

## Preparation for a Successful Mold Remediation Project:

by Joel D. Patterson, Mitigation Manager, M.J. White & Son, Inc.

During our last forum, we learned that prevention is the best form of mold remediation. Now, we will confront the situation, where, despite our best preventative efforts, we must begin a mold remediation project.

As with any endeavor, success is based upon preparation. And, through my experience, preparation must be based upon a thorough knowledge of the task at hand. So let us now learn about the complexities and complications that we will encounter at the start of a mold remediation project, and how best to deal with them.

First, while there are no direct federal or Michigan laws on mold remediation, there exists various industry standards to guide you through the process. The two most prominent standards are the New York City (NYC) mold guidelines (last revised in 2008), and the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning, and Restoration Certification (IICRC) S520 Standard (also revised circa 2008). Basically, both standards view mold as a potential health hazard and then set out guidelines/standards to remediate the mold in the safest manner for the workers and the occupants of the affected area. These standards should be your starting point as you approach a mold issue.

Paraphrasing, the guidelines set out an initial five step process when mold is discovered:

- Step one is to identify the moisture source and remedy this situation to prevent further mold development. Mold remediation cannot



## 500 Resumes Just Arrived...Which One Is The Property Management SuperStar?

by Ernest F. Oriente, The Coach  
{Article #158...since 1995}



Finding a new SuperStar for your property management company is never an easy task, especially in our current economic climate. In addition, a recent article published by the Society of Human Resource Management {SHRM} says, "over 50 percent of the information presented on a resume by a job candidate may be false or misleading". In this

article we will share some important tips and techniques for reading resumes, the most important first step for finding property management SuperStars.

**Sorting the resumes:** Resumes arrive by mail, E-mail or fax. Start by sorting these resumes into three stacks. Your "A" stack will include resumes from potential SuperStars who attach a customized cover letter. This cover letter will address you personally and will often include specific references to the advertisement you placed. Your "B" stack will include resumes from possible SuperStars who will only attach a generic cover letter. Your "C" stack will include those who just send a resume and represent the least likely group to contain a SuperStar.

**Setting up your system:** Purchase an 8 1/2 x 11 "flat desk file" with A-Z tabs. A flat desk file looks like an accordion file, except it lays flat on your desk and can be easily carried with you. Use your A-Z desk file to store the resumes of potential SuperStars, sorted by last name. When a person returns your initial telephone call or arrives for their first interview, you will now have their resume right at your fingertips.

**Tips for reading a resume:** Here are some key questions to consider when reading a resume:

1. What city/state does this person live in? How long will their commute to work be? If this person does not live locally, how long will it take for them to acclimate professionally and personally?

2. How many companies has this person worked for in the past five years? Are the companies related? Any time gaps?

3. What skills and experience can this person bring to your property management team?

4. Does this resume include specific and measurable

## WA3 Calendar Briefs:

- July 14 - Manager's Only at Ironwood Place Apartments
- July 23 - Beach Party at Harbor Cove and Beach Club
- September 17 - Nova Award Sponsored by CORT
- September 23 - Financial Boot Camp with Cynthia King from Chicago



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15th of the month for next month's publication.  
Submit all materials to  
Alice Ehn, Executive Officer

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## **President's Message:**

**By: Kelly O'Don-**

It's hard to believe that summer is already here. I am sure that everyone is busy with his or her properties as this is our busy season! Please make it a point to stop by our beach party, which will be held on July 23, 2009 at Harbor Cove and Beach Club's Gazebo on Whitmore Lake. This is a free event and is a wonderful way to meet new members, catch up with old friends and just have FUN! This event is good for families with games and fish feeding for kids.

**Stop by!**



## **EO Message**

**By: Alice J. Ehn**

Summer is finally getting here. There is much to be done as the busy season approaches.

You should all know that the association has been invited to a couple of meetings that could prove to help the interests of rental housing in the area or at least get you all more informed.

The first meeting was with Mark Lloyd and Jeff Ellis with the City of Ann Arbor's housing inspection department. There are many customer service issues that we provided to the inspection department that they promised to address (if possible). We sent a letter from the association with 18 items of complaints provided by all of you and this was a preliminary meeting to determine if there was any ability on the part of the City of Ann Arbor to address some of these issues. Among them was the increase in the inspection cycle to 3.5 years since many of you indicated that was where they were at with inspections anyway. For a complete listing please go to the website for a copy of the letter that was sent under the members only documents section.

