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Responsibility for
Maintenance, Repair
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by Pamela Dittmer McKuen and Michael C. Davids

GLASS, STEEL AND STEWARDSHIP AT COMMONWEALTH PLAZA: REVITALIZING MIES VAN DER ROHE TOWERS FOR THE FUTURE

DESIGNED BY INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED ARCHITECT LUDWIG MIES VAN DER ROHE, AND COMPLETED IN 1957, THE COMMONWEALTH PLAZA CONDOMINIUM TOWERS ARE A GLEAMING EXEMPLAR IN CHICAGO'S MODERNIST PORTFOLIO. UNDERSTANDABLY, THE RESIDENTS AND MANAGEMENT TAKE ENORMOUS PRIDE IN THE PROPERTY AND ITS ILLUSTRIOUS HISTORY.

When capital repairs and renovations are necessitated by the aging process and fickle Midwestern weather, extra caution is undertaken to preserve and complement the architect's sleek, minimalist aesthetic. Such was the case with a recent comprehensive \$5 million project that spanned two years and included an overhaul of the expansive exterior plaza, residential hallway glow-ups, and modernization of the elevator doors.

"When undertaking any capital project, the board of directors remains guided by the

Miesian philosophy of 'less is more,'" says community association manager Lea Relias of Community Specialists. "They strive to stay as true as possible to Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's original designs while thoughtfully updating the property."

Located in the Lakeview neighborhood of Chicago, Commonwealth Plaza Condominium Association comprises two towers, 330 and 340 West Diversey Parkway. This highly desirable location is within walking distance of the lakefront, Lincoln Park, and upscale shopping

and dining. The towers are 29 and 28 stories, respectively. Four towers were initially planned, but only two were built. In 1976, the buildings were converted to condominiums. The original floor plan had 376 residential units, but several owners combined units for a current total of 322.

The building construction is reinforced concrete with metal and glass curtain walls, a Miesian hallmark. One of the architectural elements that distinguishes Commonwealth Plaza is the steel and aluminum framing on the first and second floors that hold in place large milk-white glass panels to create the effect that the buildings are floating.

"We have a lot of architects who live here because this is such an architecturally significant property in the modernist tradition, and they feel an affinity for Mies van der Rohe," Relias says.



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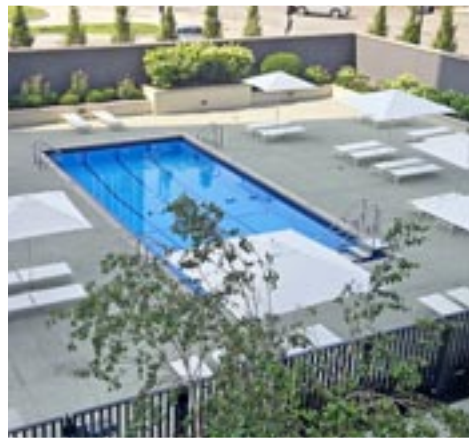
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MIES ARRIVES IN CHICAGO

One of the pioneers of modern architecture, in the 1930s, Mies (as he is generally known) was the director of the then-avant-garde Bauhaus school of art, design, and architecture in Germany. The ascending Nazi party decreed modernism as “degenerate,” thus forcing the school’s closure and Mies’ immigration to Chicago.

He joined the faculty at the Armour Institute

of Technology, a forerunner of the Institute of Technology, and headed the department of architecture while designing the campus’ master plan and many of its buildings. He also became an American citizen. Mies died in 1969 and is buried in Graceland Cemetery, along with several other notable Chicago architects.

BOLD CAPITAL WORKS

“With buildings almost 70 years old and

wanting to remain true to the Mies design, we always have challenges,” Relias says. “This is particularly evident with any capital projects we launch.”

Planning for the plaza overhaul began with a small committee tasked with addressing its deteriorating condition and establishing a cohesive landscaping theme. Over time, this effort expanded into a campus-wide review, which included relocating the 340 building



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driveway away from the building's main frontage, and sloping the terrain to direct water runoff away from the tower foundations. Miesian consultants Dirk Denison Architects and Artemisia Landscape were engaged in the design and landscaping. Installation of the landscaping was executed by McAdam Landscaping. Professional architects and engineers were brought in to assist with engineering solutions and plaza deck repairs. Lighting specialists were engaged to design and implement the illumination elements.

For the residential hallways, the board consulted with renowned Miesian architect Robert Kleinschmidt. The scope included custom-designed carpeting and painting to coordinate with the custom wall tapestries on each floor. Authorized by the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, the tapestries are reinterpretations of Albers' "Homage to the Square" series. The accompanying carpet design draws inspiration from Anni Albers' textile work. (Like Mies, the Albers spent part of their careers at the Bauhaus.) The result is a bold yet respectful design, introducing blocks of primary color at the elevator banks in the

hallways--an eye-popping change from the formerly gray palette.

The carpet installation was an exercise in precision, starting with the 330 building. Installers from PC5 Company started on the top floor and worked their way down, completing about one to one and a half floors per day. A detailed floor-by-floor schedule was sent to building residents, so they knew when their hallways would be disrupted and could plan accordingly.

Updating the residential elevator door roller package required a different schedule. The cabs were modernized in 2008, but the doors were not part of that project. Each building has two passenger elevators and one freight, or service, elevator.

