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"We knew that if we could just project a more professional image, we could pull in higher caliber people off the street. When the displays were installed, I cut all advertising. I used the money that had been going towards less-effective advertising on the system, it didn't cost me a cent! Our traffic immediately tripled. Profits immediately doubled. This is the best bang-for-the-buck advertising ever!"

Mr. Ashley DeLoach • Valdosta Home Center • 229-244-7245

"The bottom line: I was spending \$7000/month on off-site advertising. When I started using the displays and the On-Site Marketing System, I stopped ALL advertising. Results: I am saving \$80,000/yr on advertising and my sales numbers are up 35%!!! How can you beat that?"

Mr. Rick Martin • Heartland Homes • 270-442-0021

"Overall, the displays have doubled our traffic, and the 'quality' of buyer we attract has improved as well. In the first 3 days using your system, we sold 2 homes which we can attribute directly to the messages we ran. Within 3 Days of using the system, the displays were 50% paid for. (And we initially thought it was an 'expensive' idea!) Just a few days ago, we closed two deals in one day who stated that the message on the display was what pulled them in."

Mr. Jamie Hanks • Sinclair-Oconee Homes • 478-956-2499

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2220 Walk On Drive
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Resident Relations Forum DRAWS NEARLY 2000

BY GEORGE ALLEN, CPM, MHM

Property managers from the U.S. and Canada gathered to discuss the latest techniques to attract and retain residents

Did you miss the first-annual NCC forum for communities? The Resident Relations Forum was held earlier this year in conjunction with the National Manufactured Housing Congress & Expo.

The speaker roster at the forum was packed with information that can be applied immediately by community owners and property managers to better serve their residents and improve the bottom line.

How successful was the first forum? The comments say it all:

"This type of resident relations forum is so important to all of us 'in the business,'" was one typical response. "Loved it and it was a great day with great information about resident relations. Well worth my time and money," was another.

The event was attended by nearly 200 people from 36 states and Canadian provinces. California was represented by 32 registrants; Illinois was second with 15; Florida had nine; and Ohio, Michigan, and Oregon were represented by seven each. Six land-lease community owners/operators attended from Arizona and Utah.

If you missed the event, don't worry, planning is already underway for a second Community Issues Forum on April 9, 2007, in Las Vegas, Nev. (see sidebar *Plan to Participate Next Year*, p.28)

Following is a quick synopsis of the first event for your reading pleasure:

EVENT QUICK NOTES

Following opening remarks by Robert Blatz of American Land Lease, a land-lease community asset class real estate investment trust (REIT), Steve Jandrell of the organizational change management firm CapGemini spoke about how to, "plan, manage and implement" change in the workplace. Attendees were encouraged by the talk to return to their properties to immediately implement resident relations enhancements.

Next was a general panel discussion session moderated by Rick Rand of Great Value

8 Ways that Superior Customer Service Improves the Bottom Line

According to Michael Drago of J.D. Power & Associates, one of the keynote speakers at the Resident Relations Forum last April, there are eight positive results from adopting a comprehensive resident relations program focused on superior customer service:

- 1 Increased new and "resale" home sales and home site leasing;
- 2 Increased usage—i.e., more telephone and on-site visit "traffic" by prospects;
- 3 Competitive advantage by becoming "best in the local housing market";
- 4 Improved, even superior, operating results (i.e., higher net operating income, or NOI);
- 5 Increased financial performance overall;
- 6 Increased housing market share in local housing market;
- 7 Increased word-of-mouth traffic, or "referrals"; and
- 8 Greater pricing leverage, providing "more bang for the buck"



ANNE RIPPY/GETTY IMAGES

Plan to Participate Next Year

It's not too early to think about participating in the next Community Issues Forum, scheduled for April 10, 2007, one day before the start of the National Manufactured Housing Congress & Expo for Manufactured and Modular Housing in Las Vegas, Nev. The focus of the forum will be determined in the coming months.

