THE HEARTBEAT

FALL 2025

Chicken Bill HB2062 Win!

See page 15.

cai HEARTLAND CHAPTER

CHAPTER MAGAZINE

CAIHEARTLAND.COM

Fall 2025

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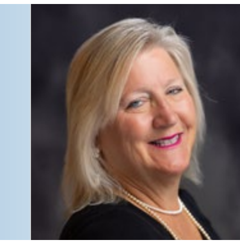
President's Letter

By: Jan Mullaney, EBP



Happy Fall! As the leaves change and fall arrives, it's a great time to reflect on the successes we've shared this year and look ahead to the exciting opportunities still to come. Our CAI Heartland Chapter continues to grow stronger thanks to the dedication of our members, volunteers, and partners. Your involvement-whether through events, education, advocacy, or committee work-is what drives our mission forward, and I'm truly grateful for the vibrant community we've built together.

This season shaped up to be a busy and rewarding one, with several events you didn't want to miss.

October was all about golf! We kicked things off on October 13th with one of our chapter's most beloved traditions, the Annual Bill Summers Golf Tournament 2025. The event is always a highlight of the year, offering a perfect mix of networking, friendly competition, and fun. Later in the month, we also headed to beautiful Lake Ozark for the MOLAC Golf Tournament, supporting our ongoing legislative advocacy efforts here in Missouri. Both events were fantastic opportunities to connect with colleagues and support CAI's mission in a relaxed and enjoyable setting.

Then, as we moved into November, I was especially excited about our final in-person educational program of the year, featuring Kelli Risse and her impactful presentation: 'When Overworked, Overwhelmed, and Overstressed is No Longer Working."

In a profession that often demands so much of our time and energy, Kelli's session will provide valuable strategies for finding balance, managing stress, and approaching our roles with renewed focus and resilience. I encourage every member to attend-it's a great way to end the year on a strong note.

Finally, as many of you are preparing 2026 budgets, I want to remind you about our important $1 a Door Campaign. This initiative directly supports CAI's legislative advocacy efforts in Missouri, ensuring that the interests of community associations remain represented and protected at the state level. Even a small contribution makes a significant difference, and we encourage every community to include this in their budget planning before the year ends.

Thank you once again for being such an integral part of CAI Heartland. I was able to see some of you on the golf course, at our November program, and continuing our work together as we wrap up another successful year.

Warm regards,

Jan Mullaney, EBP SERVPRO Team Chestnas
President, CAI Heartland Chapter Board of Directors

Membership Update

NEW MEMBERS

Association Prime powered by SouthState Bank
Coeur de Royale Condominium Association
DNI Properties, Inc.
Eagle Roofing Products
Farha Roofing
FirstService Residential Missouri
FirstService Residential Missouri
FirstService Residential Missouri
FirstService Residential Missouri
FirstService Residential Missouri
Keystone Property Management Company
Keystone Property Management Company
Smartwebs
Summertree Village Condos
Summertree Village Condos
Summertree Village Condos
The Boardwalk COA, Inc.
The Boardwalk COA, Inc.
The Boardwalk COA, Inc.
The Boardwalk COA, Inc.
Wash Pro Exterior Cleaning Services
West Property Management
Westward360, Inc.

Laura Renee Heck
Mr. Dale Willer
Mr. Billie J Wisdom, Jr.
Melissa Spatafora
Anthony E Cuipa
Ms. Diane Rehkop
Ms. Annette Sindar
Allegra Kelley
Jessica Adam
Courtney Cummings
Kameron McKenzie
Angela Woodley-Kahler
Jason Wortman
Mr. Kyle Vogel
Mr. Kyle Vogel
Mr. Robert Holte
Ms. Bonnie Bailes
Ann Roth
Mr. Bernie Schweiss
Bryan Osborne
Glenn Schulz
Lynn Strain
Susan Joy Terrell
Mr. Jeffrey Thomas White
Mr. Jeff Westendorf, CMCA, AMS
Mr. Eric Stephen Staszczak, CMCA, AMS

★CONGRATULATIONS★ TO THE NEW CAI DESIGNEES

Ms. Vee'Cynthia A. Thomas, CMCA, FirstService Residential Missouri

Mr. Kelly P. Jarrett, CMCA, FirstService Residential Missouri

Ms. Felicia A. Benedetto, CMCA, FirstService Residential Missouri

Preparation for the 2026 Legislative Session

By: Jessica Goodman, CMCA, AMS, PCAM

MOLAC is preparing for the upcoming legislative session, which begins on **January 7, 2026**. Currently, we are finalizing edits to the bill we plan to introduce. While the bill has not yet been named, it has been simplified to discourage opposition while still empowering associations to update their governing documents and providing a framework to overcome community apathy. In the coming weeks, our lobbyist will work to identify sponsors in both the House and Senate. Stay tuned for updates—pre-filing begins on December 1st.