"To replace all the mechanisms and rollers inside every door on every floor was a major undertaking," Relias says. "We spread it out over 6 months, doing one elevator at a time, and going back and forth between the two buildings, so as not to inconvenience everyone for a long period of time."

One freight elevator is slated for upgrades in 2026.

The combined cost of the three projects was about \$5.5 million, and the work was spread out over two years. A third year was dedicated to minor items, such as sealing the plaza deck and purchasing new pool furniture, that could not be finished earlier because of weather conditions.

"Originally, we planned to spread the projects out over three years, but reduced it to two years, so as not to inconvenience the owners over three summers," Relias says.

ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Commonwealth Plaza Condominium Association is governed by a nine-member board of directors who serve two-year terms that are staggered, so new members can be added while some with experience remain in place. Special-interest committees are formed as needed, on an ad hoc basis, depending on the project or objective at hand. The Green Initiative, however, is long-standing and ongoing.

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has been managed by Community Specialists for more than 30 years. Relias has been on the job for over 16 years, and Shelly Castellano is the property supervisor who provides guidance, support and a variety of resources as needed.

Alex Baeza serves as chief building engineer and oversees a maintenance staff of 10 full-time employees. The association also employs office, door and garage staff for a total of about 35 employees.

RICH IN AMENITIES

A robust amenity package accompanies the urban lifestyle at Commonwealth Plaza. Among the offerings are 24-hour door staff; hospitality room; outdoor swimming pool, sundeck and playground; smart lockers for package delivery and dry-cleaning lockers; high-speed fiber optic wireless internet and cable TV. Each tower has its own fitness center and laundry room. A convenience market for essentials and light fare should open this year.

For parking, the garage has a total of 232 spaces of which 100 spaces are assigned for self-parking, and 102 spaces are designated for

valet parking with capacity for more. The carport has a 35-car capacity plus an enclosed bicycle room for bike storage. Four charging stations are available for electric vehicles; residents who wish to use them pay a monthly fee for unlimited charging capabilities.

STRONG FINANCIALS

With an annual operating budget of over \$7 million, the association board and management embrace their fiduciary duty to ensure sound fiscal health. The average selling price for units at Commonwealth Plaza start about \$225,000 for a studio and go up to over \$1 million for combined units. Monthly assessments range between \$700 and \$3,000-plus, depending on the size of the unit.

To help finance the cost of the plaza, hallway and elevator upgrades, the association obtained a \$3.5 million line of credit that converted to a 5-year loan. The board chose to levy a special assessment rather than leave the reserves underfunded. Owners have the option of making a single payment or spreading partial payments over the span of the loan.

"The board felt it was better to do the work all at once and not drag it out over multiple years to reduce all the noise and dust," Relias says. "Now everyone is enjoying the plaza, which is incredibly inviting and beautiful, especially this time of year. Our curb appeal has been greatly enhanced, which is so important for a property of this stature."

PREVIOUS CAPITAL PROJECTS

In 2020, Commonwealth Plaza took on soffit restoration, which sounds simpler than it actually was. The soffits are overhangs that circle the buildings and house the mechanical piping as well as the light fixtures that illuminate the plaza. Along with repairing damage to the soffits, the internal plumbing was replaced and new LED fixtures were installed. New plaster work was applied using the same original plaster lath process.

The soffit project was phased over two years at a cost of about \$2 million. The 340 building was completed in 2020, and the 330 building followed in 2021.

The year 2018 saw completion of curtain

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wall renovations on both towers. The project, which addressed the first- and second-floor glass and aluminum that frames the buildings, entailed replacing the bottom horizontal aluminum channels that support the glass on the ground floor, and making necessary repairs to the membrane below. New milk-white glass panels of the original size and type were installed. The curtain wall project took about a year to complete and cost about \$1.5 million.

GREEN INITIATIVES

Sustainability and “green” building weren’t in the architectural vocabulary of Mies’ day, but his core philosophy is certainly in alignment (as long as it was quietly built into the design and not for “show,” that is). He was a strong proponent of resource efficiency, eliminating waste in structure and materials, and doing less but doing it better.

A major endeavor was the special recycling diverter buttons installed on the trash chutes on each floor. The diverter button system was installed by Nu Recycling and makes it easy for residents to separate recyclables from non-recyclables. They go down the same chute, but press the button, and recyclables are diverted to recycling bins.

“The building is very green-forward, especially for a 70-plus-year-old building, and it’s been great to see that our efforts have not only been sustained but have grown over the years,” Relias says.

MOVING FORWARD

With the completion of the recent capital project, the board and management remain committed to sound fiscal practices while carrying on the legacy of its architect. They engaged Reserve Advisors for a comprehensive updated reserve study to lay the groundwork to plan for future capital projects and expenses.

“Over the last decade, the board focused on what they knew had to be done,” Relias says. “Now that we feel caught up, it is timely to do an in-depth reserve study to see how we move forward.”

“We have truly enjoyed our long-standing relationship with Commonwealth Plaza, and we applaud their approach to working as a team to accomplish their goals, objectives and projects,” Castellano says. “They have shown great leadership over the years and provide a terrific example for other associations to learn from.”

Surely, Mies would be pleased to know modernism endures. 