If you'd like to make a topic suggestion, contact Mike O'Brien, CAE, executive vice president of the National Communities Council, at 703-558-0652 or mobrien@mhcommunities.org.

rent sessions covering amenities and services characteristic of all-age land-lease communities as well as "55-and-over" communities. These valuable insights and practical suggestions were presented by Christine Lindsey, MHM, with UMH Properties in Tennessee; Rick Rand, ACM, of Great Value Homes in Wisconsin; Doug Grass, CPM, of Follett Investment Properties in California; Chris Parrish, owner, Parrish Manor in North Carolina; Bill Cramer, CPM, of RIMCO Properties in Pennsylvania; Dora Cline, CPM, of Hometown America in Florida; Ron Bunce, of Equity Lifestyle Properties in Arizona; and myself, George Allen, CPM, MHM.

As a related aside, notice how many of today's professional property managers underscore their commitment to improving resident relations in the land-lease community by earning one or more of our industry's professional designations—MHI's Accredited Community Manager (ACM), the Institute for Real Estate Management's Certified Property Manager (CPM), and GFA Management's Manufactured Housing Manager (MHM).

Which raises the question, are you presently working on your certification?

There were also case studies in resident relations. Andy Strine of Investor's Realty in Delaware dealt with the all-age scenario; Troy Brost, MHM, described his experiences as owner/operator of age-restricted SongBrook Community in Eugene, Ore.; and Jim Marlow of American Land Lease described how upgrades to his firm's properties enhanced resident relations.

The final, and well-attended, general "discussion session" was facilitated by Jenny Hodge of American Modern Insurance Group and turned out to be one of the most popular sessions of the day, and demonstrated the value of the entire program.

If you would like more detailed information about the presentations at the Resident Relations Forum, a book of spiral-bound handouts are available in limited quantities from MHI's National Communities Council for \$30. To order the binder, visit www.mhcommunities.org or call Greg Rinck at 703-558-0646. ■

Homes Inc. It featured Fran Hirsch of Brandenburg, Staedler & Moore, who explained the "do's and don'ts" of effective resident screening. Tim Newby, of Newby Management, followed with his take on how to clearly communicate and fairly enforce on-site rules and regulations (also known as guidelines for living). Greg Harmon of Commonwealth Real Estate concluded the panel with his take on effective conflict management and resolution.

During the afternoon, there were several concur-

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

Since 1996, the NCC has provided community owners and managers a forum for establishing policies and programs to enhance manufactured home communities nationwide.

Through government affairs, education, and networking, the NCC has protected and advanced the interests of community owners over the last ten years under the leadership of some of the industry's finest professionals, including Gary McDaniel, BaseCamp Capital LLC, formerly of Chateau Communities (1996 to 1998); Barry McCabe, Hometown America (1999 to 2000); Kris Jensen, Jensen's Inc. (2001); Jeff Kellogg, formerly of Chateau Communities (2002); Rick Rand, Great Value Homes Inc. (2003 to 2004); and Nathan Smith, PHC, SSK Communities (2005 to present).

At the MHI summer meeting in Washington, D.C., the industry celebrated the NCC's ten years of efforts to make communities an attractive housing option and protect and advance the interests of community owners.

10th Anniversary Celebration Sponsors

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- Wells Fargo Home Mortgage



Nathan Smith



The National Communities Celebrates 10 Years of Influence



Mike Sienkiewicz, Sienkiewicz Holdings; Mary Gaiski, Pennsylvania MHA; Dan Baxter, Popular Housing Services



Robin Jacobs, Foundation Works



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Nathan Smith, Gary McDaniel, Kris Jensen, Jeff Kellogg, and Richard Rand



Don Glisson and Jed Gleim, Triad Financial



Duane Oxendine, Textron; Dennis Jones, R-Anell Housing



Rick Rand, Great Value Homes; B.J. Williams, Champion Enterprises



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