We were also invited to a meeting with the University of Michigan. They have received a grant to study the affect of the nearly 3000 beds units coming online over the next couple of years for student housing. The impact could be felt by the University themselves and by the rental housing environment that currently exists. The University indicated that they still have no plans to expand enrollment and that the full effect of their upgrades and improvements in dormitories will not be felt for approximately 10 years. The bottom line is that there is going to be more places for students to rent and the study hopefully will help determine what areas need improvement.

I will keep you posted as developments of either of these committees produce information. In the meantime, it might help if you contact your local official and indicate you are looking forward to their amending the inspection ordinances (per the new state law) if you are currently doing business where there is a periodic inspection program.

Lastly, I am working on providing all of you with an updated Membership Directory. All vendor members should make sure that all their information is correct on the website and contact the office to make sure we have you listed in the appropriate category/categories. You are welcome to two category listings and the information for advertising in the directory has gone out to all vendor members via first class mail.

# Superstars (con't)

(Continued from page 1)  
achievements?

5. Does this resume include any information regarding ongoing training and/or certifications?
6. Does this resume include any information about professional and/or industry affiliations?
7. Does this resume have any spelling or grammatical errors?

**Tip From The Coach:** In addition to the questions above, ask yourself the following questions while reviewing each resume: Does this person have experience working with consumers? Does this person have a sales/service background? Does this person have experience developing relationships?

**Conducting a telephone interview:** Select the best candidates from the resumes you have been sent and schedule a ten minute telephone interview with each person. During each call, ask the following questions: "Are you currently employed? Why are you leaving your current employer? What is the ideal position you are looking for? Why should you be the person selected for this position? What are you currently earning?" Take written notes during each phone call and listen carefully to this person's telephone voice, their attitude, and how close their ideal position matches the position you have advertised. Financially, your advertised position should be within 15-20 percent of this person's current income. Lastly, give each person homework or research to complete, prior to their first interview with your property management company.

Want to hear more about this important topic or ask some additional questions about how to read a resume? Would you like to see a sample of a world-class resume? Send an E-mail to [ernest@powerhour.com](mailto:ernest@powerhour.com) and The Coach will E-mail you a free PowerHour invitation.

*Author's note: Ernest F. Oriente, a business coach since 1995 [23,660 hours]--the author of SmartMatch Alliances--and the founder of PowerHour...[ [www.powerhour.com](http://www.powerhour.com) ], has a passion for coaching his clients on executive leadership, hiring and motivating property management SuperStars, traditional and Internet marketing, competitive sales strategies, and high leverage alliances for property management teams and their leaders. He provides private and group coaching for property management companies around North America, investment banking services, executive recruiting services and powerful tools for hiring property management SuperStars and building dynamic teams. Ernest worked for Motorola, Primedia and is certified in the Xerox sales methodologies. Recent interviews and articles have appeared more than 6000 times in business and trade publications and in a wide variety of leading magazines and newspapers, including Smart Money, Inc., Business 2.0, The New York Times, Fast Company, The LA Times, Fortune, Business Week, Self Employed America and The Financial Times. Since 1995, Ernest has written 151 articles for the property management industry and created 250+ property management forms, business and marketing checklists, sales letters and presentation tools. To subscribe to his free property management newsletter go to: [www.powerhour.com](http://www.powerhour.com). PowerHour® is based in Olympic-town... Park City, Utah, at 435-615-8486, by E-mail [ernest@powerhour.com](mailto:ernest@powerhour.com) or visit their website: [www.powerhour.com](http://www.powerhour.com)*

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## Court Upholds FCC Ban on Exclusive Video Provider Contracts:

On Monday, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit decided in favor of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in NAA/NMHC's lawsuit seeking to overturn the FCC's October 2007 order that retroactively banned exclusive access agreements between apartment properties and cable television providers.

During oral arguments before a three-judge panel on April 17, we argued that the FCC lacked the legal authority to regulate exclusive access agreements, and that actual conditions in the apartment industry video market did not justify the regulation.