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by Jonathan Wassel – Keough & Moody

So You Think You're Responsible? Association vs. Owner Responsibility for Maintenance, Repair and Replacement When Damage Occurs

ONE OF THE MOST COMMON ISSUES ANY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION WILL FACE OCCURS WHEN THERE IS DAMAGE TO PROPERTY WITHIN THE ASSOCIATION, AND A DETERMINATION NEEDS TO BE MADE AS TO WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DAMAGE.

When maintenance, repair and replacement are required due to damage, not only must a determination be made as to who is responsible for undertaking the maintenance, repair or replacement, but also who is responsible for the cost to perform the maintenance, repair and replacement. One of the most common mistakes we see when property damage has occurred is confusing an association's maintenance, repair and replacement responsibilities with that of the association's insurance obligations pertaining to the property.

Specifically, there is a thought that because the association insures certain portions of the property,

that in every situation the association will be responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of that portion of the property. The flip side of this also is the belief that just because it wasn't the association's "fault," its insurance is not implicated. However, neither of these generalizations is necessarily true, and each issue should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Insurable Casualty

The first step in any analysis is determining if the maintenance, repair or replacement implicates the association's insurance coverage. In other words, depending on what caused the damage, there may be insurance coverage. This is called an "insurable

casualty" by the insurance carrier. Insurable casualties can range from water and wind damage to damage caused by fire and anything in between. If there is any question as to whether or not the damage was caused by an insurable casualty under the association's insurance coverage, and the damage is likely greater than the association's insurance deductible, best practices dictate that the association should make a claim to its insurance carrier for a coverage determination.

Check Governing Documents

Whether or not there may be insurance coverage is not only based on if there was an insurable casualty, but also if the property that was damaged was that which the association was required to maintain insurance coverage over. This will depend on both the association's governing documents, as well as whether or not the association is a condominium association. For example, if the associ-

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ation is governed by the Illinois Condominium Property Act ("Condo Act"), the Condo Act requires certain minimum insurance coverage as it relates to the common elements and the units. In particular, the association is required to insure at least the bare walls, floors and ceilings of the units located within the association. There may be additional coverage required to be maintained by the association's insurance coverage under the association's governing documents. As far as non-condominium associations, the required coverage pertaining to the property and individual units or lots will depend on the association's governing documents.

What if There is No Insurance?

If there is no insurance coverage for the damage that was caused to the property, whether because the damage is under the association's insurance deductible or because it was not an insurable loss, or for any number of other reasons, the association will need to determine whether the association or the individual owner is responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of the property that was damaged. This will depend on the language of the association's governing documents. There are a number of misconceptions that we see in our office on a routine basis that associations should keep in mind as it relates to maintenance, repair and

replacement responsibilities.

First, just because the association may be required to maintain insurance over certain portions of the property does not mean that when there is no insurance, the association is responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of those same portions of the property. Taking the example from the Condo Act, just because a condo association is responsible for insuring up to the bare walls, floors and ceilings of a unit, does not mean that the association is necessarily responsible for the routine maintenance, repair and replacement of the bare walls, floors and ceilings. While the association may be responsible for these portions of the property when there is no insurance coverage, this responsibility is not automatic. It will depend on the specific language from an association's governing documents as to maintenance responsibilities.

Additionally, just because the association may be responsible for undertaking the maintenance, repair and replacement of certain portions of the property does not necessarily mean that the association is also responsible for the cost. That is, the association may be responsible for performing the work to fix any damage when there is no insurance coverage, but the association's governing documents may also provide that the cost may be assessed back to the owner or owners who are benefited by the

work. Moreover, depending on what caused the damage, for example, an owner's or their guest's negligence, the association's governing documents may also provide that the association may assess the cost back to the offending owner, even though generally the cost would be an association expense.

Factors & Facts Related to Damage

Whenever there is damage to property within the association, determining who is responsible for the damage will depend on a number of factors based on the specific facts related to the damage. One cannot assume just because the association may be responsible for insuring certain portions of the property, that the association is also responsible, when there is no insurance coverage, for the maintenance, repair and replacement of those same portions of property. What will ultimately determine responsibility will be based on whether or not there is insurance coverage and, if not, what the association's governing documents provide as to the respective responsibilities of the association and owners for maintenance, repair and replacement. If damage has occurred within your association, and the issues of responsibility need to be made, do not hesitate to contact legal counsel. 🍃

IREM Chicago 2026 Premier Awards

Four companies and three individuals were recognized for excellence and outstanding contributions to the property management industry May 8th, 2026 during the 22nd Annual IREM Chicago PREMIER Awards event.

A packed house of more than 300 industry professionals and guests attended the gala event held at the historic Drake Hotel.

These three professionals earned individual IREM PREMIER Awards in their respective categories:

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The IREM Premier Awards were created to recognize individuals, organizations, and companies for excellence in areas that include innovation and technology, energy conservation, community involvement and leadership, property management, vendor services and embodying the core principles of IREM.

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➤ Pictured above are (L-R): Jason Seebacker|Balanced Environments, Rebecca Teffeteller|Balanced Environments, Ashley Evans|The Missner Group, Debbie Moarn|BELFOR Property Restoration, Gerda Varkuleviciute|Tandem Property Management, Monica Melchiori|FirstService Residential Illinois, Kelli Stuart|Draper & Kramer, Kristen Sarkisian|Trinity Property Consultants, Mallory Brey|Trinity Property Consultants, Jeanine Harden|Trinity Property Consultants,

throughout metropolitan Chicago. The Chapter works to keep members informed on safety standards, legislative activities and other issues that have an impact on commercial real estate property management. And, it provides members with industry education, opportunities for community service, job referral services and guidance for candidates seeking to earn IREM industry designations.

