

Message from the President...

Our newsletters have covered many issues, but as we move through 2010, I want to review several practices that we use to protect your investment.

Support Fair Housing - This covers a vast area such as advertising, showings, tenant selection, equal opportunity practices for the handicapped, and much more.

Select Good Tenancy - We continually work to improve screening practices. Choosing the right tenant is more cost effective than quickly renting to someone who will become a problem tenant, even if it means a longer vacancy.

Provide Solid Documentation - Another key area to reduce risk and keep tenant problems at bay is using good rental documents. This encompasses leases, addendums, property notices, communications, etc.

Maintaining the Physical Property - We continually work to use competent vendors to maintain your property. As we have stressed many times, preventative maintenance is a key to reducing many maintenance issues. However, whether small or large, it always pays to address the problem and solve them before they escalate.

Take Tenant Safety Seriously - Addressing anything that could endanger tenant safety is necessary. The courts have zero tolerance for a property owner who ignores maintenance that endangers a resident. This can include unsafe electrical, flooring, plumbing, door locks, walkways, lighting, landscape, and more.

Respect Your Tenant's Privacy - We contact tenants 24 hours in advance for maintenance work and other entries.

Encourage Tenant Retention - It can increase the ROI to keep a good tenant. There are many ways to encourage tenant retention including online rent payment, maintenance requests and responding quickly to tenant issues.

Address Security Deposit Issues - Tenants do move and when they do, the security deposit can become a battleground. Although we try to avoid this, a dispute can arise. We work to settle any deposit issue quickly.

Provide Accurate Bookkeeping Records - We work to provide you with an accurate accounting of funds for your property at all times through both online and PDF statements. When you have questions on our bookkeeping, we work to provide answers to your questions.

Continue to Keep Our Clients Informed - Keeping you informed on what is happening with your investment is always important. This newsletter is a vehicle for sharing our updates and we hope you find this information useful.

Thanks,

Mike Lautensack

President

Del Val Property Management LLC

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Message from the President
- 2 How Do People Search for Rental Housing?
- 3 Owner Updates - Utilities
- 4 Del Val Personnel Contact Numbers & Properties for Sale

How Do People Search For Rental Housing?

Survey Results Will Surprise You...

In a recent survey completed by Rentbits.com of 1000 people who were in the process of finding a rental home, people were asked a series of questions about their process of finding an apartment or house. The results will surprise you.

Apartment vs. House

One of the first surprises was that **83% of people were looking for houses versus apartments**. It would seem that people's interests has migrated away from small apartments towards houses. This change should have some major impact on apartment builders who have been increasing the number of new apartment buildings in 2008. For investors, it should highlight the need for investing in houses versus duplexes, triplexes or small apartment buildings for long term value.

Rental Advertising

Another surprise was the large impact of the internet on how people look for rental housing, with **72% of people saying they start their search on the internet**. Over **93% of people visit at least 2 different rental sites during** their rental search. Landlords need to understand this trend and start to use the internet to advertise your open rentals. There are free sites such as

craigslist and many paid sites that offer great exposure. Pick a few sites and sign up for accounts and get your advertising onto the internet.

This is exactly what we have seen in our business as older methods of advertising, such as newspaper and locator companies, have become less effective in recent years.

We have moved heavily to the internet for advertising to be out in front of this trend.

Key Words

In these Internet searches, people are using **search terms that are between 3 to 6 words with "location" and "price" as the primary key words**. It is important that people understand the importance of key words in your ads including the city, the zip code, the area code and neighborhood names such as "South Philly". Be sure to use shorter versions of city names such as "Philly" for Philadelphia. Anything that people might type should be in your ad to be sure to capture as many people as possible with your ads.

Other Terms

After the two most important elements of an advertisement including price and location are a number of additional elements such as pictures, lease terms, deposit amounts, pet friendly and appliance that are important to people. People are looking to "rule out" certain properties if they do not fit their needs. These additional elements allow them to rule out certain houses without having to

waste their time or your time visiting properties they will never rent. We have recently started filming videos of our rental properties, producing a "Virtual Tour". This tour allows prospective tenants to see a 2 to 4 minute video of the entire property, allowing them to make a decision about renting the property, whether positive or negative, without actually having to visit it. Obviously, this is a huge time saver for both potential tenants and Del Val, and we are finding that everyone gains from the benefits.

Gender Gap

Another surprise was that 82% of respondents were female. Conventional wisdom says that 80% of home buying decisions are done by women. Landlords need to cater to women and make sure your kitchens and bathrooms are the highlights of your property to ensure a quick rental process.

