**August 26, 2018**



**Some news about fire safety upgrades**

Smoke detectors will be upgraded next month in the bedrooms of all Watermark vacation rentals.These new detectors come with improved lithium ion batteries good for up to 10 years and with a modest price tag of about $15 each.

Reacting to City of NSB’s plans to treat all vacation rentals as businesses (including inspections and fines of anyone found in non-compliance with safety standards), the Watermark board at its Aug 18 meeting approved a group purchase and installation of the required safety equipment. The purchase was put on a fast track out of concern that the vast majority of surface-mounted smoke detectors currently in use throughout the Watermark clearly do not meet the new criteria and would result in fines of about $75 per violation.

The city wants them installed inside each bedroom so our plan to place them above the door inside the bedroom.

D**elivery of** the new equipment is **expected next week and installation scheduled to start right after the Labor Day weekend.**

As for maintenance of the new smoke detectors, these won’t do anything different than the old ones but are simply a newer version that last longer – that you won’t need to change out batteries on every year or so. The city requirement calls for smoke alarms to be either hard-wired or have a 10-year lithium battery (sealed and tamper-proof style)… so the old 9-volt battery style will not meet the criteria.  On these upgrades, once the 10 years is up, you have to replace the entire unit.

Fire extinguishers whose expiration date has passed will be updated at the same time to get all Rental Group owners in compliance with city codes… The extinguishers will also be about $15 each. **Once the installations have been completed, the office will be contacting everyone about reimbursement**. Rental Group owners will see money for the upgrades taken out of their rental proceeds.

**Did August rental occupancy continue to slide this year, as we speculated in the July newsletter… or did it rally?**

I**t came around!  We are actually more booked this year than last year in August.  We’ll finish the month with at least 8 fewer empty weeks. Not all Florida counties moved up their start dates, so that apparently helped prevent the decrease that was originally feared.**

**What can we expect for the long Labor Day weekend?**

**A full house.**

**What is the latest timetable on the cable tv/wifi conversion?**

**The Spectrum work crew is supposed to start arriving the day after Labor Day (Sept 4)…and we expect them to start getting into the units the following week (Sept 10-17). This is just for the re-wiring aspect of the project, not the installation of the new equipment… once started, however, the entire project, is expected to take 60-90 days to complete.**

**How bad a Hurricane Season is expected?**

For the entire June 1 to November 30 season, NOAA predicts a total of 9-13 named storms (winds of 39 mph or greater) of which 4-7 will become hurricanes (winds of 74 mph or greater), including 0-2 major hurricanes (winds of 111 mph or greater). So far, the season has seen five named storms, including two hurricanes.

**When is it recommended that we start moving our balcony furniture inside?**

**If history is an indicator of future performance, the week after Labor Day marks the beginning of the worst part of hurricane activity for Floridians. For that reason, we recommend that balcony furniture be moved inside as a precaution after last use.**

**What is the local lighting requirement during turtle season?**

During turtle nesting season -- May 1 to Oct. 31 -- beachfront homes, condos and businesses in Volusia County must shield light sources and reflective surfaces so they can’t be seen by someone standing on the beach. Such lighting is known to disorient the sea turtles and possibly lead them away from the ocean and to almost certain death. Thus, any source of light or reflective surface visible from the beach is a violation of the county’s code, regardless of color. More questions? Call Volusia County’s Lighting Compliance Officer at 386-238-4668.

**What is the ideal time to schedule my deep cleaning?**

**Required on an annual basis every fall, the deep cleanings are expected to completed before the arrival of your winter renters.**

**Did deep cleaning rates go up?**

**No, they are the same as last year…** 2-bedroom, $245… 2-bedroom deluxe, $280… and 3-bedroom, $325.

**A few newsletters ago, you sent around a survey of 3 BR rates among NSB condos… Will you be following up with a similar survey of 2 BR rates up and down the beach?**

**It’s in the works. We’ll get it out to everyone next month in enough time to for owners to study it well before the annual rental meeting in October.**

**What’s the outlook for Winter ’19? Are we booked solid or nearly so?**

**Yes!**

**Bill & Sandy (#203)**