The Importance of Fundraising

MOLAC is a nonprofit organization that operates solely on the donations we receive. These contributions directly support the work of our lobbying team in Jefferson City. This team is essential to our efforts—they bring legislative expertise, keep us informed about daily activity during session, and advocate for our priorities. In short, they are our voice at the Capitol when we cannot be there ourselves.

$1 Per Door Campaign

Budget season is the perfect time to talk with your boards about the work MOLAC does on behalf of their communities. We encourage every association to contribute at least **$1 per door**. We understand that rising costs and pressure to keep assessments low can make this feel like a difficult request, but even the conversation itself can be powerful.

It provides an opportunity to:

- Remind boards that association professionals are working statewide for their best interests.
- Share how proposed legislation—or bills we work to stop—could directly impact their community.
- Encourage participation in supporting efforts that ultimately benefit all Missouri associations.

Even if a board declines, the discussion raises awareness and builds understanding. And they may surprise you with a "yes"! CAI

Dollar-a-Door or More!

YOUR DONATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE

MISSOURI
LEGISLATIVE ACTION COMMITTEE
Community Associations Institute

WAYS TO PLEDGE

>> Community Pledge

[ ] # of doors

X [ ] $1 or more

$ [ ]

>> Flat Rate Pledge

- [ ] $100
- [ ] $250
- [ ] $500
- [ ] $1,000
- $ [ ]

Thank you for your support!

MISSOURI
LEGISLATIVE ACTION COMMITTEE
Community Associations Institute

Helping out is easy! Go to www.caionline.org/LACdonate or fill out and return this Dollar-a-Door or More donations form. Most community association boards can legally allocate money to support the Missouri Legislative Action Committee. Please check your governing documents to verify before donating. **Corporate contributions are allowed and appreciated.**

METHOD OF DONATION

☐ **ONLINE—** www.caionline.org/LACDonate

☐ **CHECK—** make payable to: **Missouri Legislative Action Committee**

Association Name: ______________________________

Management Company: ______________________________

Community Manager: ______________________________

Mailing Address: ______________________________

Phone Number: ______________________________

Email Address: ______________________________

Does your association agree to be recognized for its contribution by CAI? Yes / No

*The Missouri Legislative Action Committee is **NOT** a Political Action Committee (PAC) and **does not** give money to legislators or legislative candidates.

Please return this completed form to the address below:

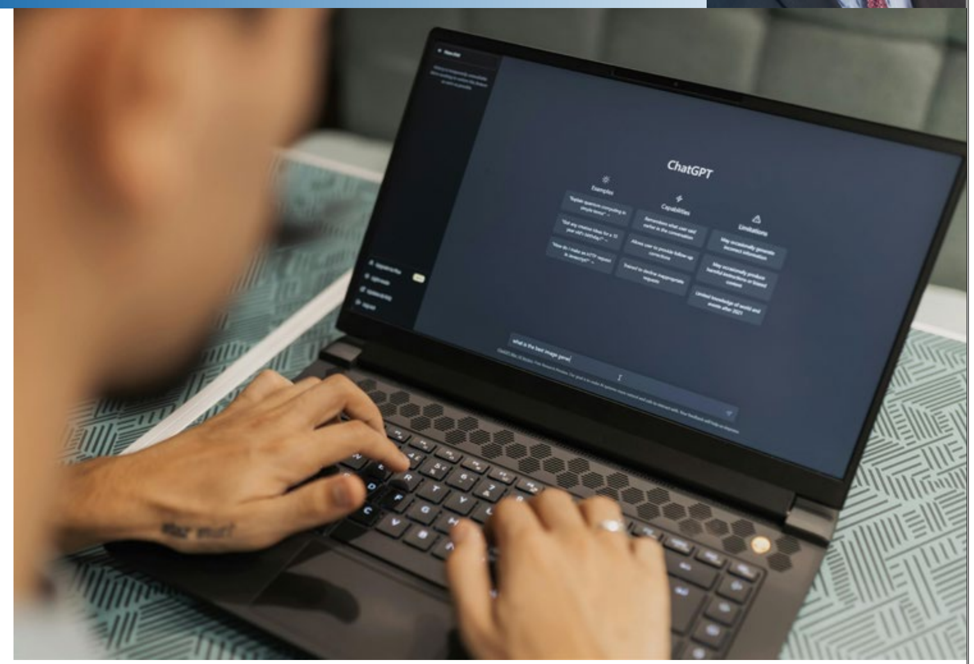
CAI-Missouri Chapter

c/o Community Associations Institute

P.O.Box 953 | Bridgeton, Missouri 63044 | cathy@caiheartland.com

AI as a Tool for Community Associations: Proceed Carefully, Use Strategically

By: Todd Billy, CCAL and Katie Gundersen from Sandberg Phoenix



Artificial intelligence can help a board and community manager work more efficiently and communicate more effectively. When used thoughtfully, AI can streamline many routine tasks, freeing up valuable time for more complex decision-making. However, left unchecked, there are substantial and significant legal, operational, and reputational risks that must be carefully considered. It is important to recognize that AI is not infallible and should never be relied upon as the sole decision-maker in any situation involving a community association.

