***What We Do For You:***

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**INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

 Many mobile home park owners and managers do a lot for their communities’ residents. The question is: do we make a mistake by not reminding them from time to time about all the things they would truly miss if these things went away or were even curtailed? And while it is true that most of the things we do to operate and manage our parks are for reasons like the bottom line, they, for sure, benefit the residents. Take rent increases, as an example. No one likes them, of course, but the sting of a rent increase may be lessened if the residents realize all the things the owners and managers do with the residents’ best interests at heart. Residents rarely think about what an inviting mobile home park you provide and what it takes to keep it that way. And, why should they? It’s the owners’ and managers’ job to keep things running smoothly.

NAI Iowa Realty Commercial

**A Berkshire Hathaway Company**

The next time you:

• raise the rent,

• amend a rule,

• change a policy,

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 reframe it in your own mind and think “what’s the benefit to the resident?”. Everyone’s favorite radio station is WIIFM (What’s In It For Me). Do we need to adapt our mindset a bit?

For more information on LISTINGS OF PARKS & COMMUNITIES visit us at:

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 Warren Buffett’s advice to small business owners is this:

 “*The best advice to a small business owner…is never stop thinking about how to delight your customer. Not to satisfy your customer, but to delight your customer. And when you wake up in the morning, start thinking about it. At night, think about it. And then dream about it.”*

Remember too, that people generally will go along with a change if given a reason. It does not need to be the most elegant or elaborate reason. The point is, when engaging with a resident, to give a reason, i.e., “Yes, garbage cost will be passed through to the residents and let me explain the reason why…”. Most of the time the residents will feel they have had their say, and they will be satisfied with the answer. Get in the habit of saying “and let me explain the reason why…”. Saying this will be a boon to your communication skills and thus your resident relations.

 Several years ago, our state MHA offered the Accredited Community Manager (ACM) course. This course has been developed over the years by the Manufactured Housing Institute in conjunction with community owners. It is a top-notch course that dives deep into management and operations with sections on financials, resident relations, repairs and maintenance, and much more. The ACM instructor, Chrissy Jackson, a community owner, gave the class a tip for resident relations. It’s the What We Do for You list. Chrissy recommended making a list of things, big and small, noticeable and unnoticed, that you do for the residents. Ideas for using the What We Do for You list could be to print it once a year in your newsletter, put it on your website, as a hand out in the office, or laminated and posted in the office. It’s a tool for your mangers, too. In the hubbub of their duties, it is easy for managers to forget why the community is a great place to live. The What We Do for You list needs to be top of mind for them. It keeps them enthusiastic about the mobile home park and why it’s a great value to the residents. What doesn’t work is when a resident complains to a manager and the manager’s response is, “Uh…let me get back to you.” The manager’s response needs to be energetic and positive after hearing out the resident. Managers should add to this list monthly. Do you think there is nothing new that you do for your residents? Or do you think the residents know everything the community does and provides? Think again. This might be new information to your residents but it’s a good refresher, too. Here is a sample letter.

This newsletter and its content are not meant as a solicitation of any property or properties that may be listed. This is a creation of Joanne M. Stevens with NAI Iowa Realty Commercial, as a resource for mobile home park / manufactured home community owners.

A LETTER TO THE RESIDENTS OF ABC MOBILE HOME PARK:

*Dear Residents,*

*Thank you for another wonderful year at ABC. We have had some fun with our first annual Clean Up Contest. Looking back at the year in review, we have done some very nice improvements to the park and will continue that trend into 2018.*

*Streets, Sewer and Water*

*Most years we make a significant street repair or replacement project; our harsh Midwest climate is tough on streets. With an older park, such as our ABC, the water lines and sewer lines are repaired and replaced a lot. We thank our residents who are careful about what they put down their sinks and toilets and refrain from grease, cigarettes, and wipes getting flushed or poured down the drains.*

*Water Conservation and Water Meters*

*Adding individual meters has resulted in over 1,000,000 gallons of water consumption reduction per year! We also notify residents when their consumption spikes, so they can remedy a dripping faucet or other leak. Conserving water is an important contribution to sustainability. Consistently looking for water main leaks adds to this effort and helps contain operational cost.*

*New Homes*

*Buying new homes for the community helps upgrade the overall appearance of the park. Buying pre-owned homes has offered our residents the opportunity to move up to a newer or larger home. When a resident buys a “new” park owned home, we often buy that resident’s existing mobile home. This helps them buy the “new” home.*

*LED Lights and Sustainability*

*We have installed some LED lighting in our outside storage area and on individual lots where the yard lights were repaired or replaced. Some of the hills have been planted with shrubs for erosion resistance and to cut down on mowing, as per a City initiative to curb carbon emissions.*

*Appearance of Homes and Home Sites*

*During our Spring and Fall Clean Up Campaigns, our managers did a masterful job of working with residents to get the mobile homes and home sites looking as clean and cared for as possible. A lot of power washing, painting, skirting and general junk removal occurred. Our managers and residents worked together on this year’s clean up so that residents can feel proud of where they live.*

*New Resident Screening*

*The managers do their best to screen prospective residents so that when a home in the community sells, a good resident moves in. Further, we employ a service for background checks. Our managers provide onsite management that is backed up by our regional property manager, making sure that there is always someone available in person, by email or by phone to listen and address questions or concerns.*

*Selling Tenant Owned Homes*

*There are a lot of people that would like to move in to your community. The many inquiries and calls we receive is a good indication of the demand. Our website benefits residents by providing basic information about the park, rules and policies, lot rent, homes for sale, etc. We also help our residents with the paperwork of selling their home.*

*Again, thank you for the wonderful year. Please feel free to reach out to management if you have a question or concern.*

*~The Management.*

Ultimately, the mobile home park’s job is to operate the property in such a way that the homeowners’ home value is at least maintained, if not enhanced. Mobile home ownership may be one of the tenants’ largest assets. We owe it to them to make the mobile home park as clean, well run, and attractive as possible.

What’s on your list? Go to my Facebook site (@MHPOwnerBroker) and post your suggestions or send me an email at joannestevens@iowarealty.com.



**SAVE THE DATE: Links on Our Website**

### National Communities Council

###  Fall Leadership Forum

**November 1-3, 2017, Westin Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL**

**Keep current on mobile home industry events. Go to my website and click Save the Date. You will find information on upcoming events.**

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**Need to Refinance?**

**There may never be a better time to refinance your park. Interest rates are low. If you have a loan coming due, don’t be shy about calling lenders.**



Past Newsletters

are on my website.

**JoanneMStevens.com**

 Click newsletters on the left-hand column.

**WHAT IS YOUR PARK WORTH?**

**In the last 36 months, have you:**

**• Added homes to your community? • Passed through utilities to your residents?**

**• Changed occupancy? • Increased rent?**

IF YOU ANSWERED YES, YOU NEED TO KNOW YOUR PARK’S CURRENT WORTH!

I am always happy to do a FREE, NO OBLIGATION, Real Estate Review for your park(s). You ought to know today’s market value of your real estate investments.

If this is something you would like, simply give me a call at 319-378-6786, email me at joannestevens@iowarealty.com , or visit http://joannemstevens.com/

Joanne Stevens is a specialist in listing and selling mobile home parks and manufactured housing communities throughout the U.S. With her 20 plus years of experience in developing, zoning, owning, retailing, managing, turning around and brokering parks, she can maximize your sale price.