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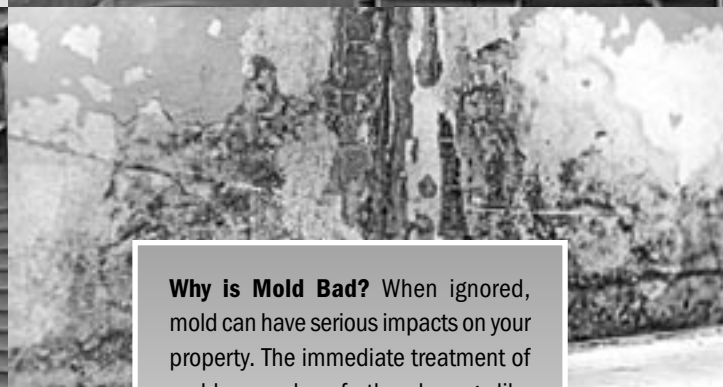
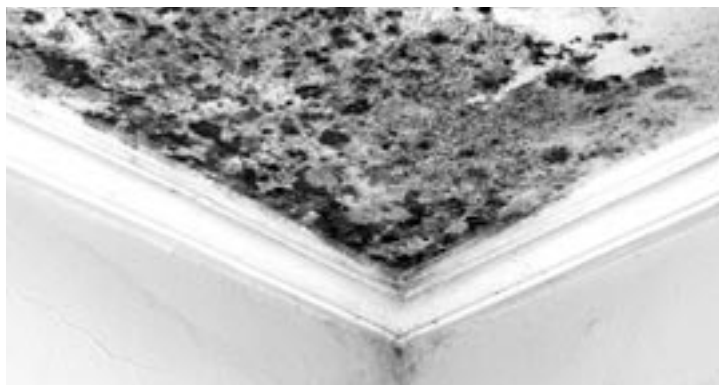
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By Russ Riendeau, PhD

Community Curb Appeal Yields Big Returns

DO YOU WANT TO ADD VALUE TO THE HOMES IN YOUR COMMUNITY? WALK YOUR PROPERTY AND CONSIDER CURB APPEAL AND FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

Following are some examples of what goes through a buyers mind along with some ideas to boost your residence value by helping your neighbor(s) and the community at large to sell their homes at higher prices.

You know these phrases already:

- Curb Appeal
- Pride of Place
- First Impressions
- Gut Feeling
- Feels Right
- Consequences

But do you know how to ensure these phrases are experienced by a home buyer?

Jake and Carol pulled up to a brick brownstone that just went on the market in a thriving community. They walked up the steps and wandered through the open house of a beautiful townhouse along the Fox River. New kitchen, screened-in porch, 2 car garage, central vacuum system, hardwood floors in mint condition, views of the river and very private. Wow, is right. The asking price was high but they were willing to pay the premium for such a great space.

But they changed their mind 5 minutes later and walked away from making an offer as they walked back to their car.

A neighbor's dog had been barking during the entire walk thru. Many other patios were unkept with old furniture scattered about, old gas grills on the side of the building, torn screens on patio doors, dog leashes hanging from hooks and dead flower pots in the yard. A truck on jack stands in a remote parking space at the end of the building looked abandoned. A tattered American flag hung a few garages down from the unit for sale. Hmmm....

After first impressions of experiencing a beautiful living space subsided, Jake and Carol began to process the rest of the experience. They researched past sales prices of other units and discovered the values were lower than expected. They called another Realtor to get another opinion on the community. They started to envision living here and realized the community was not maintaining and enforcing the critical policies that protect owners'

property values by managing accountability.

Every homeowner's residence has a profound impact on the sales price and increased value of every other unit. And this can mean a profit or loss of \$10,000-\$30,000 when someone sells. First impressions? Critical. Demonstration of what sociologists define as "Pride of Place," means "do you take care of your surroundings and honor the views and impressions of your neighbors?" Curb appeal; we know the power of the drive-by eye-catching views. It only takes a regular walk around your property every so often to evaluate curb appeal. And the consequences of individuals not maintaining their residences with even the basics of clean, neat views, can impact sales numbers by more than the \$10,000-30,000 range for homes in the \$300,000-500,000 range. This is an Association Board's responsibility and challenge, as well, in promoting a consistent message and campaign to maintain the property. And most importantly, holding residents accountable for their actions/inactions and following the Rules & Regulations/Bylaws of the property.