In upholding the FCC's order, the court cited legal precedent for granting deference to the FCC, finding that the Commission acted reasonably within its statutory authority, and that the record adequately justified its regulatory action. The court also let stand the retroactive nature of the ban.

NAA/NMHC were joined in the lawsuit by the Manufactured Housing Institute, the National Cable Television Association filed a separate appeal. Although unsuccessful, our appeal served as a preemptive challenge of the FCC's claimed authority to regulate contracts it deems anti-competitive, potentially including future regulation of exclusive marketing and bulk service contracts.

While we knew there were legal barriers to winning the lawsuit, had we not appealed the exclusive access ban, we could have lost our opportunity to challenge further regulatory actions adopted under the same claimed legal authority. NAA/NMHC guidance on the ban is available on the NAA Website. The recent court decision is posted also.

## Renter Protection Provisions Enacted

On May 20, President Obama signed mortgage reform and foreclosure prevention legislation (P.L. 111-22) that includes provisions protecting renters of properties facing foreclosure. The new law requires the purchaser of a foreclosed property to give renters 90-days pre- eviction notice. It also allows renters to remain in the property until the end of their lease, unless the purchaser occupies the property as a primary residence, in which case the owner would be required to give 90-days notice.

The bill also requires the "immediate successor in interest" of a foreclosed property to assume any existing Section 8 housing assistance payment contracts and allow Section 8 renters to remain in place for the term of the lease.

NAA/NMHC opposed the Section 8 provisions in Congressional testimony on April 23, arguing that new owners should not be subject to a contract agreed to by a previous owner and that imposing additional constraints on the apartment sector would discourage investment in rental housing and prevent foreclosed apartment properties from quickly and easily moving to new owners.

The renter protection provisions of the law became effective May 20, 2009, immediately upon enactment. None of these provisions preempt more protective state and local laws. All the renter protection provisions expire at the end of 2012. These new renter protection provisions are separate from pending alarmist resident notification provisions and provisions that could be used to prematurely force properties into bankruptcy and then sell them at a lower price to an entity that guarantees to convert them to affordable housing.

Those provisions were included in a separate mortgage reform measure (H.R. 1728) passed by the House on May 7 that is still pending. NAA/NMHC have issued a grassroots AIMS alert seeking member letters opposing those very onerous proposals. A sample letter and more information on that call to action are available on the [NMHC Web site](#).

## Climate Change Bill Includes Onerous Building Codes Section

Following four days of intense debate, on May 21 the comprehensive energy and climate change legislation (H.R. 2454) passed the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. The 946-page bill would cap U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, cut emissions 17 percent and require states to get 20 percent of their electricity from renewable sources and improved efficiency.

Of interest to the apartment sector, the bill includes provisions concerning building codes, appliance efficiency standards, building retrofit incentives and a model building energy labeling program.

Most importantly, the bill requires the Secretary of Energy to establish a National Energy Efficiency Building Code by 2010 that is 30 percent more efficient than the 2004 version of the ASHRAE 90.1 Standard or the IECC 2006 and 50 percent more efficient than either by 2016. State and local governments must adopt and enforce codes that meet or exceed the efficiency levels of the national

code.

NAA/NMHC have expressed serious reservations regarding the short time frame to develop and adopt such aggressive targets in baseline building code performance. NAA/NMHC-commissioned research shows there are real practical and financial barriers preventing many apartment properties from significantly exceeding current codes. Moreover, higher levels of improvement cannot be met in all climate zones using current technology.

We have also long argued that relying solely on the building codes to achieve aggressive conservation goals is a flawed policy because most of the energy used in an apartment falls outside the scope of the model codes. Under this approach, many of the things apartment owners do to significantly improve the energy efficiency of their properties, such as making different water heating, lighting and appliance choices, are not included in the "math" used to determine how much a property has improved its energy efficiency.

In addition to the unrealistic energy efficiency targets, the House bill included language making it illegal to occupy, permit to occupy or convey a building that cannot or does not comply with the strict new national building code proposed by the bill.

Under this draconian language, owners could be severely penalized if they sold a building built or substantially rehabbed after the legislation went into effect that was, for example, only 20 percent or 25 percent more efficient than a model building code rather than the required 30 percent.

