstances never before contemplated. We're getting through it, together.

Despite losing members of our community and possibly family members to this virus, we are seeing signs of improvement and a glimmer of "getting back to normal." What today's normal actually looks like is still unclear. However, we welcome some form of return to what our lives were like back in 2019.

Our Own Unsung Heroes

Now is the time to look back and praise accomplishments, thank fellow Washingtonians, cherish what we have rather than lament what we don't, and work much harder to accomplish our collective goals.

Our gracious onsite teams, both on the office-management side and the maintenance-service side, should be praised for their efforts and accomplishments. Despite uncertainty and personal risk, they held together the most important functions of their jobs – to provide homes for families and individuals to grow their lives and seek their dreams.

Management teams worked with one another to pivot and keep up communication and togetherness. New ways of accomplishing routine tasks were developed. Motivation, leadership, and mutual respect brought teams closer together.

And guess what? We made it through 2020. Much of what we learned can and will be used as we move forward in a hopefully post-pandemic world. That is exciting in many ways. What we need now is to take a little time to recognize our own efforts and those around us.

Celebrate Mutual Successes

WMFHA held its annual Emerald Awards recognition event in March this year. Yes, the event was what we now call "virtual," rather than at the Bellevue Hyatt with a lovely dinner, a little wine, good company, and everyone dressed up to the nines.

That did not diminish the honor and pride this multifamily family felt for the Emerald Award nominees and finalists, and award recipients recognized during the celebration gala.

The dedication, humility, and modesty of the award nominees makes it challenging to judge accomplishments. Housing providers don't toot their own horns or brag about how great they are. They do their work without fanfare. That's why Emerald Awards and other ways our industry can reward accomplishments and thank our peers for their efforts are so important. Who doesn't need a pat on the back once in a while?

Your Partner in Education

Your fellow employees have invested themselves in their work and their craft. Invest in them. Ask them what their career goals are. Ask them what their skills and passions are, or what they feel they could learn or do better. Show them they have a path to achieve their personal and professional goals in your organization.

There has never been a better time to start a career in residential property management (RPM). Demand for

