

HOUSING

The
Portland
Observer

Water Bureau Home Page Available

Information about the city of Portland bureau of Water works is now available to Internet users at <http://www.water.ci.portland.or.us>.

"Visitors to our site can expect to find a great deal of general information, initially," noted Bureau administrator, Michael Rosenberger. "We have started with the basics and will add incrementally from there."

The site carries information on water sources, water system, water quality, conservation, customer service and links to related sites.

A "What's New?" section will note upcoming meetings and agendas as well as alerting the visitor to recent additions to the web pages.

Manager's build relationships one resident at a time

When it comes to residential real estate marketing today, the catch phrase is "individualized, individualized." Many of today's Accredited Residential Manager's (ARM) are finding that any targeted marketing program they develop for their residential properties must be based on the fundamentals of collaboration and communication.

To earn the Institute of Real Management's (IREM's) Accredited Residential Manager recognition award, individuals must first fulfill strict requirements in the areas of experience and education, and must abide by a formal Code of Ethics.

In today's competitive residential market, building relationships with customers on an individualized basis has become critical to the survival of property management businesses. The real estate business has always been one based on relationship building, but residential managers are finding that they must spend more of their time communicating and collaborating with current and potential customers.

Success at this kind of relation-

ship building makes it easier to both attract and retain residents. On-going relationships with residents encourages them to be more loyal to the organization as a whole.

While the residential management community has always counted on tenant profile information to develop marketing programs, it has become increasingly important to focus on individual customers in addition to targeted segments or audiences.

Lori Daniels, ARM, rental manager with the Hunters Ridge development in Gahanna, OH, noted that direct contact with residents on an individual basis has been essential to the leasing program of her property.

"We get a lot resident referrals through our current residents," she said. "That's real important."

Daniels, who works with a marketing director in developing programs for her property, said she has learned that because today's tenant profile is changing, an individualized rather than mass marketing approach is essential.

"Our residents can be categorized according to several different income classes, ranging from a lower-mid-

dle income class to upper-income class residents who may require an apartment only on a short-term lease," she explained. "There's a lot of communicating that has to go on between them and us."

James Britcher, ARM, director of support services for the Baltimore-based Wallace Campbell & Co., AMO, agreed that on-going communication with the resident is important.

"Marketing is always in flux," he acknowledged. "If it stagnates, so do resident applications."

Britcher added that marketing tactics need to be targeted and individualized to the property and customer. He said that marketing methods within his company for its 14,000 residential units range from word of mouth, to television promotions and newspaper ads.

Solving problems and eliminating obstacles for a customer are essential marketing techniques for today's residential management industry. Today's ARM specialists understand that to address an individual resident's requirements, they first have to learn what those requirements are

and that involves direct, one-to-one interaction.

This one-to-one communication is especially important at renewal time. Daniels said this is a good time to determine what her residents are not happy with and to try and fix problems.

"Sometimes I'll find out that getting the renewal will come down to giving them a new item or transferring them to a different apartment within the property," she said.

Some resident managers are finding, too, that implementing a marketing approach that is based in individualized, one-on-one contact is not just a personal preference but a necessity as a way of dealing with changes occurring in the marketplace.

Theresa Caro, ARM, resident manager of the 282-unit, Anaheim-based Chaparral Apartments, acknowledged that changing demographics in her area has required a more individualized approach to marketing.

"I'm finding that I have to be a lot more creative," she said. "In addition to advertising in newspapers and For Rent guides, we also work di-

rectly with residents through resident referral programs."

One example of a more personalized form of marketing which Caro implemented recently was a referral program which she promoted in the form of a door knocker.

Residents who successfully referred another resident to the property received \$200.

Caro who is responsible for the marketing of her property, said she has had to alter marketing approach because of changing demographics. She noted that the population of her local area is now 86 percent Hispanic, and the aerospace industry, once the primary employer in the area, has all but disappeared with the result that the market can no longer withstand higher rents.

"Not everybody likes the same thing," Caro explained. "Now, we have a situation where multiple families are living together in the same apartment with some members working two and three jobs just to make the rent. We've had to make our marketing efforts more individualized than we did five years ago in order to adapt to these changes."

Housing Our Families and Union Labor Retirement Association receive \$7 million grant

Housing Our Families and Union Labor Retirement Association were pleased to learn from Congressperson Earl Blumenhauer that they received the largest federal housing grant ever made in the City of Portland: a \$7 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The grant will cover the cost of construction and operating subsidy for a 74 unit low income elderly project to be located on NE. Martin Luther King Jr., Blvd. and Dekum. The project is named the Alberta Simmons Plaza, after the outgoing Chair of Housing Our Families.

This project is a partnership between Housing Our Families, a non-profit community development corporation working to create affordable rental housing in N/NE Portland, and Union Labor Retirement Association, a non-profit that specializes in affordable elderly housing and who currently operates the Union Manors projects. Also involved in this project is the Housing Development Center, which will provide technical assistance on the construction and financing of the project, and the Oregon HUD office.

