

Better Landlording through Education

JOIN US FOR OUR JANUARY 24TH, 2017
MEMBER LUNCHEON FEATURING:

Sarah Sedlacek Iowa City Crisis Center



Speaker for the January meeting will be Sara Sedlacek from the Iowa City Crisis Center. Sedlacek will discuss the local organizations in Johnson County who provide financial assistance to residents, a history of the Crisis Center, and how landlords and property managers can help develop relationships with these organizations to ensure their tenants get the help they need.

Portland, Maine Landlord Sentenced for Safety Violations

From the Portland Press Herald, by Randy Billings

The owner of a Portland apartment building where six people died in a fire two years ago was sentenced Thursday to 90 days in jail for a misdemeanor building code violation. Justice Thomas Warren handed down the sentence in Superior Court in Portland. It is believed to be the first time that a landlord in Maine has been jailed for a safety code violation. Although landlord Gregory Nisbet was acquitted of manslaughter charges in the Noyes Street fire, Warren said the code violation deprived three tenants on the third floor of an emergency exit and a chance to get out of the house alive. The staircase was on fire and the only third-floor window was too small to be used as a way out, regardless of doubts

raised during Nisbet's trial about whether the tenants were conscious or quickly overcome by smoke and fumes.

"This was a knowing violation of the code and it had serious consequences," Warren said.

Although the judge chose not to impose the maximum jail sentence of six months, he ordered Nisbet to pay the maximum fine, \$1,000.

While an appeal is possible, the sentencing appears to end a criminal case that has been closely watched by the victims' families and by landlords, tenants and municipal officials across the state. The Nov. 1, 2014, blaze was Maine's deadliest fire in nearly four decades and prompted Portland to create a new housing safety office, expand its safety inspections of rental units and more aggressively prosecute landlords who fail to respond to notices of code violations.

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Membership Meeting at Flannigan's in the IOWA RIVER POWER COMPANY

Our next General Membership meeting will be held Tuesday, November 22nd, 2016, at 11:30 am at Flannigan's in the Iowa River Power Company, 501 - 1st Ave, Coralville.

Any interested member of the Association is welcome to attend starting at 12 noon. If you wish to have lunch, please arrive at 11:30. The buffet lunch will include: French Dip, Fries, Salad, Desert & Drink.

Please RSVP by email (apartmentassoc@gmail.com) or phone to Mark Ruggeberg at (319)338-0435 with the number of individuals from your office or home who will be attending. **Cost is \$12.00 per person.** It is important to let us know if you will be attending and having lunch. If you do not RSVP and intend to have lunch, you may be asked to wait to serve yourself until we are sure that we can provide food for those who have RSVP'd.

The speaker will have the floor from noon to 1pm.

LUNCH IS \$12.00 AT THE DOOR.

Iowa City Recycling Update

On November 1, the City Council of Iowa City passed a resolution enacting several waste minimization programs.

Computer monitors and televisions can no longer be landfilled. Please note this affects the entire landfill service area: Johnson County, Kalona and Riverside. These items and most other electronics can be recycled at the Iowa City Landfill and Recycling Center or at the East Side Recycling Center through the Iowa Valley Habitat for Humanity ReStore. Recycling fees at the Iowa City Landfill and at the East Side Recycling Center range from \$2 to \$15 per item.

- \$2 for small items such as printers, stereos, VCRs and DVD players
- \$10 for televisions or computer monitors smaller than 18 inches on the diagonal measurement (fee includes computer components)
- \$15 for televisions or computer monitors 18 inches or larger on the diagonal measurement and all console televisions (fee includes computer components)

Some local stores that sell such items may accept electronics for recycling when a new item is purchased. Some local second-hand stores may also accept electronics for reuse or recycling.

Recycling is now required at all multifamily dwellings within Iowa City. The simplest way to get started is to call the trash hauler you currently use for pricing; most haulers offer recycling services. It is anticipated that most haulers will offer a dumpster for single stream recycling that will include cardboard, paper, plastic and metal; some haulers may offer other containers sizes. Enforcement will be tied to rental permits.

This is also a good opportunity to remind tenants in single family homes through four-plex buildings that they already have access to City of Iowa City curbside recycling services; they just need to pick up a bin at City Hall. More information about the City's curbside program is available at www.icgov.org/recycling.

More information about both of these initiatives is available at www.icgov.org/waste-proposals.

City of Iowa City Recycling Coordinator Jen Jordan can assist with promotion and education to tenants. Please contact Jen at jennifer-jordan@iowa-city.org or 319-887-6160 with questions or for assistance.