See 'Difference-Makers' on Page 10

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Singh
BLU
AVENUES RESIDENTIAL
ROOKIE OF THE YEAR - MAINTENANCE
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Evaul
JUNCTION 160, MOSAIC ON GREENWOOD &
VIEW AT BITTERLAKE
CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD FKA PINNACLE
COMMUNITY MANAGER OF THE YEAR 151-300
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ORIGIN
CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD FKA PINNACLE
LEASING CONSULTANT OF THE YEAR 1-300
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LINCOLN PROPERTY COMPANY
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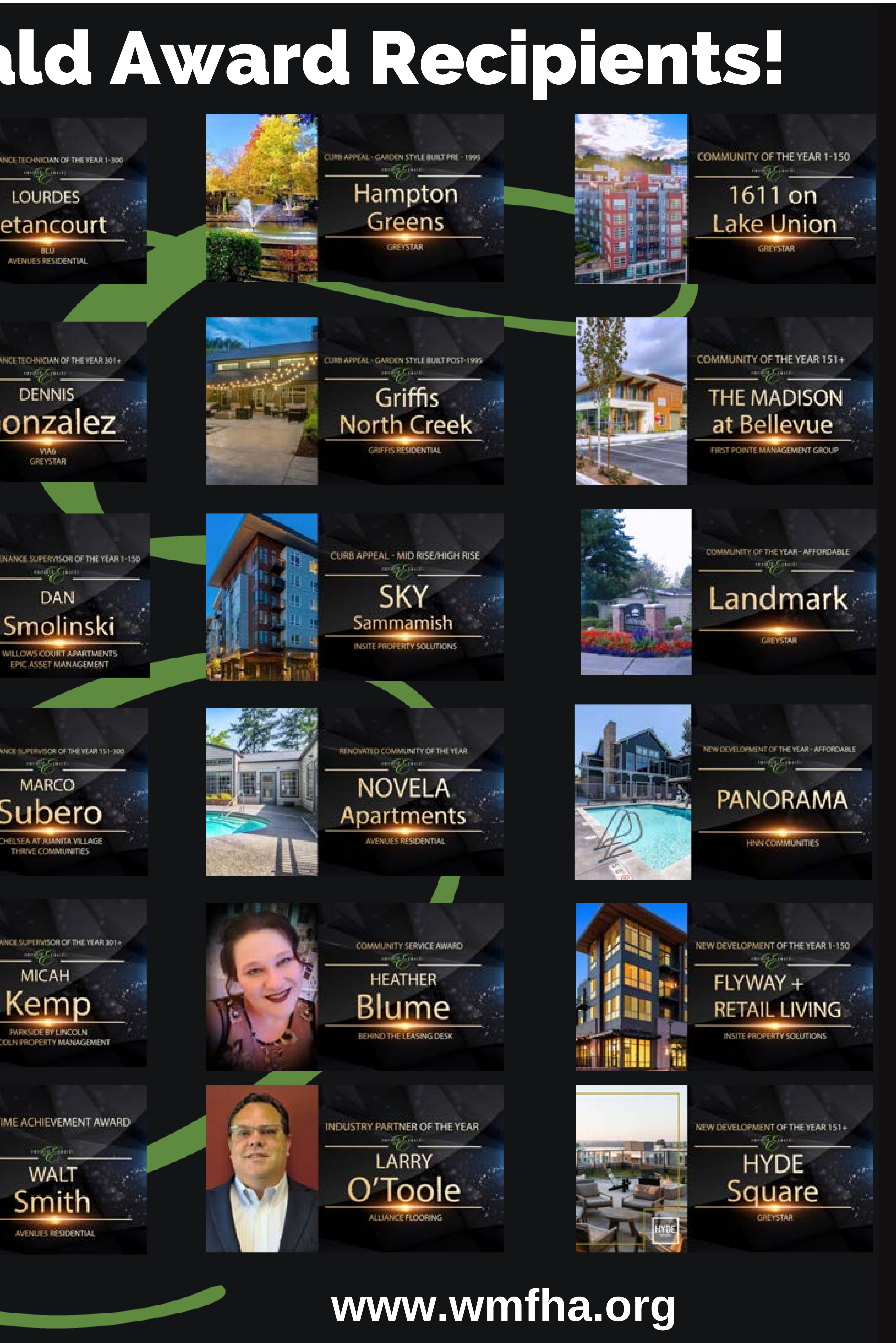
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Difference-Makers Lauded

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rental housing is growing rapidly, and so is the need for talented, creative, and passionate people to help build strong communities.

This opportunity to give back exemplifies the spirit of an industry that supports and celebrates individuals. We strive for inclusivity and equity. We seek to attract those who may not know of the many career paths and benefits of joining the multifamily housing industry. We want diverse, talented newcomers with varied experiences and attributes to begin to build their work-lives around residential property management.

RPM is a meaningful, dynamic, and highly professional field, dedicated to helping people choose and enjoy the housing lifestyle that's right for them. Working in a team atmosphere allows you to build strong relationships with co-workers while developing your own leadership abilities.

WMFHA has many career development and educational opportunities available to grow and learn new skills. The association recently awarded more than $27,000 in education scholarships for 2021 career development opportunities, such as credential programs like Certified Apartment Manager (CAM), Certified Apartment Portfolio Supervisor (CAPS), Certified Apartment Leasing Professional (CALP), Certified Apartment Supplier (CAS), and Certificate for Apartment Maintenance Technicians (CAMT).

Another bright spot in our current normal are the frequent online webinars and seminars that can be attended from the convenience of your living room or dining room (in jeans or even sweatpants).

WMFHA continues to offer training from industry subject matter experts and facilitators in a virtual environment. Our 6 Feet Apart webinar series are free, bite-sized informational opportunities to share valuable knowledge and learn new skills.

Legal and legislative seminars are critical due to the ever-changing political landscape of our industry. Popular Fair Housing Fridays are for both new and accomplished members of our industry.

Working for a Better Tomorrow

Property management is a growing field with opportunities to excel. An industry where we can give back to others while meeting our own personal desires. Once you experience this exciting property management field, it's hard to step away.

That is why participation in your local housing association is a critical part of your long-term career strategy and helps to give back to the industry that serves you and your companies.

Let's all work together to make 2021 a memorable year. Let's celebrate and share our successes. Let's help out others and mentor those who can use our experience and talent to learn. Let's take our craft to even higher heights in the year to come.

