

December 2016

COMMUNITY MOMENTS

A RealManage Publication

Jessica Henderson, CMCA®

Director of Community Association Management

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INSURANCE

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Words From Our President

I hope everyone enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday. Our RealManage Ambassadors did a fantastic job in November giving back to the community. Together, they selflessly donated over 1,000 pounds of food, providing enough to feed over 1,100 people. Here we are in the last month of 2016 entering the most wonderful time of the year. The approach we take in December sets the tone for next year. We use the motto “finish strong” at RealManage to characterize our posture and energy toward serving our client communities at the tail end of the year. The last week of the year is a time to reflect on accomplishments, enjoy time with friends and family, and recharge our batteries to start the new year off with strength and vigor. I am always humbled by the hard work, passion and dedication of all the association board members we serve. Each of you is an unpaid volunteer with many other competing obligations, making your service even more admirable. This is a great time of year to communicate to the community members all of the wonderful accomplishments from 2016 and discuss what the goals are for 2017. I am a firm believer that morale is directly linked to being aligned with organization objectives. The most successful communities we manage communicate goals and objectives each year and call for teams to take ownership in projects to achieve them. As we wrap up the year, I want to thank you for your commitment to the RealManage family, and we look forward to serving you in 2017. If there is anything you feel we need to improve on for 2017, please let me know by emailing: clientsatisfaction@realmanage.com.

Wishing you and your family Happy Holidays and best wishes for the New Year.

Chris Ayoub
President

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Employee Spotlight |

Jessica Henderson, DCAM

Jessica Henderson, CMCA® began her career with RealManage in 2010 and has since then, set the bar high as a humble, lead-by-example, Director of Community Association Manager in our Houston Branch.



Written by Nicole Mancos, Vice President- Houston

Jessica Henderson was born and raised in Madison, Wisconsin. Her family is what brought her to Houston, and that is when she fell in love with the big city life! Jessica joined the RealManage family in 2010 as an Assistant Community Association Manager (ACAM) and was the only individual in this position to support the entire Houston branch. Though she previously worked with multifamily properties and earned her Real Estate license, Jessica was quick to learn the ropes and excel in her ACAM role and was promoted to a Community Association Manager (CAM) within the first three months of employment. Over the next four years, she grew her knowledge as a portfolio manager, got a firm grasp on Houston operations, and earned her Certified Manager of Community Associations (CMCA) certification through the Community Association Institute (CAI). Her many accomplishments led her to the Transition Community Association

Manager (TCAM) position. Jessica truly embodies the RealManage core values of integrity, respect, selflessness, personal relationships, and always improving. Because Jessica upholds these values, she provides the highest level of support and service to our valued client communities. Within a year as a TCAM, Jessica was promoted to a management level supervisory role as a Director of Community Association Management (DCAM). She currently supervises seven portfolio managers, two ACAMs, has finished her Association Management Specialist (AMS) certification through CAI and completed her Associate Degree in Business Management.

Vice President of Houston, Nicole Mancos, explains that “Jessica is a well-rounded leader and supervisor. Her experience in numerous roles over the years has shaped her character and made her an expert in her field. Branch managers seek her out for support and advice, and the best quality about Jessica is her humble attitude.”

Jessica said, “I love finding ways to help my managers seek solutions to every challenge that comes our way because overcoming obstacles inspires me to do more for them, and it drives me to continue my training so I can assist even more. The Houston branch has a real family bond that we share, and the level of support that we share amongst the team is unbreakable.”

Thank you, Jessica, for your commitment to the RealManage mission, core values and providing the highest level service to our client communities. You are an incredible asset to the company.