Generally, AI applications work in a similar fashion where a prompt (or question) is provided, and the AI application generates a response. Some AI applications are "educated" or learn by information available online, including the prompt, which should never include any private information. Some are "closed," in that the AI application relies solely on the information provided to it. Regardless of the model, they can generate what is referred to as "hallucinations," which is a fancy way of saying the AI response is not accurate or made up. Additionally, AI does not have a law degree or license to practice law, so using AI for legal matters could result in more legal issues, not less. AI-generated responses may sound convincing, but can lack the nuance and expertise required for legal interpretation. Thus, treat AI like a powerful assistant—useful, but never autonomous.

Despite these risks, there are practical, low-risk ways to use AI in community association context. For example, AI can help draft plain-language communications with owners, summarize larger volumes of data, propose agendas, and compare proposals. However, operational guardrails are vital. This includes adopting an AI policy that: (1) specifies when AI can be utilized, (2) identifies or restricts what information may be used in the prompt, and (3) specifies the human who would review the response generated by AI. Such policies help ensure that AI is used responsibly and that sensitive information is protected.

For legal services, a board or community manager should consult with its legal counsel before utilizing AI. In some instances, legal counsel might already have the right AI application to assist, so generating a response might result in more work, not less. In some instances, AI might not even be necessary. And, certainly in some instances, the attorney will simply want to review the AI response to ensure that the AI does not unintentionally create more legal risk to the association. This extra layer of review is essential to maintaining the integrity and safety of the association's operations.

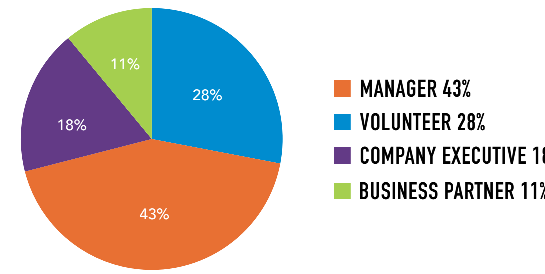
As with any new tool, training, monitoring, and guardrails can result in AI being another tool in the toolbox. Ongoing education about AI's capabilities and limitations is essential for all users. Like any tool, it is just a tool that should be used for the right job and in the right situation. By approaching AI with caution, clear policies, and a commitment to oversight, community associations can benefit from its efficiencies while minimizing potential downsides.

CAI

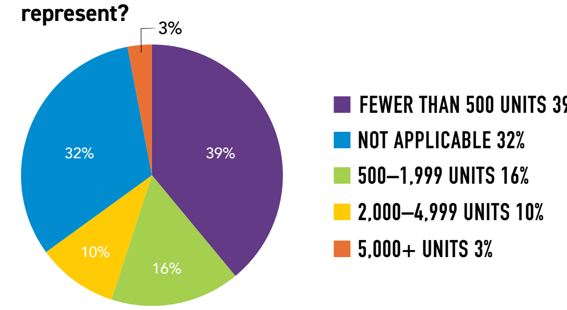
Snap Survey

MAY 2025 | **478 Respondents**

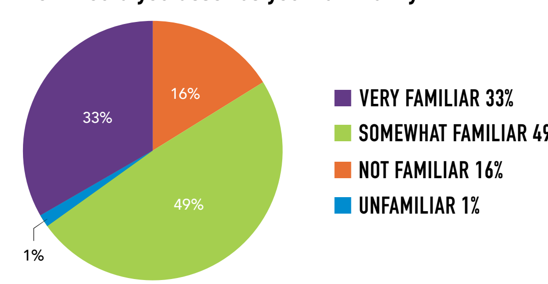
What is your role in the industry?



What is the size of your community or the community you represent?



How would you describe your familiarity with AI?



Do you currently use AI?

If yes, which AI applications are you using?

80% Large Language Models (ChatGPT, CoPilot, Google Bard/Gemini)
51% AI for meeting summaries (Zoom Assistant, Otter, Other)
27% Language translation & text-to-speech
29% Chatbots/virtual assistants
17% Video & photo creation tools
15% Smart technology (water sensors, security cameras, parking monitoring)
13% Other (please specify)
6% Custom building a proprietary AI system
4% Predictive analytics for maintenance

Common Trends: Grammarly/Grammerly, Stan/Stan Intelligence, HOAi/HOAI, Grok, Vantaca Scout & IQ, Microsoft Word and Outlook (AI integration)

If no, what best describes your future for AI adoption?

34% I am not interested in using AI I am researching AI options
37% Unsure
17% I plan to start using AI in the next 12 months
12% I am not interested in using AI

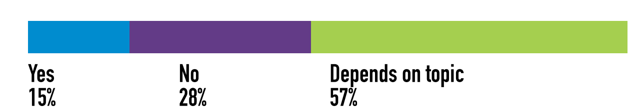
How often do you use AI in your community or to serve your community clients?

29% Every day
31% Occasionally
12% Rarely
27% Never

How comfortable are you using AI in a professional setting?

28% Very comfortable
33% Somewhat comfortable
24% Somewhat hesitant
16% Very hesitant

Do you trust AI-generated content more than a traditional Google search?