It would also create a new federal building code enforcement program, something normally left to the states and localities to enforce. These federal enforcers could assess penalties (that would accrue daily) on builders and property owners found in violation. And federal courts could void unlawful sales transactions. This provision bears a striking resemblance to the difficulties in retrospectively complying with requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

NAA/NMHC worked with several other real estate groups to oppose and amend the legislation's building code section (Section 201 of Title II). While a Republican amendment to strike the entire code section failed on a party-line vote, a separate amendment by Rep. Jim Matheson (D-UT) that struck the onerous enforcement provision was accepted. The Matheson amendment directs the Department of Energy to develop a code enforcement protocol via the rulemaking process.

During the debate, Matheson indicated that even with his amendment, the building code and enforcement provisions remain extreme and more work is needed to improve the section. Under the amended bill, it would still be illegal to occupy, lease or convey a property that does not meet the strict new national building code standard, but enforcement would be left to the states for at least three years while the DOE developed a federal enforcement program. This approach merely delays the subsequent enforcement actions that are strongly opposed by NAA/NMHC.

We continue to oppose the entire building codes section of the bill. Despite considerable media attention, the fate of the legislation is not certain. The bill has been referred to eight other House committees, and at least four have said they will hold their own markup of sections under their jurisdiction before allowing it to move to the House floor. It is also unclear whether sufficient support exists to pass comparable legislation in the Senate.

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# Mold Remediation Part II con't:

(Continued from page 1)

be effective until the moisture source is eliminated as the mold growth will return.

- Step two is to assess the health issues that exist or could potentially occur. Is there anyone who is complaining of allergy like symptoms, respiratory problems, or head-aches? Are there any persons with a pre-disposition to mold susceptibility? Such persons would be children or the elderly, as their respiratory system is not fully functioning, immune-suppressed individuals, and severely ill people. These people are to be warned of the potential health issues. Containment of the area of growth immediately is highly recommended. You may also want to move your resident or tenant until the remediation can be completed.
- Step three is to determine the need to involve an appropriate building or environmental health professional to assess the mold problem. The guidelines recommend the use of such individuals on a case by case basis. The factors to consider are the extent of the issue, whether or not you can identify the cause, the existence of health issues, and any foreseeable legal complications. John Datillo, a certified environmental hygienist and an owner of I.A.Q. Management, Inc., notes that the revised mold standards "now involve and add the more detailed and technical elements of human health and building science to the remediation issue for which the owner and restorer will be held accountable."
- Step four is to then outline a protocol to follow for the remediation project. This is the who (a certified firm or in house staff), the how (through soda blasting, demolition, dry ice blasting, etc.), the where (what area is to be contained off and to be remediated), and the why (what is to be considered a successful remediation project). A level one report from an industrial hygienist would detail each of these steps and more.

The final step is to then ensure that the previous four steps have all been covered with extreme care to ensure that the remediation project will provide:

1. Eradication of the moisture source
2. The return of the affected area to a healthy environment
3. No cross contamination of unaffected areas
4. No health issues for any of the workers, residents, or tenants.

In the next installment we will examine the actual work performed during a mold remediation project.

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# Associate Spotlight - RentGrow Screening Tips

Spring is upon us. As the weather heats up, so will the traffic in the leasing office. Now is the perfect time to freshen up your resident screening practices for Spring 2009. Here are some *essential resident screening tips* to help you prepare for peak traffic.



## **Seven Essential Resident Screening Tips to Prepare for the Busy Season:**

1. **Evaluate your criteria.** Now is the time to review your occupancy rates and bad debt to determine if you might need to adjust your customized screening criteria. "With the present economic turmoil, being pro-active is the best way to stay ahead of the game," says Mike Lapsley, president and CEO of RentGrow. "It is really key to communicate with your screening provider and make necessary criteria adjustments that form the best results." In many regions of the country today, slower household formation is impacting demand, more applicants have experienced foreclosures or other financial challenges, and the employment market is less stable. You may want to speak with your screening company about your customized screening criteria and make sure your standards are appropriately calibrated with current market forces in your area, as well as your property's traffic flow, occupancy, and bad debt.
2. **Run your applicants efficiently.** Time is money.



