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Multifamily Advisor - "Going Green" Newsletter

Given that we publish an electronic only newsletter, and maintain an online only vendor guide, we thought it only natural to cover the topic of "going green". In this issue of the Multifamily Advisor we offer some great ways companies are making strides to manage with conservation in mind.



Top Providers



Save a tree! More like save thousands of trees by Going Green with the "Paperless Leasing Office"

Given the incredibly paper-intensive nature of multifamily operations, the idea of turning a leasing office into a "green"

operation is enough to turn even the most seasoned professional a little green around the gills.

Consider a single management company with 10,000 units in its portfolio. If this company's standard lease document contains 20 pages, then for those 10,000 units it will generate 200,000 pages of lease forms every year. That's 40 cartons of paper for the lease documents alone. Add resident applications, income verification documents, resident notices, environmental compliance documents, and resident utility bills and receipts, and it could top 300,000 pages a year. The number swells even higher if you include purchasing, hiring, vendor compliance, and other business-critical documents.

Going green indeed!

But there is a solution that can help companies reduce reliance on paper and promote green corporate values: a fully integrated document management system like OneSite Document Management System from RealPage.

At its simplest, a document management system is a centralized computer system that stores, catalogs, and allows users to instantly retrieve a wide range of electronic documents or images of documents. The first benefit of a robust document management system is an improved archive of the hundreds of thousands of pages generated by a given apartment property each year. Instead of a company relying on managers to keep documents related to an individual resident together, a document management system can accomplish this by automatically linking all of a resident's files, such as the guest card, application, lease, billing notices, and payment history.

Other green benefits include eliminating the need to fax or ship documents from the property to the home office for review or approvals; saving expenses associated with printing, mailing, and physical storage (such as renting an off-site storage unit); and increased employee productivity through faster search and reduced printing and filing time.

One of the most exciting developments in document management systems is the addition of e-signature capabilities. RealPage is both the first, and the largest, multifamily software supplier to have developed a robust architecture for a legally valid end-to-end multifamily electronic document workflow, creating a true paperless (and greener) leasing office.

If you're serious about taking your leasing office and, ultimately, your

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entire company, to greener pastures, then check out a document management system like OneSite Document Management System from RealPage.

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Email Michael Cunningham at michael.cunningham@realpage.com.



Water conservation is the cure and Leak Doctor has the perfect prescription!

Water represents a significant amount of the costs in operating multifamily housing both indoor and outdoors. Indoor water use is primarily by the occupants of the units through the use of toilets, showers, faucets, clothes washers and dishwashers. Outdoor water is for areas that include landscaping, pools, spas, fountains and washing cars.

Saving water in multifamily can be achieved indoor by repairing leaks and installing low water using devices.

Items such as 1.6gpm toilets, 1.5 or 2.2 gpm aerators on the faucet, low flow showerheads, energy star rated dishwashers and clothes washer. Outdoor areas can save water through reducing lawn areas, not having rotors and sprayheads on the same irrigation zone, rain sensors that work to shut off irrigation during wet periods, use of drip irrigations systems in flowerbeds and bushes. If your property has a car wash limit use by adding pay per use equipment or timer assisted water to reduce water use time.

Water loss can also occur when hidden leaks occur under your slab or in the irrigation piping. A quality leak detection service can help locate and stop these leaks at a very inexpensive cost to the property.

Another way to help reduce your cost of retrofit is to contact your local utility department and ask to speak with their conservation coordinator. Both electric and water utilities may offer free evaluation of your properties to locate ways to lower your utility costs. Water utilities may also offer you mobile irrigation lab audits to help determine if your irrigation systems are working effectively. Some utilities offer toilet rebates, water conservation kits, volume discounts, and sometime offering actual hardware to install yourself. Outdoors also check to see if your irrigation is on a separate meter to avoid paying sewer charges.

Finally, to truly effect change you need to help change the behavior of your tenants to use less water. You can accomplish this with water conservation tips included in your monthly newsletters, provide a utility conservation workshop for the community in your clubhouse, offer tenants assistance in fixing leaks found in showerheads, toilets, faucets (usually it's a \$1 washer) and provide common area laundry equipment that are water saving equipment.

Water conservation is something you can design into new properties to help you lower your water use for future developments. By using

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Email the Leak Doctor at leakdr@earthlink.net.



"Green light go"! The Donaldson Group in Maryland is pulling ahead when it comes to energy conservation.

The Donaldson Group (TDG), a multifamily housing real estate management firm based in Rockville, MD, is tackling the problem of rising energy costs in tandem with their Greening Program. The brain child of TDG Utilities Administrator

Nathan Vanderlinden and Greening Program Coordinator Angelique Wheelock, Operation Green Light was unveiled portfolio-wide on January 25, 2008.

Under Operation Green Light, each TDG property purchased five compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs for each apartment home. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, these new "green" bulbs use 75% less energy than their incandescent counterparts. With minimal effort, The Donaldson Group properties have automatically reduced energy consumption everywhere these CFL bulbs are employed.

To get the residents involved and to emphasize the importance of a teamwork approach to energy conservation, TDG distributed flyers telling the residents of their energy conservation intentions and inviting them to come to the rental office to pick up their five bulbs. When residents claim their bulbs, they are asked to sign the TDG Energy Saving Pledge, a document that outlines specific ways residents can reduce their energy consumption. Joann Kay DiMeglio, long term client of The Donaldson Group, feels that informed residents are better stewards of the properties' resources and their own energy bills: "We need to help our residents by educating them," she said. To this end, energy saving pamphlets are distributed to the residents with their CFL bulbs and in all move-in packages.