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- Regular reminders to residents on Rules & Regulations and policies that the Board is mandated by the State of Illinois to follow--per documents registered with the State of Illinois. Using the argument of government policy keeps the pressure off Board decisions being seen as convenient or showing favoritism. Grandfathering of past allowances around Rules & Regulations is not a reality.
- Email and physical paper to deliver updates on the community. Some people are not regular email users and read paper documents. It is also an excuse if a resident says "I didn't know about all these policies." Claiming ignorance on knowing this info should be addressed directly--and without enabling the same actions. Be firm, remind owners that they are subject to fines for non-compliance if this is in the policies.
- Share data on home sales prices over the past 5 years to demonstrate how prices can be higher with better maintenance of the community. (Today's overinflated house prices will not last forever, so prior data will be very helpful in showing the jump.)
- Give owners a check list of what they can easily do to increase the curb appeal of their homes to keep sales prices high for their neighbors selling, as well as impressions that Realtors see driving by. The list can include:
 - Windows clean, bushes trimmed, sidewalk edged and no trip cracks present.
 - Fresh front door paint and clean front porch.
 - Paint garage door and is the mailbox level?
 - Back patios: are they appealing, inviting and look like they are used?
 - If a neighbor is having open house, can you be sure your pets are quiet and not distracting?
 - Are flower pots and baskets looking healthy?
 - Remove any bikes, toys, yard tools, equipment, lumber, etc. from the yard to look neater.
 - Remove the extra pairs of boots and shoes from the front/back doors and store.
 - Are your community entrance signs current, painted, level and showing high value?
 - Are your parking lots/spaces clear of old vehicles?
 - Is your clubhouse inviting, clean, safe and compliant?
 - Are your street signs and address numbers visible, free of landscape overgrowth?
 - Are your fire hydrants freshly painted?



This past summer brought a record number of tornadoes to Illinois and we experienced rainfall that was well above average with plenty of thunder storms too. The severe weather caused a variety of challenges for community associations ranging from downed trees to roof damage to flooding. Time like these are when it pays to have good working relationships with vendors that can assist with handling these problems.

This type of summer weather challenges also caused some down time for exterior building maintenance and restoration projects as well challenging landscape contractors to keep up with fast growing grass and shrubs along with abundant weeds. Hopefully our weather will moderate this Fall and allow contractors time to catch up on their work.

Our cover story in this issue features a property profile on Commonwealth Plaza in Chicago. The twin towers that were designed by famed architect Mies Van Der Rohe, recently underwent a comprehensive \$5 million project that spanned two years and included an overhaul of the expansive exterior plaza, residential hallway glow-ups, and modernization of the elevator doors. This article offers a model of how an association, management, architects, consultants and contractors can collaborate to implement successful capital improvements.

Our second story offers valuable insight on whether the Association of the unit owner is responsible for maintenance, repair and replacements when damage occurs. A special feature in this issue highlights the importance of community curb appeal and explains some ways that you can help real estate sales for unit owners.

Our legal update column outlines a new collections policy requirement that has been approved by the Illinois legislature (and is expected to be signed into law). Another article with legal implications details changes to the Department of Energy (DOE) standards for commercial water heaters.

Our Landscape Buyer column discusses how you can build a better snow & ice management program. Getting your property ready for winter weather is among the many things you should be planning for during the Fall season.

State of the Industry Event

Our annual State of the Industry luncheon and seminar will be held on November 19th at the Chicago Cultural Center. We will provide a legal update and have a panel of experts to discuss a number of key topics and trends. Many members of our advisory board will attend this event and would be happy to meet and greet you as well.

We will continue to explore many other building management, maintenance and improvements in coming issues of CBE. If you have an idea or story to share, please let us know. Special thanks to the firms, associations and groups that are Authorized Distributors of Chicagoland Buildings and Environments and Condo Lifestyles. Those of you who are interested in becoming subscribers can obtain subscription information on our website www.chicagolandbuildingsandenvironments.com or contact our office at 630-932-5551 📧

Michael C. Davids
Editor and Publisher

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Building a Better Snow & Ice Management Program

For many condominium associations, townhome communities, and commercial properties, snow and ice management is often viewed as a service that begins with the season's first snowfall. In reality, the foundation for a successful winter program is established months before winter arrives.

Late summer and early fall provide an ideal opportunity for boards and property managers to evaluate their current snow and ice management program, discuss expectations, identify property-specific concerns, and prepare

for the unpredictable weather ahead. The earlier these conversations take place, the more prepared everyone will be when winter arrives.

Just as importantly, this planning period often coincides with budgeting and evaluating service

providers for the upcoming year. It can be an excellent time to review both snow and ice management needs for the upcoming winter season and landscape management programs for the following year, allowing for better coordination and long-term planning.

Why Early Planning Matters

Snow and ice management involves much more than plowing snow after it accumulates. Successful winter operations require weather



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monitoring, staffing, equipment preparation, material selection, communication, documentation, and the flexibility to adjust as changing weather conditions unfold.

We have found that properties investing time in preseason planning often experience:

- Better communication between the property and service provider
- More consistent service during winter events
- Fewer misunderstandings during storms
- Improved preparation for extended or back-to-back weather events
- Reduced liability exposure through better documentation and planning

Waiting until late fall to finalize a snow program often limits preparation time and can create unnecessary challenges before the season even begins.

No Two Snow Programs Are Exactly Alike

Many people assume every snow contractor provides essentially the same service. In reality, there can be significant differences in planning, communication, staffing, equipment, documentation, and response strategies.

Questions worth discussing include:

- When is service initiated?
- How are sidewalks and entrances prioritized?
- How frequently is the property monitored during extended storms?
- What communication should be expected before, during, and after weather events?
- What documentation is maintained?
- Which deicing materials are recommended and why?

Every community has its own priorities, challenges, and expectations. A successful program should reflect those differences rather than rely on a one-size-fits-all approach.