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- It's critical that your screening is thorough, but also critical that the screening workflow is configured in the fastest and most efficient manner possible. Ask yourself: How long does it take to get the results from each component of the screening process? What are the most essential components of the applicant screening process, and where are those components in my workflow? How much am I paying, in terms of both screening report costs and time, for each component of the screening process? Eliminate unnecessary steps and make sure the ordering of the workflow is logical and efficient. A good web-based screening platform will allow you to program customized workflow management rules, saving you time and money while maintaining consistency.
3. **Re-train now, before peak traffic months.** When the leasing office gets busy this summer, you want everyone to be on top of their game and focused on showing units and signing leases. "Even if you feel the process of screening applicants has become routine, it still makes sense to review internal screening procedures, policies, and fair housing laws with staff members to make sure everyone is on the same page," adds Lapsley.
4. **Call the experts when questions arise.** When you have a question with a screening report, whether it's a criminal record classification, the details of a credit report, or a challenge from an applicant, contact your screening provider immediately.
5. **Determine if it's necessary to implement new screening services.** If you are contemplating adding new screening services, such as address search, landlord & tenant /eviction, rental history records, etc., evaluate and decide whether to implement these services before peak season. Your screening provider can advise you on the best options to help you achieve your screening goals.
6. **Keep things simple - have a cheat sheet.** Keep your own directory that includes all of your vendor and service providers' contact names, email addresses, and phone numbers that you can reference quickly when questions arise.
7. **Consider taking a refresher training class from your screening provider.** Retouch on the process of submitting and reviewing an applicant's information and get any lingering questions answered.

In this economic climate, we're all looking forward to warmer weather to kick-start the "busy season." Be prepared and take care of the essentials!

Christina Failla is the local sales consultant of RentGrow, Inc., the resident screening experts ([www.rentgrow.com](http://www.rentgrow.com)). She can be reached at [fail-lac@rentgrow.com](mailto:fail-lac@rentgrow.com) or call 781-332-3309.

## PMAM Wins Paragon Awards at NAA



**Education Award**  
 Pictured left *Jessica Wressell, GLAS-tar Education Chair, Kathy Vallie, AE for PMAM and Clio Hanks, President.*

**Government Affairs Award** -  
 Pictured right *Clio Hanks, President, Kathy Vallie, AE for PMAM and Gary Offenbacher, Past President*



*Kathy Vallie, pictured middle above also won the Association Executive of the Year*

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## Events:

### JULY:

**14-Manager's Only** - Ironwood Place Apartments, No cost to members, Guest Speaker Kathleen Mabie with On Site Team Building/Optimization. 8:30 to 9:30 am.

**23-Beach Party** - Free to members, 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Harbor House and Beach Club Gazebo on Whitmore Lake. Rain or Shine. Dinner and Drinks, Sponsorships available.

### AUGUST:

**5 thru 7 - Government Affairs Roundtable, San Francisco**

**17 - Nova at Weber's Inn**, Sponsored by CORT Furniture - 6:00 to 8:00 pm.

**18 - GLAStar Deadline for Awards**

**23 - Financial Boot Camp with Cynthiann King** 6 hours of everything financial you need to know to work with your budgets and make your properties more profitable. Open to all Manager's, Assistant Managers and Independent Rental Owners.

Limited space for Washtenaw Area members because we are partnering with the Detroit and Lansing Apartment Associations. Get your reservations in Early to ensure you have a spot. Classroom size also limited. Location: Independence Village of Brighton Valley, Brighton. Time: 9:00 to 3:00 pm. Cost: \$99 per member of any of the four local affiliates.

**24 - Product and Service Council Meeting.** Open to all vendor members of the Washtenaw Area Apartment Association. This group meets 2 times per year to discuss what they can do with the association for little or no cost that will improve recognition for all vendor members.

### OCTOBER:

**6 - Real Estate Continuing Education for Property Management Industry.** Instructor: Rich George, Cost: \$55, Location: Cleary University on Plymouth Rd, Time: 9:00 to 4:00 pm.

**8 - R410 Refrigerant Certification Testing**  
**12 thru 16 - CAM (Certified Apartment Manager) CRAM course—all in one week. Sign up by Sept 1 get \$85 discount.**

**Full Cost: \$685**

**20 - General Membership Maintenance Appreciation Lunch**

**21 - NALP starts**

**22 - R410 Refrigerant Certification Testing**



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