We are WMFHA. We are multifamily.

WMFHA supports the rental housing industry by providing quality educational opportunities, coordinating networking events for personal growth, and by advocating for legislation equitable to our industry and the broader community. To learn more about membership in this passionate organization, simply call us at 425.656.9077 or visit our website at www.wmfha.org. Follow us on Facebook and our other social channels for up to date information on association activities.

How to Get Rid of Tenants Who Damage Your Rentals

Continued from Page 1

Do I just allow them to keep living there in the filth, or can I even evict them to make the home either habitable or tear it down?

They are paying the rent on time. But I don't want to be found as the one at fault for the home being unsafe to inhabit.

We are currently replacing a stove and found several dead mice and unspeakable unthinkable filthy conditions under the stove and counters. We have to wear hazmat protection to work in the home.

What do I do? **- Yvonne**

Dear Landlord Yvonne: Sounds like you have a mess on your hands.

If the tenants are paying the rent as required, you may have difficulty with eviction during a pandemic.

My advice is to wait until the pandemic and eviction moratorium is over and then tell the tenants you are going to renovate the property and they will need to move.

Since they have been there for many years, and have paid rent for many years, I would give them time to find a new place, but give them a definite time by which they must be out.Also, let them know, at that time, legally with notice, that the month-to-month lease is terminating.

I understand your distress at finding the property in poor condition, but if they stay for a few more months, after having been there for 13 years, I can't see it getting much worse.

If you can wait, your odds for an easy tenant removal go way up.

I know it may be very difficult for you to bide your time right now but if you push to remove these tenants now, during a pandemic – especially if there is a disability – you may not win in court.

Can a Landlord Install a Security Camera on a Rental Property?

Dear Landlord Hank: I have been told that cameras are an invasion of privacy. However, I am aware that several professionally managed sites use them.

My situation involves use of cameras (NOT pointed at individual doors) placed to cut down on trash and toys that make my rentals dangerous and unattractive to tenants. Would you please clarify what the law says? We don't want to leave our tenants having to report their neighbors.**-Pam**

Dear Landlord Pam: You'd have to check with your state and local laws, but you should be able to place cameras viewing common areas without an issue as long as the cameras are not hidden and not IN someone's residence, as that could be construed as spying.

Also, cameras with audio capability are another issue you would need to check on.

I think it is a great idea but I would let current and future residents know in advance that cameras are being put in use to cover common areas around the property.

Hank Rossi started in real estate as a child watching his father take care of the family rental maintenance business and now with his sister co- owns a real estate brokerage focusing on property management and leasing, and he also continues to manage his real estate portfolio in Florida and Atlanta. Visit Landlord Hank's website: https://rentsrq.com

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Water Damage: When Should You Call a Professional?

By Kelly Stone and David Schmidt

Certain plumbing issues can easily be handled on your own. But there are other times when it's best to call in the experts.

Here are five examples of such situations.

1. Moisture has gone from one unit to another unit or space:

At times one unit does not think water has gone into another space but the source unit should be addressed by a professional who will assess this and then come up with a strategy as to how to handle it and if it has spread. The professional will make appropriate recommendations based on type of water, how long it has been wet, if materials can be salvaged and more.

2. When you have identified microbial growth on any building surface:

You might find it on anything from walls to floors to cabinets and frequently the growth is noticed before a leak is detected. A technician can determine if it related to plumbing, siding or roof failures, poor air circulation or other causes to then make recommendations as to how to best handle it.

3. Drain water backs up out of a toilet, sink or tub:

All drain water should be considered highly contaminated and when it soaks into carpet or drywall it can have adverse health effects along with being a super fuel for other types of microbial growth. Most people assume that sewage is highly contaminated but any drain water is considered highly contaminated and just as dangerous.

4. When you need help finding a leak:

Many times, people just think of plumbing when leaks occur yet when you are not sure where the water is coming from, a certified technician can help expose if something is coming from the roof, windows, siding or more. Additionally, they can help eliminate sources thus pinpointing the root cause.

5. To assess the extent of a complex water-related incident:

Complex water related incidents can include many scenarios. Some examples are a mystery leak that is finally resolved and then discovered to have affected many other areas that are along the water lines. It is always best to err on the side of caution with having inspections done regularly and addressing any issue when it is small before it becomes a bigger issue.