The Value of a Preseason Site Inspection

One of the most valuable—and frequently overlooked—steps in preparing for winter is conducting a detailed site walk before snow covers the property.

Walking the site together allows the property manager and service provider to identify areas that deserve special attention, including:

- Locations that frequently ice over
- Drainage concerns
- Roof snow or ice shedding areas
- Fire hydrants and emergency access routes
- High-traffic pedestrian areas
- Snow storage locations
- Landscape features requiring protection

Many of these conditions become difficult or impossible to recognize once snow arrives. Identifying them beforehand helps crews respond more effectively throughout the season.

Understanding these concerns before winter begins often leads to better communication,

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Successful winter operations require weather monitoring, staffing, equipment preparation, material selection, communication, documentation, and the flexibility to adjust as changing weather conditions unfold.

improved service, and fewer surprises during the season.

Questions Every Board Should Ask

Selecting a snow provider involves more than comparing pricing. Asking thoughtful questions can help establish realistic expectations and strengthen the working relationship throughout the winter.

Consider asking:

- How early do you begin monitoring approaching weather systems?
- What specifically triggers service at our property?

- How are sidewalks and entrances prioritized?
- What is your communication plan before, during, and after storms?
- How do you document weather conditions and services performed?
- How do you prepare for prolonged or back-to-back winter events?
- What deicing materials do you recommend for our property?

- What communication level do you expect during storms?
- Are there unique property conditions we should be aware of before winter begins?

These conversations allow both parties to build a program tailored to the property rather than relying on assumptions.

Five Signs You Have a Proactive Snow Provider

- Begins planning well before winter arrives.
- Conducts detailed pre-season site inspections.
- Communicates before, during, and after winter events.
- Selects equipment and deicing materials based on conditions and property needs.
- Maintains accurate weather, service, and material application documentation.

Questions Your Snow Provider Should Be Asking You

A proactive service provider should also take time to understand your property and expectations.

Some of the questions commonly asked about a property include:

- Which areas have historically presented the greatest challenges?
- Have there been previous slip-and-fall concerns?
- Which locations generate the most resident complaints?

Looking Ahead

Winter weather will always be unpredictable. Preparation doesn't have to be.

Boards and property managers who begin planning early, ask thoughtful questions, and work with an experienced service provider are often better positioned for safer properties, stronger communication, and more consistent winter performance. 

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Gold Coast Neighbors



➤ Pictured above are (LtoR) Raphael Lavin, Ivana Komljenovic, Melissa Rickey, Rose Rogic and Robert Grieb.

The Gold Coast Neighbors recently held a seminar for condominium board members and building managers. The program was held on Wednesday, July 22 at the St. Chrysostom's Church in Chicago. Gold Coast Neighbors President **Melissa Rickey** and program chair **Robert Grieb** opened the program by welcoming guests and thanking **Rose Rogic**, MBA, CMCA Vice President of Associa Chicagoland-city division for sponsoring the event.

Topics covered by guest speakers **Todd Walter** of Reserve Advisors and **Howard S. Dakoff** of Levenfeld Pearlstein, LLC included the latest condominium law updates, reserve study requirements, and new Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac guidelines. Refreshments were provided and a networking reception after the seminar was enjoyed by all attendees.

ABOMA



The Apartment Building Owners & Managers Association (ABOMA) held their annual education seminar at East Bank Club, Chicago on Thursday, June 11, 2026. A presentation was provided by ABOMA Counsel **Kevin Kelly** of Troutman Pepper Locke on "Avoiding Costly Mistakes in Managing Union Represented Employees" and **Rob Menigoz** of Cary Schiff & Associates provided a recap of the Safe Homes Act as required for all leases in Illinois.

The seminar program explored some common mistakes Community Association Managers make in the hiring, firing, and managing of community association Door staff and Janitors represented by SEIU Local 1, that often result in additional costs to the community associations they serve; and how to best avoid those costly mistakes. A networking reception followed the seminar.

South Loop Neighbors



The South Loop Neighbors held a Condo Corner educational seminar on June 30 at Café Bionda, Chicago. **Diana Turowski**, Building Manager of The Manhattan Building at 431 South Dearborn and Owner/Board Member at Dearborn Village, welcomed South Loop board member attendees and introduced speakers **Adam Khan** of Levenfeld Pearlstein, LLC and **Michael Davids** of Condo Lifestyles. She also recognized **Rose Rogic**, MBA, CMCA Vice President of Associa Chicagoland-city division for sponsoring the event.

The "Condos, from A to Z" program covered a brief snapshot of a variety of topics including Assessments, Artificial Intelligence, Bulk Agreements, Emotional Support Animals, Electric Vehicles, Fannie Mae/Freddie Mac Loan Eligibility, Governing Documents, Hearings, Insurance, Limited Common Elements, Move-In / Move-Outs and Nuisances. For more information on SLN events, visit southloopneighbors.org.



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by Howard Dakoff, Esq. and Adam Kahn, Esq. - Levenfeld Pearlstein, LLC

Illinois Legislature Approves New Collections Policy Requirement – What Do Condominiums and Community Associations Need to Know?

The Illinois legislature recently approved amendments to the Illinois Condominium Property Act (“ICPA”) and Common Interest Community Association Act (“CICAA”) that will significantly impact how condominium and common interest community associations pursue collection of unpaid assessments.

What Does the Legislation Do?