Keith Chandler, of the Forest Creek Homeowners Association in Austin, is a perfect example of an outstanding Board Member. He selflessly devotes an endless amount of time to the Association in the interest of the members of the community. Mr. Chandler always attends board meetings fully prepared to discuss agenda items, often with reports to hand out detailing research he has personally conducted on the topic at hand, or on-site meetings he has taken the time to coordinate with association vendors. He can look at the big picture, and not get bogged down in minor issues. Additionally, Mr. Chandler will raise questions to be addressed and make recommendations for effective solutions. An example of an effective solution was when he recommended the upgrade of the security system. While management put the project out to bid, he took the time to meet with multiple vendors at the site to go through the detailed logistics of the project to be sure that their bid would be for proper scope of the project. He made himself available to be there when the equipment was installed. He tested it and followed up with the vendor to work out the issues. This example is one of the

numerous projects where Keith has taken the initiative to give of his time in the best interest of the community. He has been the driving force behind a million-dollar fence/wall replacement project, meeting with several engineering firms and vendors. He was also the driving force behind the installation of a reclaimed water system a few years ago that not only saved the association a great deal on water costs but was a betterment for the environment. No matter what the project, large or small, Mr. Chandler can regularly be counted on to do his research, generously give of his time to meet with bidders, follow up on the work after it is completed, and never expects anything in return. He is an outstanding example of a board member who genuinely cares about the upkeep and betterment of the community for its residents, and gives selflessly of his time and knowledge towards that end goal.

Both the Forest Creek HOA and RealManage Austin benefit greatly from the volunteer spirit of Keith Chandler. He is a real pleasure to work with and exemplifies all of the characteristics of an effective Homeowners Association Board Member.



Written by
Ben Kirby and
Mary Arnold

CiraNet| Contact Management Enhancements

CiraNet supports a robust owner contact management tool that allows owners and community managers to store multiple contacts in the property owner record. Phone numbers and emails can be tracked by individual and not generalized by the property owner. We have added support to designate an email and/or telephone number as the primary contact. The ability to subscribe to standard and/or emergency messages for email or text message was also added in the recent enhancement. Management company staff can correspond to the subscribers with mass messaging via email and/or text on a compatible device (additional charges may apply, subscription required). Some of the key features include:

- Contact order preference for phone numbers and email addresses
- Contact Type (e.g. owner, household member, property manager or other)
- Description (e.g. Sally's cell)
- Number / Email Type (e.g. Mobile, Home, Work, etc.)
- Contact preferences: Opt to receive standard communication or emergency communication
- A Photo of the Owner(s)
- Text messaging is limited to mobile-compatible devices





Holiday Decoration Safety Inside and Outside Your Home

Written by Katie Vaughan , Vice President CiraConnect Insurance Services

For many people, decorating their home for the holidays is one of the joys of winter. However, amid the festivity of decking out a residence with lights, a tree and all the trimmings, certain dangers exist that, if not recognized, can lead to hazardous situations. If you live in an HOA community that encourages residents to decorate their homes for the holidays and you are looking forward to displaying season holiday decorations, be sure to follow the tips below.

BUY A RECENTLY CUT TREE

If you prefer to use a natural tree instead of an artificial one, be sure to purchase a tree that was recently cut. Trees that are cut days before purchase often have dry needles that are more likely to catch fire than fresh needles. The best way to ensure that a tree is recently cut is to buy it from a holiday tree farm that removes the tree from the ground right before you buy it. Because its needles are more resistant to heat, a fresh tree is safer to string with lights.

PLACE THE TREE AWAY FROM THE FIREPLACE

Fresh holiday trees are less likely to combust than dry ones, but even needles on evergreen trees in the wild are relatively combustible. Paintings on holiday greeting cards often show a glowing holiday tree sitting close to a crackling fire. The scene may look warm and cozy, but one popping ember from the fire could cause the tree to go up in smoke. If your home has a fireplace that you use in winter, be sure to set your holiday tree away from the fire.

Before lighting a fire, remove all greens, boughs, papers and other decorations from the fireplace area. Check to see that the flue is open. Burning evergreens and wrapping paper in the fireplace can be hazardous. Flames can flare out of control and send sparks flying into a room or up the chimney and ignite creosote deposits.