Kelly Stone is with Fischer Business Development and David Schmidt is Construction Manager, Master Water Restorer.

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Fischer Restoration
6608 220th St. SW
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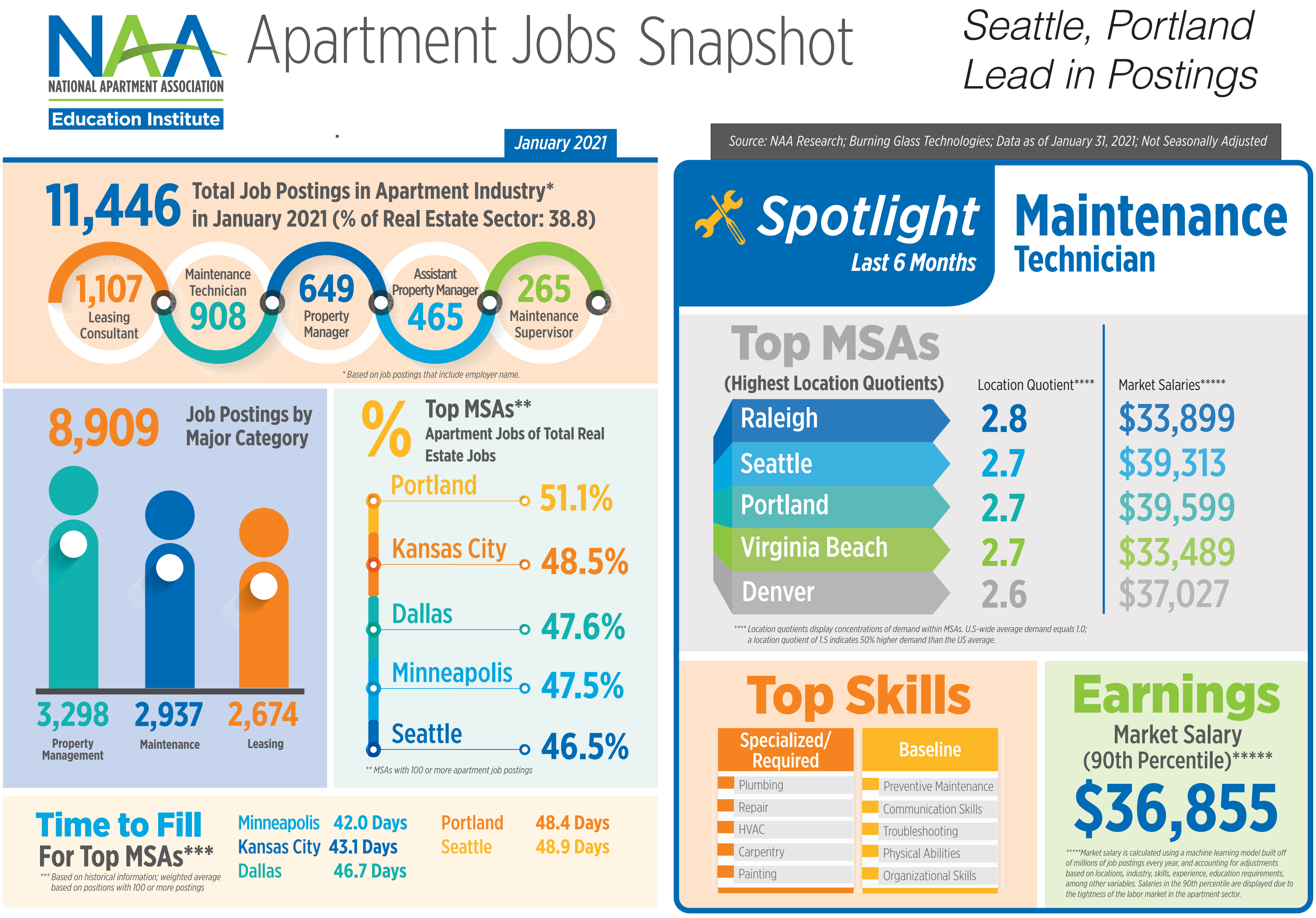

National Apartment Association Education Institute

Seattle and Portland are in the top positions for apartment job postings, according to the latest report from the National Apartment Association.