Owner Updates - Utilities

Del Val often gets questions from owners about utilities and how the changeover works from your account to the tenant's account. **First, please do not cancel the utilities in your name as it can be difficult to get service turned back on once terminated.** Rather, we ask that you let us coordinate the changeover of the utilities.

The utilities we are concerned with include Philadelphia Electric Company (PECO), Philadelphia Gas Works (PGW) and the Water Revenue Bureau. Del Val has a standard procedure, as follows:

PECO and PGW

- 1) During the lease signing process, the tenant is informed that, pursuant to their lease, it is his/her responsibility to have the utilities put in their name before or immediately upon moving in.
- 2) Following their move-in, the tenants are sent an **Introductory Letter** stating, among other items, that the utilities are to be placed in their name. The contact numbers to the utilities are provided.
- 3) Approximately, one week after move-in, a phone call is placed to PECO and PGW to ensure the accounts have been transferred to the tenant's names. If not, the tenants are informed by telephone, email and letter that they are not in compliance with their lease and further action may be taken.

4) Three days later, another phone call is placed to PECO and PGW to confirm that the accounts have been transferred.

5) The Owner will most likely receive a “final bill” and will be marked as such. If for some reason the Owner would continue to get invoices from PECO or PGW, we will continue to work on the issue until it is resolved.

Additionally, we strongly suggest that Owners register their properties with PGW’s “Landlord Cooperation Program at <https://www3.pgworks.com/lcp/info/faq.aspx>. PECO’s also has a program for registering your properties by filling out a Form for the “Landlord Agreement” program. To obtain the form, call PECO at 1-800-494-4000, and choosing voicemail option # 3 (residential), then option # 2 (moving) and finally option # 3, transfer service. PECO will mail you the form to register your properties with PECO. These programs are designed to protect the owner from incurring utility charges that belong to a nonpaying tenant.

Water Revenue

The Water Revenue Bureau makes it very difficult for tenants to put accounts into their names. Therefore, the account stays in the owner’s name, but we change the mailing address to Del Val’s mailing address.

We ask Owner’s to provide the Water Revenue bill with account information to Del Val and we contact the Water Revenue and have the mailing address changed from the Owner’s to Del Val’s for billing purposes.

Upon receiving the first Water Revenue invoice for the new tenant, Del Val prorates the amount according to move-in date and enters the amount on the tenant’s rental account for payment and informs them of the invoice. After this, all water bills are paid and the applied to the tenant’s account for reimbursement.

Please let us know if you have any questions regarding this procedure. We would be happy to discuss them with you at any time.

Why Do You Think 10% of Real Estate Investors Make 90% of the Money?

Click Here to Find Out Why!

<http://www.private-lending-secrets.com/>

Del Val Property Management LLC

81 Lancaster Avenue, Suite 208
Malvern, Pa 19355

<http://www.delvalproperty.com/>



Join us on Face Book at

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=273112110257&ref=mf>

Our Staff...

Mike Lautensack – General Questions

610-240-9885

<mailto:mlautensack@delvalproperty.com>

Chip Robinson – Rent / Buy or Sell Questions

215-520-2888

Jen Narvell – Accounting/Bookkeeping

302-545-2284

Jim McEachern – Maintenance Director

215-237-6072

Terri Ulaner – Administrative Assistant

610-703-1737

5118 Haverford Ave. Philadelphia, PA 19139

- 4 Bedrooms, 1 and Half Bathrooms, Finished Basement, Freshly Rehabbed
- \$129,000

~~2223 Ardmore Ave, Drexel Hill, PA 19026~~

- ~~3 Bedrooms, 1 Bathroom, Garage~~
- ~~144,900~~ SOLD

3123 Weymouth St., Philadelphia, PA 19134

- 3 Bedrooms, 1 Bathroom
- \$35,000

4 Properties for Sale

- * All Single Family homes in W. Phila
- * Newly rehabbed to high quality and tenant occupied
- * Professionally managed with leases through 2010
- * Monthly rents = \$2,885
- * Asking \$265,000
- * Proof of Funds or Pre-qualified only please

**Do you want your property listed here?
Call Chip at 215-520-2888**

Do You Want \$100 OFF Your Next Month's Management Fee?

We are like most business and that we rely on our existing clients to recommend us to other people as our primary way for growing our business. So I am asking everyone **recommend us to 3 other people** and if one of them becomes a client we give you a \$100 discount in your upcoming management fees.