



Social Media and Other Sites that Can Save You Time and Money

by Jeffrey O'Brien, Esq., Mansfield Tanick & Cohen, P.A.

Technology has revolutionized how we do business. Social media sites, websites and smartphone applications all combine to make us more efficient in our respective businesses, and the CIC industry is no different. Here are just a sampling of resources available to CIC managers and board members to make their jobs easier:

CIC Midwest LinkedIn Group: Yes, folks, CIC Midwest has its own LinkedIn group. On it you'll find various discussions and information on upcoming events. Whatever your role is with CIC communities, joining the CIC Midwest LinkedIn group is a must. Do you have a question about a legal issue involved with your CIC community and don't know where to turn for the answer? Post the question on the CIC Midwest LinkedIn group page and you'll almost certainly hear from one of the member attorneys in a short while.

Minnesota Multi Housing Association (MHA) LinkedIn Group: MHA also has

its own group, and for those professionals involved on both the rental and CIC sides of the multi-housing industry, this group offers many of the same aspects as the CIC Midwest group to the broader group of multi-housing industry professionals.

Xpenser.com: Xpenser.com isn't a social media site, but rather an application which can be used via a computer or smartphone. Xpenser lets you record expenses as soon as they happen via whatever means are available to you quickly and painlessly. Send them in via Email, SMS, IM, or voice (call a number and say your expense). Use the iPhone, Android, or WebOS native applications. From your Blackberry, email "Lunch \$78.50 with BigClient" and it's recorded. From your phone, SMS "exp groceries \$27.13." From your computer, IM "Equipment \$889.19 backup server." From your phone, call and say "taxi \$39 office to airport." Use the Web interface to edit and finalize them or export them to your favorite financial management software. No

more forgetting your cash expenses, no more half-day expense entry sessions

Squareup.com:

Square is an app which enables you to accept credit cards quickly and easily using your mobile device. Subscribers receive a free card reader when they download the app. Fees are 2.75% per swipe. If you enter credit card numbers manually, Square costs 3.5% + 15¢ per transaction.

Doodle.com: Having trouble scheduling an important meeting via email? Try Doodle. Doodle eliminates the chaos of scheduling and saves you a lot of time and energy when you're trying to find a time to bring a number of people together. The service is used for business and personal scheduling by more than 10 million people per month. Instead of using just one



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REPLACEMENT RESERVES *continued from page 25*

hire a professional reserve company to perform the required review every three years.

Q: *Does the new prohibition on taking or borrowing money from the reserve account to fund operating expenses mean that associations can no longer reserve for painting, seal coating, and other major maintenance expenses?*

A: The new statutory language makes it clear that funds that are being reserved for the replacement of components in the association must be kept separately from all other accounts that the association maintains for operating expenses, and that funds in the replacement reserve account may not be used for operating expenses. However, it does not prevent associations from maintaining separate "operating reserve" accounts to be used for the

funding of larger maintenance and repair projects. Associations should consult with their tax advisor to make sure that these operating reserve accounts are properly set up to avoid any possible tax consequences of having surplus operating funds at the end of the year.

Q: *Is there a penalty for failing to comply with the new reserve requirements?*

A: There is no penalty provision built into 515B.3-114(1) for associations that fail to comply with the new reserve requirements. However, as with all provisions of MCIOA, 515B.4-116 provides a right of action for homeowners and other parties damaged by the failure of the association or other parties to comply with any statutory provision, and further provides that the prevailing party in such

an action may recover its attorney's fees and costs in bringing the action. In other words, the association and/or its board of directors can be sued by one or more homeowners for failing to comply with the statutory requirements and could be facing a judgment that includes an award of attorney's fees and costs. Further, an award for attorney's fees and costs may not be covered damages under the association's applicable insurance policy, meaning that those amounts would have to be paid out-of-pocket. ■

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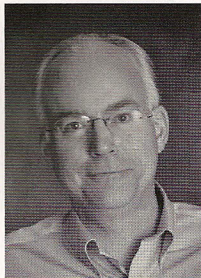
GOOD NEWS

Send your company's Good News items to connie.anderson@mmha.com. Deadlines for each quarterly issue of CIC Midwest News are: March 1, June 1, September 1, December 1.

New Subcommittee Chairs

We welcome our two newest CIC Midwest subcommittee chairs:

Douglas Strandness, Dunbar Strandness, is our new Legislative Subcommittee Chair. He became an associate member of MHA in 1981 when he was a property manager working for LaSalle Group. When he started his own company in 1991, he immediately joined MHA. He was involved in the start up of the MHA Investors Club. In 2000, he worked with Kim Carlson of Cities Management, who was then the MHA Board Chair, to initiate the formation of CIC Midwest. He continued that effort when he became the Board Chair in 2001. He has also been involved with the MHA Legislative Committee and with lobbying at the State Capitol for at least 20 years.



STRANDNESS

Doug has been involved in all aspects of the multifamily housing industry since 1975. After working primarily in day-to-day property management for 30 years, for both rental and CIC properties, he refocused his efforts in 2010. He now works as a consultant in the areas of asset management, management of major rehab projects, redevelopment and financing.

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option, Doodle enables you to propose several dates and times and the participants can indicate their availability online. You'll find the perfect time to meet in a quick and easy way, no matter how many people and calendars are involved. Doodle is free and doesn't require you to register.

These sites are far from a time consuming distraction. In fact, usage of these groups and sites can actually increase your productivity. ■

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Justin P. Short, Esq., Best & Flanagan, is our new Publications Subcommittee Chair. He specializes in representing cooperatives and community associations on HUD financing issues, construction warranties, construction defects, community governance and other general litigation matters.



SHORT

Major Awards

We are happy to present our Major Award to those CIC Midwest members who have contributed time and expertise to help move our organization forward.

Phaedra Howard, Hellmuth & Johnson, received the Major Award in September.

She was integral in CIC Midwest's legislative effort this spring, working closely with MHA Director of Government Relations Todd Liljenquist. She was a top recruiter in the last two membership contests. She is co-chair of the CIC Midwest Education subcommittee, teaches many classes, and is part of the team that is redesigning the ACCAM certification program. She also serves on the CIC Midwest Publications subcommittee and writes articles for every issue. She tirelessly answers questions on the CIC Midwest LinkedIn discussion group. And she is part of the CIC Midwest strategic leadership team. Thanks to all of her efforts, and those of the Hellmuth & Johnson team, Hellmuth & Johnson won the MADACS Award for Vendor of the Year.



Phaedra Howard and Cindy Reiter



Gretchen Schellhas

Gretchen Schellhas, Thomsen & Nybeck, received the Major Award in October. She became the CEO of Thomsen & Nybeck in 2007, and that's when Gretchen and her group stepped up their involvement in CIC Midwest. She and her team share their time and expertise by teaching, writing articles, and committee work. Gretchen has repeatedly been featured as a Superlawyer by *Minnesota Law & Politics*. We think she's super too. We are happy to present our major award to Gretchen Schellhas.

Matt Lupkes, New Concepts Management, received the Major Award in November. Matt has been a renaissance man with CIC Midwest - he can do just about everything, and he does. We recognize him for his outstanding contribution to CIC Midwest as past chair of the Resources subcommittee, and current chair of the MMP (Membership/Marketing/Promotions) subcommittee. He is a prolific writer of articles for *CIC Midwest News*, a stellar idea man, participates in education, CIC Midwest LinkedIn hotline questions, and as part of the strategic leadership team.

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CCAM

(the original Certified Community Association Manager course) is April 26-27th, 2012.

ACCAM (Advanced CCAM) in a modular format begins in the Fall of 2012.