Suggestions for Speakers/Lunch Discussion Topics

Is there a topic you would like to learn more about, or do you have an idea for a speaker to invite to future GICAA meetings? If so, please contact any board member or send an email with your suggestions to: apartmentassoc@gmail.com. **Thank you!**

Annual Landlord's Day on the Hill & Legislative Update



The following information was provided by Joe Kelly, Landlords of Iowa lobbyist, regarding Landlords Day on the Hill and the Occupancy Bill. If you are interested in attending the Day on the Hill, **please RSVP to Kelly at: joe@iamha.org**

The annual landlords' Day on the Hill will be held on February 1st. The Iowa Realtors Association will also be holding their Day on the Hill at this time.

We will be meeting, beginning at 10:00 a.m., in Room 304 of the Capitol, 1007 E Grand Ave, Des Moines, IA where we have met in recent years. We need to leave the room at 11:00 a.m. Therefore, we need to be punctual so that we can make the best use of our hour together. The most important part of your day is to meet with your Representatives and Senator. It is advised that you contact them in advance, telling them you will be at the Capitol on February 1. Ask them to tell you the best time for you to contact them on February 1. Many landlords, in past years, have had specific appointments set up with their legislators in advance. Room 304 will be available at 8:00 a.m. Some landlords will begin to gather at that time.

One of our priority bills, the occupancy bill, has been filed in both the House and Senate Judiciary Committees. The House Judiciary Committee is very familiar with the bill, having passed it out of committee several times. As most of you know, the bill passed the House with 73 votes in 2015. However, the Senate is not familiar with it all. Should we wait until the bill comes out with a number before we start lobbying the Senate? That would not be my advice. We need to start working on the bill now. Chairman Brad Zaun has authorized the bill, and he is in favor of it. The ranking member, top Democrat on the committee, is Senator Rick Taylor. He is for the bill and will assign himself to the subcommittee. Senate Judiciary Committee members are listed following this article. If you live in or have a business in one of these Senator's districts, it would be a good thing to contact the Senator and tell the Senator that this bill passed the House two years ago, with bipartisan support, and that it will be considered by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill does not prevent cities from regulating the occupancy of rental houses. It would prevent cities from using an arbitrary standard, such as whether the persons are part of a family, as the standard for regulating the number of people who may rent a house together.

UPDATE: The occupancy bill, SSB 1009, was released last week. Senator Shipley will be the floor manager. It's my understanding that many of the members of the Pottawattamie Chapter know Senator Shipley very well. Senator Julian Garrett is the second Republican on the subcommittee. He resides in Warren County. The third member of the subcommittee is the ranking member, or top Democrat on the Judiciary Committee, Senator Rich Taylor. Senator Taylor has already announced his

support for the bill. He was chair of the Senate Local Government Committee last year. Senator Taylor had planned to introduce the bill, had the Democrats retained control.

As I mentioned earlier this week, speed is important. You can imagine that the Iowa League of Cities is probably sending out a legislative alert right now, asking their members to oppose SSB 1009, based upon home rule authority.

SSB 1009 really doesn't overturn home rule. Cities would still have the right to regulate occupancy in rental homes, as well as owner occupied homes. What SSB 1009 does is to prevent cities from using a standard, whether there is a family relationship established, as the reason for putting a limit on how many can occupy the dwelling.

Cities should use different standards, such as square footage of the sleeping area, how many sleeping areas are in the dwelling, parking standards, etc.....

Let's start to work now on the Senate Judiciary Committee. If your Senator is not a member of the Judiciary Committee, contact your Senator and draw his/her attention to SSB 1009.....ask for their support.

Let me know what kind of feedback you get from your Senator.

The following are a list of recently introduced bills that may be of interest to landlords:

Senate File 42 by Senator Zaun: A bill for an act relating to jurisdictional changes to small claims court cases.

Senate File 59 by Senator Chelgren: A bill for an act striking the future repeal of provisions relating to the property assessment appeal board and making corresponding changes.

Senate File 71 by Senator Chelgren: A bill for an act providing sanctions for the filing of frivolous actions.

Senate Judiciary Committee Members:

- [Brad Zaun](#) (R, District [20](#)), Chair
- [Dan Dawson](#) (R, District [8](#)), Vice Chair
- [Rich Taylor](#) (D, District [42](#)), Ranking Member
- [Tony Bisignano](#) (D, District [17](#))
- [Nate Boulton](#) (D, District [16](#))
- [Jeff Edler](#) (R, District [36](#))
- [Julian B. Garrett](#) (R, District [13](#))
- [Kevin Kinney](#) (D, District [39](#))
- [Janet Petersen](#) (D, District [18](#))
- [Charles Schneider](#) (R, District [22](#))
- [Jason Schultz](#) (R, District [9](#))
- [Tom Shipley](#) (R, District [11](#))
- [Amy Sinclair](#) (R, District [14](#))

Calendar

Greater Iowa City Area Apartment Association meetings are held on the **4th Tuesday of each month at Iowa River Power Company.**

January, 24th: GICAA Lunch Meeting
February 1st: Landlord's Day on the Hill
February 28th: GICAA Lunch Meeting