Snap Survey

MAY 2025 | **478 Respondents**

What areas of your community or work have benefited from AI?

80% Communication (email responses, resident interactions)
35% Event planning and announcements
26% Contract review and RFP development
22% Resident or stakeholder education
22% Other
16% Financial management (budgeting, reporting)
8% Predictive maintenance

Common Trends: No Use of AI / Not Yet Used, Document-Related Tasks, Operations & Administration, Research & Learning, Critical or Skeptical Comment

How effective do you find AI?

45% Somewhat improves productivity
38% Significantly improves productivity
15% No noticeable change
3% Decreases productivity

What concerns do you have about using AI?

63% Data security and privacy risks
55% Lack of training or knowledge
48% Putting proprietary content in the public domain
37% Ethical concerns (bias, transparency)
21% Lack of clear benefits
21% Potential job displacement
20% High costs of implementation
15% Other

Common Trends

- **Accuracy and Trust Concerns:** Respondents questioned the reliability of AI-generated content, citing errors, the need for fact-checking, and potential misinformation or hallucinations.
- **Lack of Knowledge or Training:** There's a clear gap in understanding how to effectively use AI. Users noted a steep learning curve, low awareness, and insufficient training.
- **Ethical and Privacy Issues:** Concerns were raised about data privacy, bias in AI systems, transparency of algorithms, and fears of proprietary information being exposed.
- **Job Displacement and Overreliance:** Some worry about AI replacing human roles—particularly in tasks like writing, legal review, and financial reporting—and that it may discourage critical thinking or promote laziness.

Have you used AI for any of the following?

85% Writing and editing documents
37% Automating emails
36% Creating newsletters
26% Developing RFPs or bids
24% Contract evaluation or summaries
17% Managing resident queries via chatbots
13% Other
12% Implementing smart technologies (sensors, cameras, etc.)
8% Generating financial reports

Common Trends: No or limited use of AI, Document creation & editing, Workflow & process automation, Search & research assistance, Communications & engagement, Accuracy, trust, and reliability concerns

What additional support would you need to adopt AI?

80% Training programs
50% Cost-benefit analysis tools
49% Case studies or success stories
26% Vendor recommendations
11% Other (please specify)

Common Trends

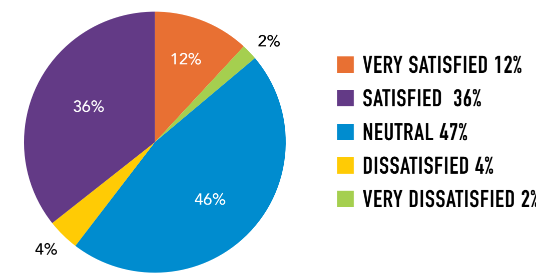
- **Training and Education:** There is a need for more training and education on how AI tools work, how to effectively use them, and how to integrate them into workflows, particularly for staff and community managers.
- **Ethical and Legal Concerns:** There is concern about the ethical implications of AI, including privacy, data security, accuracy, and the potential for bias.
- **Trust and Accuracy:** Ensuring the accuracy and reliability of AI outputs is a key concern
- **Cost and ROI:** Cost-effectiveness and demonstrating a solid return on investment (ROI) are crucial. Respondents want to understand the financial impact and benefits of adopting AI tools in their operations.

Have you experienced any abuse of AI in your work?

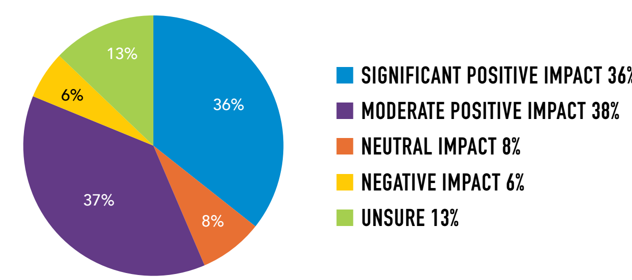
Snap Survey

MAY 2025 | **478 Respondents**

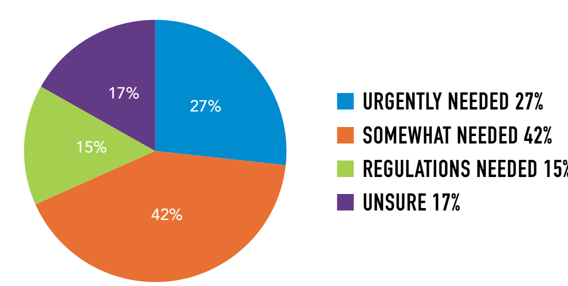
How satisfied are you with your current AI tools?



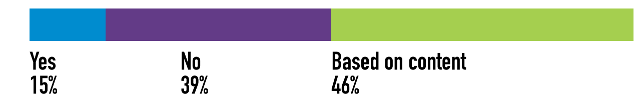
What do you think the long-term impact of AI will be on community associations?



Do you believe regulations are necessary to guide AI use in community associations?



