2018 Rental Group Newsletters

**June 12, 2018**



**Rental Group Newsletter**

**New and improved WIFI**

Details for the re-cabling project are still being worked on, but be assured that the managers will be coordinating with summer tenants to minimize any inconvenience. We expect renters to welcome these improvements with open arms. Installers hope to move through the project two units per day, with an expected completion time of 2-3 months. The Watermark board is strongly recommending owners eager for a more reliable internet to immediately order a dedicated hookup from Spectrum. Those who do will have to pay for this service for what should be two or three months. If an owner decides to have Spectrum internet installed, there is no contract, so as soon as the association contract with Spectrum kicks in, the owner can cancel their agreement with Spectrum and go onto the Watermark’s.

**Working vacations**

If a new Alamo poll is any indicator, vacation renters will be among the biggest beneficiaries of the Watermark’s WIFI upgrade. U.S. workers are finding it increasingly difficult to unplug and relax – even when vacationing, according to the poll… 59% say they pressure themselves to work during family vacations.

**Busiest May ever?**

Seems so… 19 more weeks were rented this May than last, as guests are getting wiser to this off-season month’s milder weather, slower pace and bargain rates.

**Summer outlook**

Look for June and July to be heavily booked… but don’t be surprised if August takes a hit. After state lawmakers ended the mandate that schools could not start classes sooner than two weeks before Labor Day, many schools have opted to begin classes earlier. So far, June has 10 more weeks rented over last year.

**Slider follow-up**

Owners who upgraded to hurricane-resistant sliders had significantly less water penetration during Hurricane Irma. The amount of moisture was minimal and in some cases did not require any SERVPRO moisture extraction. Fourteen owners had the new and improved sliders put in. One other owner is ordering them. If you’d like a quote, please contact the office.

**Hurricane claims deadline**

By Florida statute, it’s not too late to file a claim for damages caused as far back as three years ago – which includes both Irma (2017) and Matthew (2016).

**Hurricane checklist**

Reminder that a comprehensive checklist can be found on the owners area of *watermarkcondo.com* – with specific reference to action items owners need to take before, during and after a hurricane… One simple step we’d like everyone adopt should a big storm head our way is to put rolled-up beach towels along the inside window ledges and interior slider tracks to cut down on water penetration.

***Bill & Sandy***

 (#203)

**July 31, 2018**

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**Rental Group Newsletter**

**3-Bedroom Spot Check of NSB winter rates**

This spot check of what our competitors are doing with their 3BR rates showed the Watermark in the middle of the pack – 7th out of the 15 surveyed. Periodic checks like this are done for information purposes only. This one, taken in June and July, lists what NSB condos are charging for winter tenants February-only rentals.

3/2 Sunrise 4185

3/3 Sandpiper 4000

3/3 The Pelican 3700

3/2 EbbTide 3700

3/3 Moontide 3675

3/2 Schooner Point 3475

**3/2 Watermark 3450**

3/2 Moontide 3360

3/2 Seascape Towers 3200

3/2 Southwind 3200

3/3 Las Brisas 3020

3/2 Oceanwalk 3083 (across street from beach)

3/2 Golden Arms 2833

3/2 Sea Woods 2476 (across street from beach)

3/2 Ponce Inlet Club So 2395

This data may be especially useful to the four Watermark owners who rent out their 3BR units in the winter. [Only 3 do so in the summer.] But it is important as well to the entire rental group because the 3BR figures represent the highest price point in a range of price points around which a logical pricing structure is hopefully built.

Here are a few noteworthy things we found in this data:

* Of those charging more than the Watermark, all are on located on the no-traffic beach… and all but one actively promote rec/fitness/meeting rooms among their amenities. [The Watermark is on the driving side and has no rec/fitness/meeting room]…Of those charging more than us, three offer 3-Bedroom/3 bath units; the Watermark’s 3BR units are all 3/2s.
* Schooner Point’s 3BR rent is most like the Watermark in terms of winter rates ($25/mo. higher for a 3BR). Like the Watermark, it is a well-maintained condo community built in the 1980s…with heated pool, no smoking, no renter pets. All SP units are 3BRs… A big difference is location: the Watermark is walking distance to the food & fun of Flagler Ave…SP is far from, however, it advertises its location being on the no-traffic beach.
* Because Watermark was built around the same time as Moontide by the same developer, that South Beach-condo has served as a kind of benchmark for us through the years when rates are discussed. In that context, it is interesting to note that Moontide’s 3/3s are priced $225 more than Watermark’s 3/2s; but its 3/2s rent for $90 less.
* Of our nearby competitors, Win San, Holiday Cove North and Coronado Towers are not included in the survey because they do not offer 3-bedroom accommodations.

 From the rental manager’s perspective: 3BRs are more popular in the summer when school is out and the extra space in demand by larger parties…but they pose some unique challenges in the winter due to prospective snowbird tenants coming in twos and mostly on fixed incomes. Those snowbirds typically don’t need the extra space… However, a 3BR does make sense if the snowbirds are wanting guests to stay with them; or 2) if money is not an issue, or 3) if it’s getting late and a 3BR is only size left. Three-bedroom rentals are hardest to rent in the “off season” because the kids are all in school.

 The rental group approves rental adjustments in October at the annual rental meeting. The last time rates were adjusted was 2016. At that time, the 3BR rates were actually decreased somewhat because some of their owners agreed that they may have gotten a bit too pricey and out of line with other Watermark rates.

What our competitors are doing with their prices is only one of the factors we should consider before adjusting rates. We should also take into account the overall shape of the economy and, more specifically, the outlook for discretionary spending, the key component that drives vacation travel. We should also consider pertinent regional travel trends as measured periodically by AAA, the U.S. Travel Association, the State of Florida and Volusia County.

We welcome your thoughts.

***Bill & Sandy***

(#203)

**August 26, 2018**



**Rental Group Newsletter**

**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.

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

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 occupancy continue to slide?**

**It 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.**

 **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.**

**Hurricane Season outlook**

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.

**Winter ’19 outlook**

**We’re booked solid.**

**When should 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. If you are out of state or otherwise unable to come to NSB to bring your balcony furniture inside, the managers can assist with this given adequate notice.**

**Turtle season**

During turtle nesting season – May 1 to October 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.

**When to schedule my deep clean**

**Required on an annual basis every fall, the deep cleanings are expected to completed before t the arrival of your winter renters. Most deep cleanings are done between November and December.**

**Deep cleaning rates**

**They are the same as last year…** 2-bedroom, $245… 2-bedroom deluxe, $280… and 3-bedroom, $325.

***Bill & Sandy***

 (#203)