In January's edition of the National Apartment Association's Education Institute Apartment Jobs Snapshot, available jobs in the rental-housing industry comprised nearly 39 percent of the real-estate sector.

Metros with the highest concentration of job postings included Portland, Kansas City, Dallas, Minneapolis and Seattle.

The most recent report spotlights the maintenance technician.

Demand for these positions was highest in Portland, Seattle and Denver, where market salaries also surpassed the national average.

The top specialized skills employers are seeking included plumbing, repair, HVAC, carpentry and painting.

NAAEI's mission is to provide broad-based education, training and recruitment programs that attract, nurture and retain high-quality professionals and develop tomorrow's apartment industry leaders.

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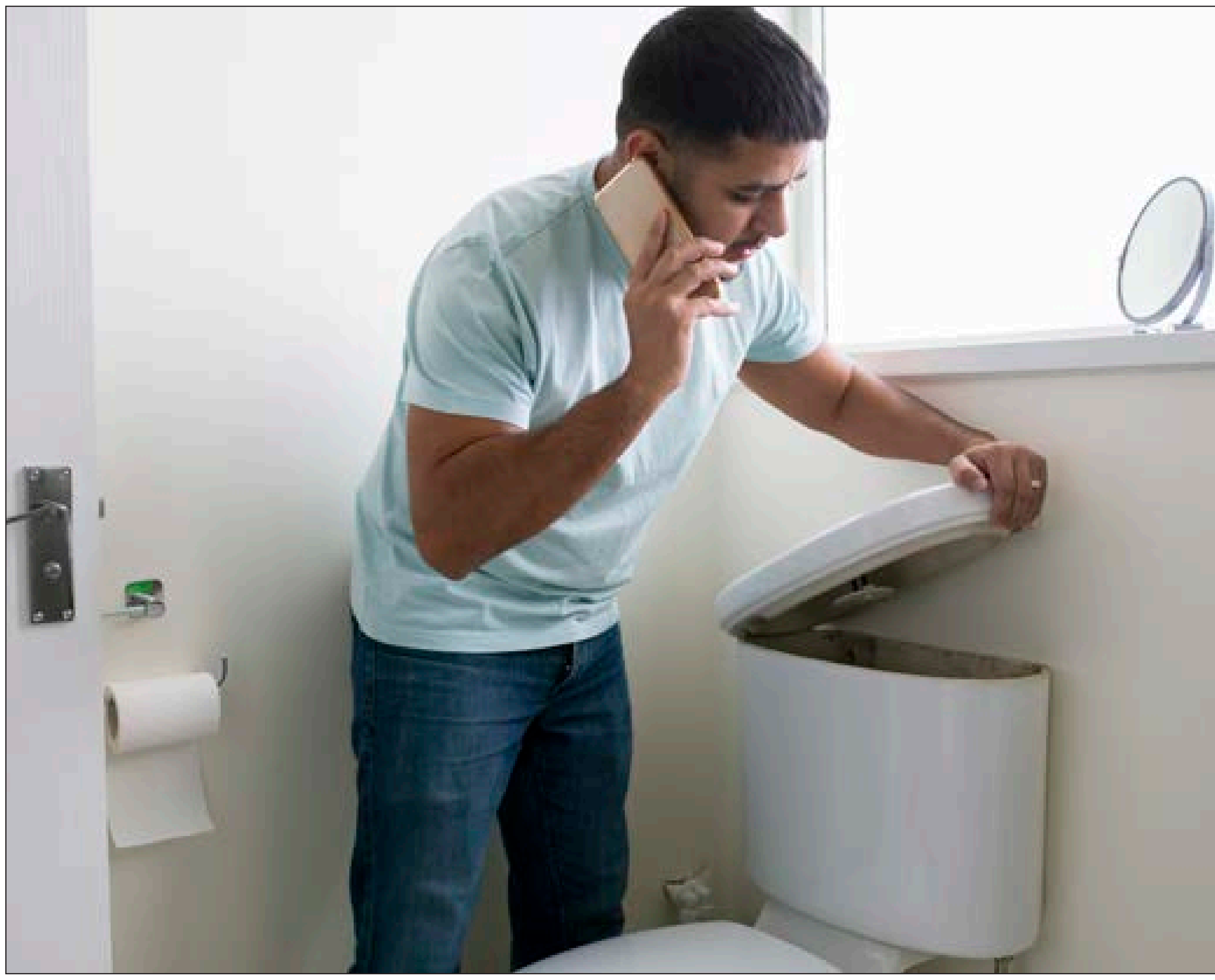
Fix Leaks: Get Tenants on Your Team