If you use AI-generated content, do you disclose its origin?



Are you concerned about AI replacing the services you or your company provide?

What do you think are the most significant ethical concerns related to AI in community association governance and management?

38% Bias and discrimination in AI decision-making
70% Privacy and data security risks
49% Lack of transparency in AI-generated decisions
21% Potential job displacement in the industry
68% Over-reliance on AI, reducing human oversight
42% Ethical use of AI in resident communications and enforcement actions
75% Accuracy and misinformation risks in AI-generated content
57% Accountability—who is responsible for AI-driven decisions?
3% Other

Common Trends:

- **Human Accountability:** Users, managers and boards, should remain accountable for the work they do, even if AI is used as a tool. This reflects a concern that AI should not replace human oversight and decision-making.
- **Privacy and Security Concerns:** deIntity theft and concerns about data ownership, particularly if a "digital twin" (AI representation) remains after someone leaves. These concerns point to the need for strong security measures and clear privacy policies.
- **Loss of Personal Touch:** Concern that AI's involvement might diminish the human connection in HOA management, particularly in areas like communication and decision-making, where emotion and personal touch are important.

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BUSINESS PARTNER SPOLIGHT:

JUSTIN SIMPSON

LIFESTYLE OUTDOOR

TELL ME WHAT YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT OUR INDUSTRY:

The relationships! So many of my clients and peers in the industry have become friends for life! When I started Lifestyle Outdoor, I decided to specialize in HOA's. During my 20+ years in the industry, I've worked with many different types of clients. HOA's understand and appreciate high quality work and are extremely loyal if you provide a great experience!

TELL ME WHAT YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT BEING A BUSINESS PARTNER:

The networking with Members and other Business partners is well worth the investment of being a business partner. The events are intimated and engaging! They are organized carefully and thoughtfully to ensure that business partners are given the opportunity to showcase their companies. We recently had a booth at the Trade show. This was our first time participating, and I was blown away by the amount of attention that we received at our booth.

TELL ME ONE FUN FACT ABOUT YOU THAT OUR MEMBERS MIGHT NOT KNOW:

My wife Jacque and I have 16 year old Triplet son's. In my life, I had never known triplets, until I had a set of my own!

MANAGER SPOLIGHT:

DIANE REHKOP

DNI PROPERTIES

TELL ME WHAT YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT OUR INDUSTRY:

My background includes Assistant Engineer in construction and a Certificate in Paralegal Studies, so I look forward to detailed projects. Finding the cause of a problem to deliver the best solution is the greatest feeling. Sometimes you need to ask a lot of questions or just ask the right questions to work things out. Other times detailed research or monitoring is required to understand the cause and effect again to get the best result. I find the details of life very important and satisfying.

TELL ME WHAT YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT BEING A COMMUNITY MANAGER:

We all know you can't make everybody happy. The best thing about being a community manager is when I get a chance to make a difference, help someone in need, and/or make a change for a community.

TELL ME ONE FUN FACT ABOUT YOU THAT OUR MEMBERS MIGHT NOT KNOW:

I raise honeybees as a hobby and teach classes on bee management through our local ThreeRiversBeeClub. Love watching and working with them. They are so much like human beings in so many ways. I also appreciate their work and family ethics.

2026 Advertising Order Form (Click to Learn More)

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G. Silver Level Partner with Management Co. ________________
H. Education Package ________________
I. Directory Back Cover ________________
J. Directory Back Inside Cover ________________
K. Directory Front Inside Cover ________________
L. Directory Full Page ________________
M. Directory Half Page ________________
N. Directory Quarter Page ________________
O. Newsletter Back Cover ________________
P. Newsletter Full Page ________________
Q. Newsletter Half Page ________________
R. Newsletter Quarter Page ________________
S. Website Advertisement ________________
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U. Webinar Program Sponsor ________________
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X. Premium Trade Show Booth ________________
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AA. Manager/ Vendor Reception Sponsor ________________
BB. Contribution to MOLAC ________________
Name the categories you want listed: ____
____
Total: $ ________________

The covers for the newsletter and directory are on first come, first served basis.

*All ads need to be sent in a jpeg or pdf format. Ads that do not meet the required size and format will be charged an additional $100.

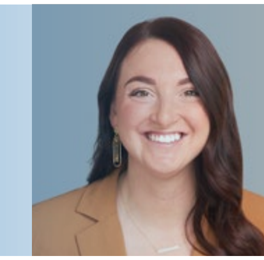
Organization______________________________ Contact ________________________
Address ____
Phone ________________ Cell ________________ Email ________________________

Please submit all advertisements to the Chapter Office by January 15, 2026 NO EXCEPTIONS!

Cathy Roth- Johnson, Executive Director
Community Associations Institute – Heartland Chapter
12747 Olive Blvd, STE 300, St. Louis, MO 63141

Chicken Bill – Ruled Unconstitutional

By: Nicole Lewis, CMCA, AMS, MOLAC Chair



On Aug. 26, 2024, CAI's Heartland Chapter and the CAI Missouri Legislative Action Committee (LAC) filed a lawsuit against the State of Missouri challenging HB 2062. This sweeping omnibus bill included a provision prohibiting Missouri community associations from restricting owners from building a chicken coop and/or raising up to six chickens on lots two-tenths of an acre or larger.