OBSERVE PRECAUTIONS FOR LIGHTS

Before you buy lights, look to see if they were tested by a safety certification company, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL). Look for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires or loose connections and discard all damaged sets. All outdoor lights need to be fastened securely to protect them from wind damage. Make sure all spotlights used to illuminate decorations are protected from the weather and are a safe distance from flammable objects.

Try not to use more than three standard size sets of lights per extension cord. Turn off all lights on trees and other decorations before going to bed or leaving the (club)house. Use timers to turn off outdoor lights. When stringing the lights, do not use more than three standard-sized light strings per extension cord. To be sure not to load an extension cord with too much voltage, check the

voltage rating of the lights and the voltage rating of the extension cord.

In addition, attempt to not hang lights on a metallic tree. If a lights malfunctions and exposes the tree to an electric charge, the tree could gather a high charge that seriously shocks anyone who touches it. Because no electrical product is infallible, another good safety practice is to only leave holiday lights on while you are home. If a string of lights malfunctions and creates a spray of sparks, you'll be able to address the situation soon after it happens. Then choosing trimmings such as holly, artificial snow, and ornaments, try to purchase products that are made from non-combustible or flame resistant materials. If children will visit your home over the holidays, you should also look for trimmings that are lead-free. If children will visit your home, it's also a good idea to choose trimmings that do not contain glass. If you do choose trimmings that contain glass, keep them hanging above the reach of children.

Once the holidays are over, how to stow the decorations becomes the issue. Fortunately, there are many products that make how to make storing them easier. Avoid trying to wrestle heavy objects up a set of stairs or into an attic. Try a rolling base instead. Test lights and discard strands that don't work. Wrap lights you want to use again around a spool. Stow smaller decorations in weatherproof plastic bins.

If there is not space to store your holiday decorations on-site, a unit in a storage facility might just be the answer. Be sure to let your insurance agent knows about this so it can be properly insured.

Best wishes to you for a safe and happy holiday season and a wonderful 2017 from everyone at CiraConnect Insurance Services.

4 TIPS FOR KEEPING GIFTS FROM BEING STOLEN IN YOUR COMMUNITY



Every year, thousands of people have a blue holiday after their gifts are stolen. A common time of year for home invasions and burglaries in general, the holiday season is a time when people must be especially vigilant about protecting their home and belongings from professional thieves. Taking the measures below will help you avoid becoming the target of holiday burglars who are looking to make an easy score by stealing presents. Here are four tips to help keep packages more secure.

1. Don't Put Presents Under the Tree

Not to be grinchy, but putting holiday gifts under the tree can be an invitation to have them stolen, particularly if the tree is easily visible through a window. If it's important for gifts to be placed under the tree, wait until the night before to put them there. Burglars are opportunistic criminals who look for the easiest way to get what they want. Putting gifts under the tree can serve as invitation for them to enter your home.

2. Hide Presents in Unusual Locations

Most burglars like to get in and out of a residence as quickly as possible. Consequently, they target places in a home where valuables are routinely kept, such as bedroom closets and dresser drawers. This is why police recommend people to store

valuables in unusual places. For example, placing gifts in the closet of your laundry room or behind the HVAC equipment in your basement is better than placing them under your bed or in a bedroom closet.

3. Shop Late Instead of Early

Although your home being burglarized is statistically unlikely, the longer gifts are in your residence, the greater the chance they will be stolen. Shopping early in the holiday season can be exciting, and there are some good sales to take advantage of, but shopping late instead of early is a practical way to prevent gifts from being stolen. If you like to shop for holiday gift early, putting them on layaway and buying them later is a good compromise.

4. Make Your Home Seem Secure

Does your home have a security alarm? Do you have an inside dog as a pet? Even if your residence isn't protected by a security alarm or barking dog, posting an alarm sign and a beware of dog sign will still make thieves think twice. As many reformed burglars have said, thieves look for the path of least resistance. If they think that entering your home will require them to evade an alarm and defend themselves against a dog, there are likely to target a different house.



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