Many of the TDG communities used parties and other resident functions to advertise Operation Green Light. The response has been overwhelmingly positive. Valerie Welch, property manager of The Commons at Cowan Boulevard, a 254 unit property in Fredericksburg, VA, has had an impressive 86% of her residents sign the TDG Energy pledge since the program's implementation in late January. She says the residents "are absolutely ecstatic" with the program. She believes the CFL bulb initiative is a win-win situation for The Donaldson Group, its clients, and its residents: "We are doing something for our future grandchildren as well as something to save ourselves money right now." Operation Green Light has also had a noticeable positive impact in resident relations



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and retention. Ms. Welch attributes this to the program's ability to "open-up conversation". Residents are impressed that The Donaldson Group cares about them as well as the environment.

For more information about Operation Green Light and how you might implement a similar program at your community, contact Angelique Wheelock at awheelock@thedonaldsongroup.com.

[Learn more about CFLs.](#)

[Learn more energy saving tips.](#)



Making an impact on the environment can be as simple as educating residents and encouraging "green" best practices.

Property management companies have an incredible opportunity to help make a positive impact on the environment. Make 2008 the year to Go Green and start by communicating energy savings tips to your residents. We applaud property managers that are at the forefront of conservation. Pamphlets and tips can be included in your move in packets. Your staff can also be very beneficial in your efforts

to promote the conservation of energy and water by having knowledge and access to conservation tips. Here's just a sample of the information that can help make a difference.

CONSERVATION TIPS:

WATER

Run only full loads in your dishwasher and washing machine.

Turn off the faucet while shaving and brushing your teeth.

Check for toilet tank leaks monthly by adding food coloring to the toilet tank. Toilet leaks waste 600 to 2400 gallons of water per day.

Save both water and energy by taking shorter showers and half-full baths.

Each cycle of a washing machine uses 32 - 48 gallons of water so run efficient loads.

Each cycle of a dishwasher uses about 16 gallons.

GAS (HEAT ENERGY)

Use a microwave or toaster oven to cook small portions and a conventional oven or stovetop for larger items.

A watched pot will eventually boil -- but putting a lid on it reduces cooking time and energy use. Also, match the pot size to burner size to avoid energy waste.

Place the faucet lever on the kitchen sink in the cold position when using small amounts of water; placing the lever in the hot position uses energy to heat the water even though it may never reach the

faucet.

When the fireplace is not in use, keep the flue damper tightly closed. A chimney is designed specifically for smoke to escape, so until you close it, warm air escapes- 24 hours a day!

ELECTRICITY

Set your thermostat as low as is comfortable in the winter and as high as is comfortable in the summer.

Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs.

Replacing 4 would save as much energy as removing 7 million cars from the road.

Still think one household can't make a difference? Education is the key to for a cleaner, safer, more resourceful environment. Share these tips with others. You will be amazed at how much it adds up.

For more conservation ideas, visit www.minolusa.com.

Minol USA, based in Dallas, Texas is a conservation company specializing in utility expense recovery and energy management solutions.

[Learn more about Minol USA.](#)

[Visit them on the web.](#)

Email Shelley Pace at space@minolusa.com.



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By equipping projects to meet ENERGY STAR^(R) qualified appliance standards, multifamily professionals have the opportunity to differentiate themselves within the

marketplace while conveying that they take the time to meet their customers' needs.

ENERGY STAR^(R) qualified appliances use 10---50 percent less energy and water than standard models. Over time, the money saved on utility bills can even make up for the cost of purchasing such appliance models.

Best of all, manufacturers offer energy efficient products across all price ranges, providing something for every style of decor, lifestyle and budget while maintaining performance.

Decreasing Energy Consumption

Refrigerators are known to use more energy than any other home

appliance; however, an ENERGY STAR^(R) qualified refrigerator uses only about half the energy of one manufactured before 1993. In most cases, the larger the refrigerator, the more energy consumed. For spaces with limited need for refrigeration, refrigerator drawers are just the right size without wasting space.

Reducing Water Waste

Some ENERGY STAR^(R) qualified front loading washer models can save up to 70 percent more energy and use 70 percent less water using the normal cycle than top-load washers manufactured before 2004.

Also, using ENERGY STAR^(R) qualified dishwashers --- those which reduce energy consumption by at least 41 percent over federal minimum efficiency standards --- is actually less expensive than washing by hand. This can mean significant utility savings while helping the environment.

For more information on ENERGY STAR^(R) qualified appliances from Jenn-Air, KitchenAid, Maytag, Whirlpool and Amana brands, visit insideadvantage.com or call 800-253-3977.

[Learn more about Whirlpool Corporation.](#)

[Learn more about other companies who supply energy efficient appliances.](#)

"Going Green" is great! "Giving Green" is even better! Here are links to some cool items we found, that companies are using for marketing and promotions.

- [Electric Eco-Kit](#)
- [Gas Eco-Kit](#)
- [Water Eco-Kit](#)
- [Eco-Wipes](#)
- [Bag Recycler](#)
- [Recycled Market Bags](#)
- [Boat Tote](#)
- [Eco-Umbrella](#)
- [Promo Cards You Can Plant](#)

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