Throughout 2024, the Missouri LAC engaged in strong grassroots advocacy and coordinated lobbying efforts to oppose HB 2062. Despite these efforts, Missouri Governor Mike Parson signed the bill into law in July 2024, and it became effective on Aug. 28, 2024.

The "chicken provision" had originally been introduced as a standalone bill during both the 2023 and 2024 legislative sessions. With the diligent support of our lobbyist, Steven R. Carroll & Associates, the Missouri LAC successfully prevented these earlier bills from advancing. However, at the end of the 2024 legislative session, the General Assembly passed HB 2062—an omnibus bill primarily addressing eviction moratoriums. In the final days of the session, eight last-minute amendments were added, including language resurrected from the prior chicken bill proposals.

In Four Seasons Lakesites Property Owners Association v. State of Missouri, the Heartland Chapter and the Missouri LAC argued that the chicken provision infringed upon the rights of community associations within the state and violated Article III of the Missouri Constitution, which states that "no bill shall contain more than one subject." CAI further contended that the original purpose of HB 2062 focused on political subdivisions and eviction-related matters, and that the addition of the chicken provision was an unconstitutional amendment. The lawsuit also asserted three additional constitutional violations.

In October 2025, Missouri Circuit Court Judge Stumpe issued a judgment declaring that HB 2062 violated Article III of the Missouri Constitution, as well as the additional constitutional claims presented in the case, including that it violated the Missouri and Federal Constitutions' Contracts Clause. The ruling immediately invalidated HB 2062 in its entirety. The State of Missouri is expected to appeal the decision, and CAI will continue to keep its members informed as developments occur.

The cost of the lawsuit totaled $50,000, a negotiated flat rate for legal representation secured through the professional connections of our lobbyist. Without this negotiated rate, it's likely the lawsuit could have cost upwards of $80,000. Funding for the lawsuit was made possible through grassroots fundraising efforts from our members and a $10,000 grant from CAI National. CAI National determined that this issue held national significance, as similar legislation could potentially impact other states, and after careful review, awarded the grant to support the Missouri LAC's legal efforts.

These achievements underscore the vital role of member engagement and advocacy funding. None of this would have been possible without the generous donations from our members, which not only helped fund the lawsuit but also sustain the work of our lobbyist—an essential component in preventing harmful legislation before it becomes law. The Missouri LAC maintains a lobbyist contract of $31,500, with potential cost increases if services are required during the month of June.

As legislative challenges continue to emerge in each session, ongoing member support is critical to ensuring our ability to respond swiftly and effectively. We encourage all members to contribute to our advocacy fund to help maintain a strong presence at the Capitol, protect community association rights, and continue defending against legislation that could impact how our communities are governed. Every donation—large or small—directly strengthens our capacity to make a difference for Missouri homeowners and associations.

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PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR

HOLIDAY PARTY

DECEMBER 9 | 5 - 7 PM

@ Harvey's Union Station

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Appetizers and two drink tickets included!
$25 for Managers and Board Members
$45 for Business Partners

cai

PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR

HOLIDAY PARTY

DECEMBER 11 | 6 - 9 PM

@ Elk Lodge #9

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CREVE COEUR, MO 63141

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$50 FOR MEMBERS, $65 FOR NON-MEMBERS