The approved legislation requires Illinois condominium and community associations to adopt a policy “concerning the collection of unpaid assessments” and requires that such policy be delivered to prospective purchasers of units. Failure to have a properly adopted policy will be an impediment to an association from successfully pursuing legal action to collect unpaid assessments.

For a condominium association, a copy of the collection policy must be provided with the 221 disclosure, and for a community association, a copy of the collection policy must be provided with the disclosures pursuant to the Section 1-35 of CICAA.

Note: The legislation does not apply to residential co-operatives.

THE APPROVED LEGISLATION REQUIRES ILLINOIS CONDOMINIUM AND COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS TO ADOPT A POLICY “CONCERNING THE COLLECTION OF UNPAID ASSESSMENTS” AND REQUIRES THAT SUCH POLICY BE DELIVERED TO PROSPECTIVE PURCHASERS OF UNITS.

What is the Status of the Legislation? When Will It Take Effect?

The amendments to ICPA and CICAA were approved by the Illinois legislature earlier this year and the legislation just recently became law. Governor Pritzker signed the legislation on July 31, 2026, and the effective date for the new law will be January 1, 2027.



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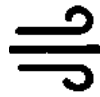
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What Must be Included in an Assessment Collection Policy?

At a minimum, the policy must address:

- When assessments are due and when they are considered late;
- Late fees and interest charges;
- Fees for returned checks;
- Payment plan availability and terms (if offered);
- The timeline before referral to legal counsel;
- How payments are applied to outstanding balances; and
- A description of the association's legal remedies for unpaid assessments.

The policy must also be consistent with the condominium or community association's governing documents. It is therefore recommended that boards consult with their association legal counsel to ensure that its assessment collection policy complies with the requirements pursuant to the legislation when it becomes law as well as the association's own governing documents.

Note: While many associations have existing rules and regulations regarding assessment payments, common language used in existing rules do not meet all of the new statutory collection policy requirements; therefore, most existing assessment payment rules will need to be amended and/or a new policy adopted that complies with the new legislation.

WHILE MANY ASSOCIATIONS HAVE EXISTING RULES AND REGULATIONS REGARDING ASSESSMENT PAYMENTS, COMMON LANGUAGE USED IN EXISTING RULES DO NOT MEET ALL OF THE NEW STATUTORY COLLECTION POLICY REQUIREMENTS; THEREFORE, MOST EXISTING ASSESSMENT PAYMENT RULES WILL NEED TO BE AMENDED AND/OR A NEW POLICY ADOPTED THAT COMPLIES WITH THE NEW LEGISLATION.

Where Can I Find Text of the Proposed Legislation?

Text of the legislation (Illinois Senate Bill 3527, Public Act 104-0734), which has been approved by the legislature and Governor, became law on July 31, 2026. It is available online at www.ilga.gov.

Key Takeaways

- While the proposed legislation was approved overwhelmingly by the Illinois legislature, it has not yet been enacted into law, but it is expected to become law in the coming weeks/months.
- For now, condominium and community associations should begin working with their legal counsel to prepare and adopt an assessment collection policy in compliance with the new statutory requirements advance of the anticipated January 1, 2027 enactment deadline. 📌

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**What Can Hayes
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By Chris Frauens and Adam Sanders – Elara Engineering

UPCOMING CHANGES TO DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (DOE) COMMERCIAL WATER HEATER STANDARDS

THE DOE HAS INCREASED THE FEDERAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY STANDARDS FOR COMMERCIAL WATER HEATERS TO REDUCE OVERALL ENERGY CONSUMPTION IN THE UNITED STATES.

The DOE standard increase in efficiency, currently planned to start October 6, 2026 results in current standard efficiency water heaters no longer being manufactured. Therefore, because of this upcoming change, now is the time for building owners to plan for transitioning your gas fired standard efficiency water heater plant -- even though DOE enforcement of civil penalties has been delayed to October 6, 2027.

First, what is standard and high efficiency? Current standard efficiency water heaters typically operate at an efficiency of approximately 80% or less. The upcoming standards require a minimum of 95% efficient equipment.

Below are some replacement options for existing gas fired standard efficiency water

heaters with considerations that should be addressed as you move forward:

REPLACE WITH GAS FIRED HIGH EFFICIENCY WATER HEATERS

Air Side Considerations:

95% efficiency is achieved by capturing more energy from the byproduct of burning natural gas resulting in the temperature of the flue gases lowering below the dewpoint and acidic condensation forming on the water heater flue materials. When the existing water heater heat exchanger and flue material is not appropriate for this corrosive environment, the flue will need to be replaced or lined.

Appropriate condensing flue materials can be expensive and will likely be a driving factor for evaluating equipment options.

Water Side Considerations:

High efficiency water heaters operate at lower water temperatures than standard efficiency equipment, typically resulting in changes to the piping of the water heater plant. Pipe changes need to be in conformance with the manufacturer's recommendations to maintain warranties and long-term performance of equipment. These pipe changes can impact pipe sizing, points of connection, piping configuration, the need to neutralize condensate, etc.

