

COMMUNITY MOMENTS

A portrait of David Conforti, a man with dark hair and a light beard, smiling. He is wearing a dark pinstripe suit jacket, a light blue shirt, and a patterned tie. The background is a blurred indoor setting with large windows.

DAVID CONFORTI

Director of Community Association Management

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Words From Our President

I want to start off by thanking you, our esteemed partners, for choosing RealManage to be your community manager. We consider it the highest honor to serve your community and we are committed to ensuring that you receive service beyond expectation. One of our core values at RealManage is “Always Improving.” I recall sitting in an auditorium several years ago as a young Army Officer at the JFK Warfare Center (Army Special Operations Forces School) during a Change of Command Ceremony. The outgoing commander mentioned something that has resonated with me since then and I believe is critical for all of us to understand: “In life, you are either getting better or getting worse. There is no such thing as staying the same.” At RealManage, we want to embody this principle and always strive for improvement in every aspect of our business. With that said, I want to hear from you, our valued clients! One of the best ways to give us feedback is by sending an email to clientsatisfaction@realmanage.com. Every email will be read and considered for implementation. We are in the customer service business and want every opportunity to vastly exceed the expectations of your community’s residents and board members. Happy Fall!

Chris Ayoub
President



Employee Spotlight | David Conforti, CMCA®

Director of Community Association Management - Illinois



Written by: Joseph Gideon, Vice President - Illinois

Dave Conforti was born and raised on the Southside of Chicago and has spent most of his adult life in the Chicagoland Area. Dave is an Illinois State University graduate with a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice Sciences and a minor in Psychology. Dave is a huge Chicago sports fan and is loving the Cubs incredible 2016 season!

Before joining the RealManage family, Dave served as a probation officer for 14 years. In 2012, Dave decided to switch careers and joined the Caruso Management Group (CMG) team. In September of 2013, Dave passed the Certified Manager of Community Association (CMCA®) exam and became a Licensed Community Association Manager. In 2015 CMG merged with RealManage and Dave has shined. He has been instrumental in transitioning the CMG team into the RealManage family. In August of 2016, Dave was promoted to Director of Community Association Management. In only four years, Dave has risen from an Assistant to a Director of Community Association Management!

Dave shined as a Community Association Manager because he is a motivated problem solver that operates with integrity. His willingness to look at problems as opportunities and implement solutions to satisfy the client has led to his incredible retention rate and innovations within RealManage. The systems he implemented to track condominium

rental leasing, community census programs, and insurance tracking is going to differentiate RealManage from our competitors and most importantly better serve our clients. His success as a manager did not go unnoticed by RealManage as he was selected as "Manager of the Quarter" in April of 2016.

Since I joined the RealManage Illinois team in January of 2016, I could not help but notice that Dave was already a leader. He has been the staff member in the office that others go to when they need to solve a problem. When a Director of Community Association Management position became available, there was no doubt in my mind that I would promote Dave. In just over two months he has stepped up to the plate leading the day-to-day operations of the CMG Division. Dave is an excellent mentor to our managers and is a prime example of an "out of the industry" personality thriving in property management. The example he has set and the success he has been able to achieve has motivated two CMG assistants to successfully pass the M100, the first step toward earning the CMCA® credential and becoming a licensed manager in the state of Illinois.

RealManage is blessed to have Dave in the family. We are all proud to work with someone so passionate about the communities he serves and the staff that he leads. Keep up the great job Dave!

Get Ready for... Budget Season!



With the onset of autumn comes a new school year, apple picking, leaf raking, and yes, community association budgets. As you plan your community's 2017 budget, here are a few tips on how to save money for your community.

As one of the leaders in community association management with a diverse client community base in 15 regions, we have developed a series of best practices to help communities manage their budget. Here are just a few ways to save on your Community Association's Budget in 2017:

1- Reduce Energy Usage - Communities that have extensive landscape lighting should work with their electric contractors and providers to evaluate their current light sources and energy consumption and consider alternative light sources in order to meet your appearance, maintenance and energy efficiency goals. Most landscape and tree illumination is meant for curb appeal and not for safety, and if so, there is definitely an opportunity to cut your operating costs. Consider the following:

- Switch from a ballast fixture to a bulb-only fixture - The typical tree and landscape lighting is a ballast fixture with both ballasts and bulbs to repair and/or replace. Add to that the fact that a ballast fixture will consume approximately ten times the energy that a bulb-only fixture consumes and you will experience repair, replacement and energy cost savings by switching to a bulb-only fixture.
- Switch from a mercury vapor bulb to a fluorescent bulb - The typical light bulb used is a highly-inefficient mercury vapor bulb. Switching to a fluorescent bulb will not only offer lower energy costs, but an added bonus is a softer, less spotty illumination appearance. One draw back with fluorescent bulbs is a shorter life expectancy, but overall, your total cost of lighting should be significantly reduced by making the switch.
- Eliminate some existing lights - Evaluate the appearance and night-time ambiance by experimenting with the elimination of every other light in your landscape lighting patterns.