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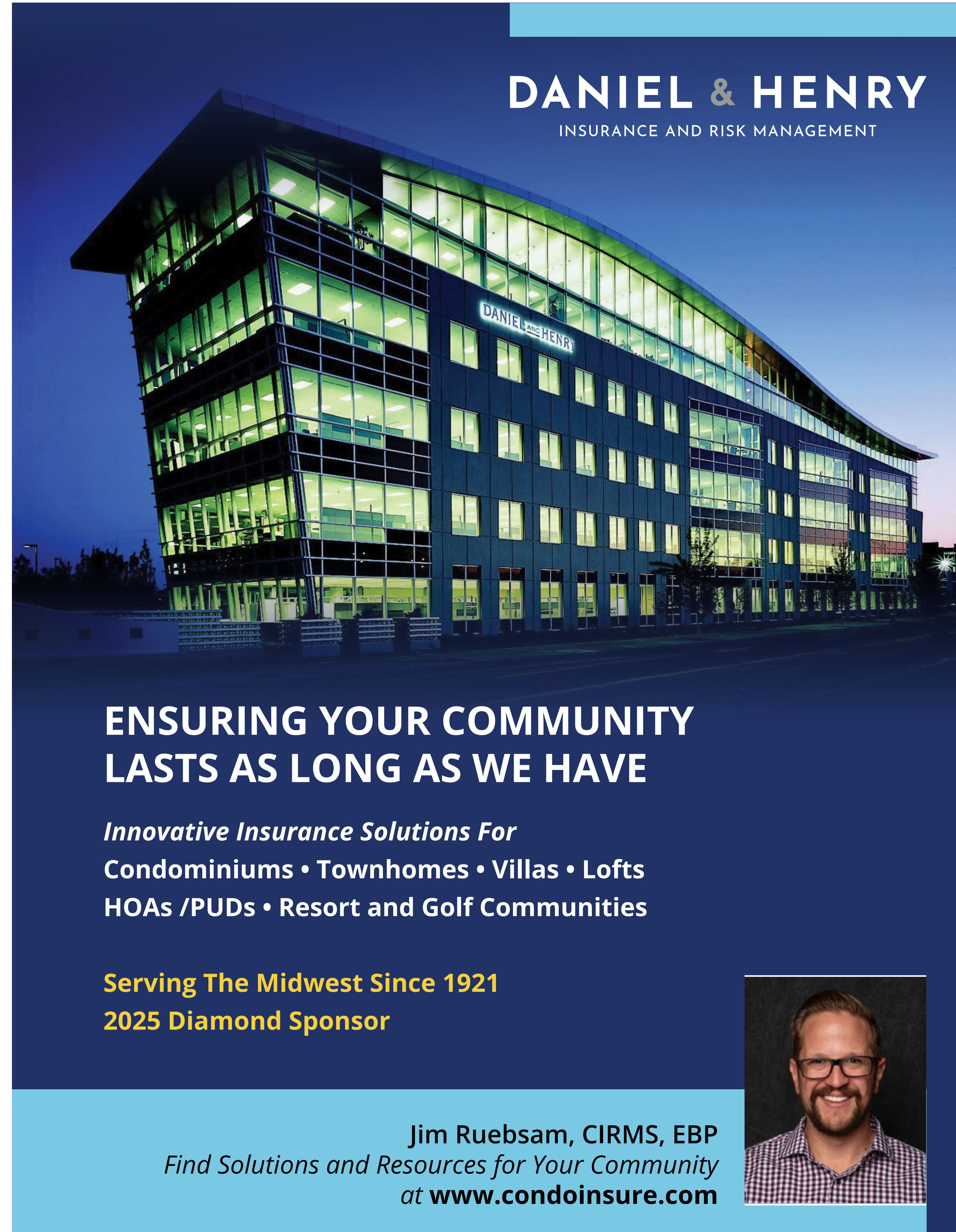
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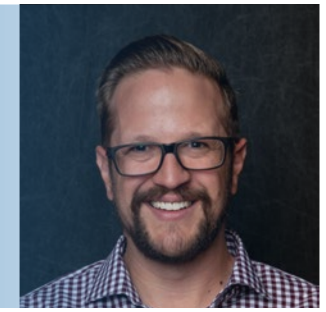
Heartland Chapter community Associations Institute
Thursday, 11/13, 9-11 a.m.
Brentwood Forest
Condo Clubhouse
Free to all New Members
Register at:
CAIHEARTLAND.COM/EVENTS

Steps To Minimizing Costly Water Damage

By: Jim Ruebsam, CIRMS, EBP



Did you know that burst water pipes and hoses are the primary reason for major losses in community associations? Please follow the steps below to help prevent water damage in your Unit and community.

- **Replace all rubber washing machine, dishwasher, and other hoses with the steel braided type.** These normally cost $20 for a pair at most hardware stores and are easily installed. Don't forget to turn off the water supply before replacing your hoses, and leave enough space behind your washing machine so that the hose does not crimp. And never run appliances unless you're home!
- **Check all water hoses and hose connections at least annually.** Replace any hoses that show fraying or bulging.
- **Always keep your Unit heated at 62 degrees or more and insulate any pipes that may be exposed to cold.**
- **If you are going on vacation, turn off your main water valve and drain all water lines by turning on every faucet until they stop running.** At a minimum, during times of freezing temperatures, allow faucets to flow at a slow drip to help prevent burst pipes while you're away.
- **Know where your water shutoffs are and learn how to shut off your water valve.** If a water pipe bursts in the middle of the night, it's not a good time to figure out how to shut off your water for the first time!
- **Be sure to have drip pans around your HVAC unit to collect condensation and spill pans beneath your washing machine.**
- **Consider installing leak alarms or automatic shutoff equipment around appliances, toilets, and faucets.** These can be found at most hardware stores.