By Melissa Levo



If you are a property manager, you already know that leaks happen to everyone and every property at some point. It will probably come as no surprise that leaks account for 12 percent of residential water use nationally. That is a lot of wasted water and money. Proactively communicating with your tenants can help you address leaks quickly and keep your utility bills as low as possible.

Running toilets are often the culprit

When tenants think of water leaks, they usually picture a dripping faucet or flooding under the sink. However, toilets are often to blame for large amounts of wasted water. The rubber flapper at the bottom of the tank wears out, allowing water to leak from the tank to the bowl and down the drain. Flappers have an average lifespan of around 5 years.

Rates vary, but in Seattle, a moderate toilet leak could cost $200 a month in water and sewer charges. One running full-bore could cost as much as $3,000 a month or more. This can happen if the flapper is stuck in the open position or if the water level in the tank is set incorrectly.

Research shows tenants want to help

Tenants are your eyes and ears in a unit and are essential to addressing leaks quickly. The Saving Water Partnership conducted interviews with multifamily tenants in 2019 and learned that most tenants want to use water efficiently. The annoying sound from a running toilet or a dripping faucet also motivated renters to fix leaks. However, they do not always realize how much water a leak can waste or know the term "running toilet."

Nearly 70% of those interviewed said they would report a running toilet within days of noticing it. Many identified having a responsive landlord or building staff as a reason they reported issues quickly. On the other hand, others said they did not report leaks right away because they did not want to be perceived as complainers.

Encourage tenants to report leaks

At move-in:

- Let tenants know that you want them to report leaks and how they should do so.
- Make sure tenants know the signs of a running toilet and how much water they waste.
- Address common misconceptions. Many tenants think that jiggling the handle fixes a running toilet and do not realize a repair is needed.

Once a year:

- Send an email and post signs in high-traffic areas about finding and reporting leaks. Use the poster on the opposite page.
- Find additional printable posters, email templates, and resources at savingwater.org.

When a tenant reports a leak:

- Respond quickly.
- Thank tenants for reporting leaks.

Other best practices to catch leaks early:

- Monitor utility bills closely to catch high consumption quickly. Look at water consumption for each meter on your bill rather than the total dollar amount.
- Learn how to calculate your property's expected "gallons per person per day" at savingwater.org.
- Replace toilet flappers and check tank water levels during turnovers or as preventative maintenance.

Replacing vs. repairing toilets

If you have consistently high water use and have checked for leaks, old toilets may be to blame. Replacing toilets older than 2004 is usually cost-effective. While early "low-flow" toilets often needed double-flushing, today's water-efficient toilets work well and save water. Find toilet performance ratings at map-testing.com.

If your property receives water from a member of the Saving Water Partnership, you may be eligible for rebates to replace old toilets. Learn more at savingwater.org.

Melissa Levo is the Residential Indoor Water Conservation Program Manager for the Saving Water Partnership, which is an organization comprised of 18 water utilities in King and Snohomish Counties. Find tips, tools, and rebates to use water wisely at savingwater.org. You can contact Melissa at melissa.levo@seattle.gov or (206) 615-1282.

Notice a Leak? Report it!

Detecting leaks is one of the most effective actions you can take to prevent water waste.

Report leaks in your apartment to your property manager immediately.

DID YOU KNOW?

Toilets are the #1 water user indoors and often leak. Running toilets can use more water than taking 15 showers a day.

Running toilets are usually caused by water leaking from the tank to the bowl through the flapper (a rubber valve at the bottom of the tank).

Look, listen, and lift the lid to learn if your toilet is leaking.

- ✓ Does the toilet tank refill constantly or in between flushes?
- ✓ Does water flow from the tank to the bowl without flushing?
- ✓ Do you need to jiggle the handle to stop the toilet water from leaking?
- ✓ Do you see or feel the flapper showing signs of wear?

Visit savingwater.org for information about these tips and other water-saving tools and rebates for your home.

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