2. Establish a Preventative Maintenance Program

Preventative maintenance programs are a proactive approach to maintaining your common areas and preventing problems before they occur. Typically, a preventative maintenance program should include inspections of all common areas including amenities such as common fences or walls, pools/spas, community centers, playgrounds, sport courts, elevators and common parking areas. Without adequate routine inspection of these areas, time, usage and the elements could render them useless, which will translate into additional costs for your community.

For most communities, preventative maintenance is merely a complement of the scheduled inspections that your management company should be conducting. As a board member you should know your management company's inspection schedule. When your management company is not scheduled for an inspection, simply walk the common areas of your community looking for any sign of wear and tear. Areas of concern should be reported to the management company for follow-up.

An effective preventative maintenance program should contain the following key components:

- Identification of equipment or systems that may malfunction such as pipes, pumps and lighting
- Periodic testing of all equipment located in your community's common areas
- Establishment of procedures and schedules for routine inspections
- Prompt repair or replacement of defective equipment found during an inspection or testing
- Use of an organized record-keeping system to schedule tests and document inspections

3. Combine Maintenance and Repair Visits

Even with the best preventative maintenance program in place, repairs will continue to be a part of your community's upkeep. When working with vendors try to bundle repairs into a single visit. If a fence company is out to repair a section of common area fence, have them inspect the entire fence. There may be a minor area of concern that they can address while on-site which in the long run will provide a cost savings to your bottom line. A single visit from your vendor will reduce labor and commute expenses while promoting fiscal responsibility within your community.

4. Review Your Landscaping Plan

Landscaping is usually one of the most significant expenses in your community budget. Therefore, a well thought-out plan is imperative when designing, planting and maintaining your common areas. Some ways to reduce your landscaping costs include:

- Reduce the amount of seasonal color - Instead focus on perpetual flowering plants that will maintain their color year round
- Consider the hardiness of the plant - Many self reliant plants are better investments than high-maintenance exotic beauties
- Consider purchasing plants that are native to your area
- Purchase your landscape material, topsoil, gravel, fertilizer & plants in bulk
- Consider purchasing your material at off-peak prices - Late summer and early fall landscape purchases can provide you a wealth of savings
- Seek the abundant free advice from professionals such as county agencies, state horticulturists and local nurseries
- Reduce the number of trips made by your landscape service - Common areas can be mowed, hedges trimmed and flower beds rotated in a single visit, thus eliminating multiple visits to your community and reducing your community's overall landscaping expense

5. Negotiate Bulk Purchasing

There is strength in numbers and your management company should negotiate on your community's behalf based upon the strength of their size and scale since vendors are usually willing to provide their services at a slightly reduced rate if there is opportunity for additional volume. However, as a community you can potentially exercise additional negotiating power if you are a member of a local neighborhood alliance of several community associations, which puts you in a good position to negotiate for bulk purchasing discounts.

6. Reconfigure Your Management Company Services

Consider changing the configurations of your current management agreement on key service levels such as reducing the number of board meetings or reducing the frequency of deed restriction inspections in order to save on your monthly management fees. Some boards achieve additional savings by going as far as appointing a committee to do their own deed restriction inspections and just have the management company send the letters and take the calls.



Board Member Spotlight | Darla Du Coing

By John Garvin, Senior Vice President, Colorado



Darla Du Coing is the Board President Berkshire, one of RealManage Colorado's largest client associations, and has served her community for many years. As a Regional Credit Manager by trade, Darla can apply her profession directly to the oversight of her community to ensure that board meetings are inclusive and informative and that the community itself has a bright vision for the future.