REPLACE WITH ELECTRIC RESISTANCE WATER HEATERS

Electrical System Considerations:

Electric resistance water heaters require a substantial amount of power to operate as they utilize emersion coil(s) to heat the water directly. A review of the building's electrical system is required to determine if adequate



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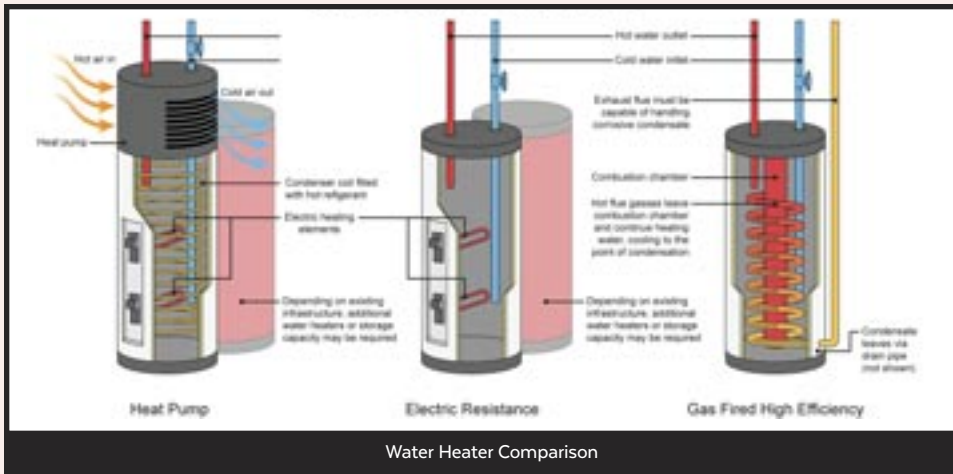





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power is available and what modifications are needed.

The impact on the electrical system may be costly and will likely be a driving factor for the option selected.

Equipment Sizing Considerations:

As the amount of power available for the electric resistance water heater plant may be limited by the existing infrastructure, additional coordination with the manufacturer will be required. The sizing of the water heater

plant will likely result in additional storage capacity which can result in physical considerations when installing the new equipment.

REPLACE WITH HEAT PUMP WATER HEATERS

Electric System Considerations:

Heat pump water heaters utilize a combination of electricity and a refrigerant cycle to produce hot water. The refrigerant cycle reduces the electrical requirements of the equipment therefore reducing the impact to

the existing electrical system. Heat pumps can use multiple times less electricity when compared to electric resistance water heaters.

While heat pumps can utilize substantially less electricity to heat water, the impact on the electrical system may be costly and might be a driving factor when evaluating options.

Equipment Sizing Considerations:

Heat pumps currently require a greater amount of recovery time from periods of high usage resulting in greater storage requirements. Typically, the amount of storage required for a heat pump water heater plant is more than that for electric resistance equipment.

Technology Considerations:

Due to the nature of heat pump water heater operation, conformance with manufacturer recommendations is mandatory to maintain warranties and daily performance of equipment.

Retrofit of heat pump water heater plants where gas fired standard efficiency water heaters are currently operational will result in a highly engineered system. The system should be designed by the client's engineer and the manufacturer to produce a successful project.

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Manufacturers are providing options for hybrid equipment that utilize both heat pump technology along with electric resistance coils. This option can be explored when conditions are necessary. Air source heat pumps typically require components to be located outdoors. The availability of space for this component needs to be reviewed and considered when evaluating options.

UTILIZE EXISTING HVAC BOILER PLANT

Compatibility:

In some cases, the existing HVAC boiler plant currently utilized to heat the building may be available to create domestic hot water via heat exchangers, pumps, etc. An objective engineer should review the feasibility of utilizing the existing HVAC boiler plant to create domestic hot water factoring capacity, physical constraints, system modifications, etc.

In conclusion, evaluating options for replacement of gas fired standard efficiency water heater plants will require an evaluation by an objective engineer taking into consideration the existing building infrastructure as impacted by DOE standards. Operational costs for the



Shown in both photos is an electric domestic water heating plant.

equipment should also be taken into consideration as this is the primary driving factor of the DOE standards. All options and aspects of designing new water heater plants are not listed above as this article highlights just some of the

likely driving factors when making this decision. Finally, it should be noted that various rebates and incentives for this type of project may be available to building owners to help offset design and construction costs. 🍀

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2026 CONDOLIFESTYLES State-of-the-Industry Seminar

31ST
EDITION

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE AND PANEL DISCUSSION ON HOT TOPICS, TRENDS & ISSUES

THIS PROGRAM EARNS 3 CE CREDITS FOR CAM LICENSE REQUIREMENTS.

Who Should Attend?

- » Community Association Board & Committee Members
- » Property Managers
- » Developers
- » Realtors & Realty Professionals
- » Colleagues & Contractors
- » Government Officials & Employees

Timing -Structure

This event is intended to be structured to accommodate various levels of expertise as well as different types of interests in community associations. It is also intended to be flexible to meet time and schedule concerns. We are pleased to accommodate you in this regard. Contact our office to make customized arrangements.

Why Should You Attend?

- » To gain valuable, practical insight on how to deal with special issues of Community Associations
- » Identify resources needed to help your association(s) solve current challenges that your association(s) is facing
- » Meet and greet Condo Lifestyles Advisory Board members and other industry experts
- » To better understand government regulations regarding community associations
- » To contribute and share your ideas and input in an effort to improve standards in the field of community associations

INFORMATION
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MCD MEDIA EVENTS
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WEBSITE
www.condolifestyles.net

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