Housing Our Families chose to name the project after Alberta Simmons because of her long standing desire for the organization to build affordable senior housing in

the NE community. "She was really the inspiration behind this project." Says Gretchen Dursch, Executive Director of Housing Our Families. "We also wanted to honor her work in the community and dedication to Housing Our Families."

Alberta Simmons, retiring Chair

of Housing Our Families, has long wanted affordable senior housing in N/NE because "Seniors have given so much to the community. We need a place to call our own. A safe place. We deserve that."

The project will serve elderly earning less than 50% of median income

in the Portland area. For a single person this is less than \$15,550 a year income; for two person household it \$17,750. HUD will provide a seven year operating subsidy for the project. As a result, tenant's rents will be set at no more than 1/3 of their income.

Funds available for rural homebuyers

The Oregon Housing and Community Services Department (OHCS) announced the availability of the "Oregon First-Time Homebuyer Program." This pilot program assists very low income persons in rural Oregon to purchase their first home.

Funding for this program is limited to \$360,000, and is jointly provided by OHCS and a grant from the Federal Home Loan Bank in Seattle.

Eligible applicants must be purchasing a home in an area with a population of 35,000 or less and must not have an annual gross household income in excess of \$19,350 (\$22,200 in the counties of

Clackamas, Columbia, Multnomah, Washington or Yamhill).

Funds are limited to a maximum of \$6,000 per recipient and are awarded in the form of a grant with a recapture provision should the homebuyer sell or transfer the property. Grant funds may be used to cover down payments, closing costs and/or minor repairs.

"OHCS is pleased to be able to offer a financial assistance program specifically targeted to the rural areas of the state," said Baruti L. Artharee, OHCS Director. According to Dee Taylor, Single-Family Program Manager, "We are excited about being able to market this program in rural Oregon and especially

appreciative of the efforts of our participating lenders." Taylor added that, "OHCS's gratitude extends to the Federal Home Loan Bank of Seattle for partnering with us in making this program a reality."

OHCS is the state housing finance agency, providing financial and program support to create and preserve opportunities for quality, affordable housing for low income Oregonians. The Department also administers federal and state anti-poverty community service programs.

For additional information on homeownership programs available through the State of Oregon, contact Dee Taylor at (503) 986-2041.

Free sand bags for flood victims

Free sand and bags are available to flood victims in the greater Portland area at HomeBase home improvement warehouses, HomeBase President Allan Sherman announced Wednesday.

This emergency sand bag project is a community service sponsored by HomeBase, in cooperation with Sakrete of Pacific Northwest Inc., which is donating the sand. In addition, HomeBase is donating the bags to the assistance effort.

HomeBase locations participating in the program are: 1260

Lancaster Drive, S.E., in Salem; 1950 N.E. 122 Ave. in Portland; 11055 Southwest Canyon Road in Beaverton; 9300 S.E. 82nd St. in Clackamas; and 11505 N.E. Fourth Plain Road in Vancouver.

Committed to meeting the needs of the local community, HomeBase currently operates 84 locations in 10 states. With headquarters in Irvine, HomeBase is one of the Western region's leading chains of home improvement warehouses. The company is a division of Natick, Mass.-based Waban Inc.

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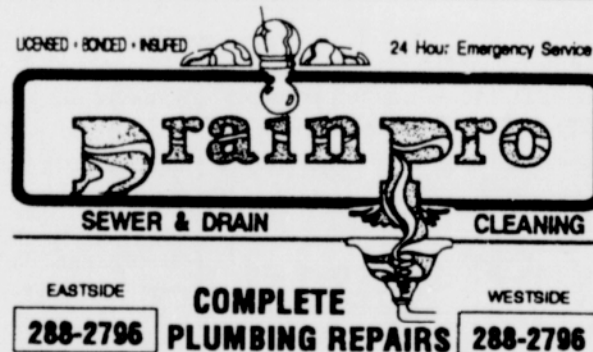
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Blankets for homeless

Thousands of homeless people in the metropolitan Portland area will benefit from many of the more than 110,000 wool blankets the U.S. Department of Defense has donated to World Vision, an international relief and development agency.

In Portland 5,000 blankets, valued at \$34,500, will be distributed to: The Salvation Army in Portland (2,500 blankets); Union Gospel Mission (800 blankets); and Portland Rescue Mission (900 blankets). LoveINC, a network of churches in Salem, will receive 800 blankets to distribute to the homeless.

Blankets are most needed during the winter and early spring months, especially during the coldest weeks when centers are opened to accommodate the increased demands for emergency shelter for the homeless.

While World Vision frequently receives donations of such items as clothing, pharmaceuticals and medical supplies, gifts of large quantities of blankets are rare. "Last year's distribution of blankets helped over 65,000 men, women and children," said Bob Seiple, President of World Vision. "We are pleased to be selected again this year to distribute blankets," said Seiple.

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