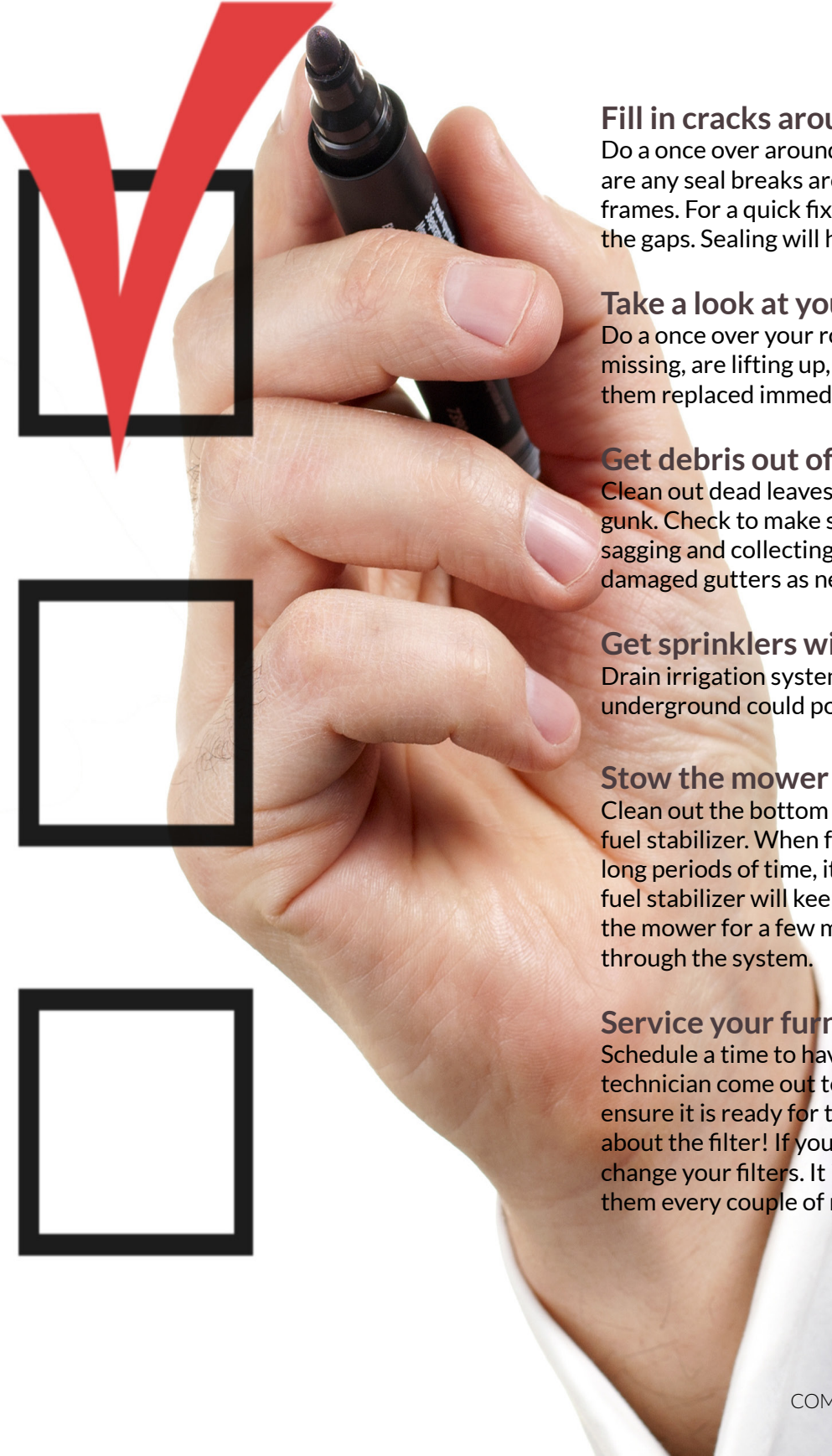
Berkshire Homeowners Association is a beautiful community of 501 homes located in Lochbuie, Colorado (the town name is Scottish-Gaelic and means Lake of the Fair-Haired Clan), which is a lovely small town located just 15 miles northeast of Denver. The community itself is in the rolling plains of Colorado and has a spectacular view of the Rocky Mountains and boasts multiple parks and miles

of walking trails, which Darla walks on a regular basis in the evenings.

Darla is steadfast in her desire to maintain the high standards which the community enjoys, and she works hand in hand with residents to ensure that Berkshire is the premier neighborhood in Lochbuie. With Darla's leadership, Berkshire also works regularly with town officials so that the town and the association can combine efforts to meet their goals.

Darla and the Board of Directors are truly a pleasure to work with. It is our honor to serve as the management team for such a valued client as Berkshire.

Home Maintenance Checklist for the Fall



Fill in cracks around windows and doors

Do a once over around your home to see if there are any seal breaks around windows and door frames. For a quick fix use exterior caulk to fill in the gaps. Sealing will help with wasting energy.

Take a look at your roof

Do a once over your roof to see if any shingles are missing, are lifting up, or are broken. If there are, get them replaced immediately.

Get debris out of your gutters

Clean out dead leaves, remove twigs and other gunk. Check to make sure that your gutters are not sagging and collecting water. Replace worn out and damaged gutters as needed.

Get sprinklers winter ready

Drain irrigation systems as even those that are underground could potentially freeze and break.

Stow the mower for the winter

Clean out the bottom of your mower and add a fuel stabilizer. When fuel sits in a machine for long periods of time, it will slowly deteriorate. A fuel stabilizer will keep gas in good condition. Run the mower for a few minutes to allow it to move through the system.

Service your furnace

Schedule a time to have a heating and cooling technician come out to repair your furnace to ensure it is ready for the chilly months. Don't forget about the filter! If you haven't done so in a while, change your filters. It is best practice to change them every couple of months.



There are two ways to preserve something that needs scheduled maintenance: maintain it regularly according to the advice of professionals, or fix it when it malfunctions. Fixing something when it breaks may seem like the easiest option, however performing regular maintenance rarely takes as long as doing repairs. By performing regular maintenance on equipment and areas in the community, time can be saved and following benefits achieved.

Increased Equipment Lifespan

Most equipment that contains moving parts needs to receive scheduled maintenance. Examples include computers, lawn mowers, and furnaces, to name a few. In the absence of scheduled maintenance, these types of equipment are less likely to reach their projected lifespan. Performing scheduled maintenance can extend the lifespan of the equipment.

Lower Operating Costs

Performing preventative maintenance can lower operating costs. For some communities, monthly preventative maintenance is a fixed expense that is paid for with a portion of monthly assessment fees. Repairing broken equipment, on the other hand, can be a significant expense that requires a community to take money from the reserve fund to pay for costly repair jobs.

Reserve Fund Preservation

It is recommended that communities use their reserve funds to pay for unforeseeable expenses, such as storm damage or a legal judgement or large capital expenditures not expenses that could be largely avoided if preventative maintenance measures were taken. Preventative maintenance can reduce financial emergencies and preserve the reserve fund.

Fewer Repair Emergencies

In the absence of regular maintenance, communities rarely learn that equipment has a problem until it breaks. The breakage of some equipment, such as lawn mowers, is merely an inconvenience; while the breakage of other equipment, such as furnaces, can be life threatening. Over time, performing regular maintenance results in fewer repair emergencies.

Value of Preventative Maintenance

Time savings, increased equipment lifespan, lower operating costs, reserve fund preservation, and fewer repair emergencies are four benefits communities receive when they perform preventative maintenance on equipment and areas that require it. For assistance developing a preventative maintenance plan for your community, contact your management provider.

Insuring Community Landscaping

Written by Katie Vaughan, Vice President CiraConnect Insurance Services

Many community associations have beautiful landscaping valued at hundreds and perhaps thousands of dollars. As with any valuable asset, the question of how to insure it often arises.

Unlike other property a community owns, coverage for landscaping is limited under most property coverage forms. Policies can have restrictions on the covered causes of loss and the total limit available in the event of a loss. Many policies have both. This is the case whether the community has property coverage included as part of a package policy or if there is a 'stand-alone' property policy.

The Covered Causes of Loss for trees, shrubs and plants under the most commonly used property coverage form are:

- Fire
- Lightning
- Explosion
- Riot or Civil Commotion
- Aircraft

Additionally, the insurance is typically limited to not more than \$250.00 for any one tree, shrub or plant with a maximum of \$1,000.00 for the claim.

Another fairly commonly used property coverage form provides coverage for all types of direct loss to outdoor trees, shrubs, plants and lawns – which is

much better. However, the coverage is usually limited to \$3,000.00 for any one occurrence including the debris removal expense.

Some insurance companies provide an 'Extension of Coverage Endorsement' that increases the amount of insurance available for landscaping claims which is good, but the coverage is still limited.

The two most common landscaping claims we see are damage from a car and wind. Note that under the first coverage form discussed above, neither one of these types of losses would be covered.

If your landscaping is destroyed by a vehicle, it is recommended to report the accident to the police. If the officer is able to get the driver's insurance information, then the community can pursue an insurance claim against the driver. This is true even if there is coverage for the accident under the community's insurance.

Many underwriters use their coverage forms. So how much insurance is provided for your outdoor landscaping will vary among carriers. Please read your policy and review the coverages with your insurance agent.

If you have any questions, the team at CiraConnect Insurance Services is available to help! Contact us at ccis@ciramail.com and/or (972) 380-3502.





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