Water damage claims can be a huge headache for your and your neighbors—not to mention the cost of deductibles and increased insurance rates. By following these easy steps, you will greatly minimize the risk of water damage. CAI

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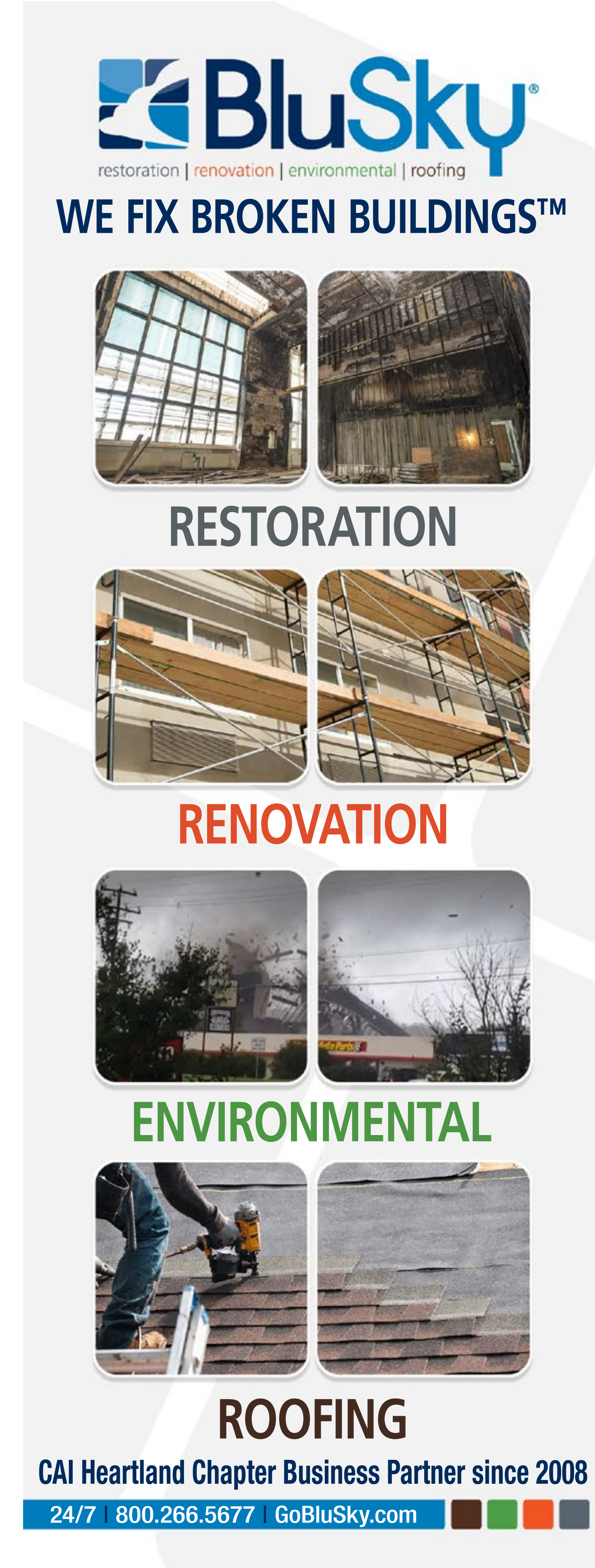

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What violations or negligence issues do the states come after HOAs for most frequently?

By: SOLitude Lake Management

If you manage or serve on the board of a homeowners association, you have a lot on your plate, from property and facilities maintenance to administrative tasks and addressing resident concerns. Prioritizing can be difficult when seemingly everything demands your attention, but stormwater pond management cannot fall off your priority list. Neglecting to properly manage these important structures could lead to regulatory violations, fines, and costly equipment damage.

We understand that you're stretched thin. That's why we've put together a comprehensive outline of the most common stormwater pond violations among HOAs and expert tips to help ensure you pass your next stormwater pond inspection.

What is a stormwater pond?

Many property managers find themselves responsible for stormwater ponds without fully understanding what they are or why they matter. Most focus on cosmetic concerns like fountain spray patterns or keeping algae and weeds at bay. These are important things that residents care about and that help make a community look welcoming to new members, but aesthetics aren't the primary purpose.

These systems are designed to prevent flooding by capturing and filtering stormwater during rainstorms and then safely diverting it downstream. Stormwater ponds may be composed of many different components, including inflows, outflows, forebays, dams, and emergency spillways.

What are HOAs responsible for?

HOAs are responsible for ensuring their stormwater systems function as originally designed. However, in most cases, property managers don't have access to the "as-built" plans, either because they weren't transferred by the community developers or they were lost over time. Even when plans exist, reading them isn't intuitive.

What do inspections focus on?

Depending on the regulatory body, HOAs may or may not be given notice ahead of an inspection. Inspectors are there to assess if a stormwater pond is in proper working order. Fines typically come into play when structural damage poses immediate flooding threats and/or when required repairs are delayed or ignored. Fines can vary from $50–$100 per day to several thousand dollars per day, depending on the particular violation and municipality.

The following are some of the most common problem areas that put HOAs at risk of violations.

Sediment build-up: Eroded sediment tends to build up around inflows and outflows, and limit a pond's capacity to hold water. During storms, this could result in flooding that endangers residents, damages surrounding infrastructure, and further destabilizes the shoreline.

Tree growth: This is one of the most common issues inspectors look for. Small inconspicuous saplings eventually become larger trees. If a tree falls on a stormwater pond dam during a storm, it can cause significant damage and result in flooding.

Blocked inlets: Items like plastic bags, trash, lawn debris, sticks, and aquatic weeds often get caught in inlet structures, preventing stormwater from flowing properly.

Rock placement: Large rocks are often placed around outflows to slow water and prevent erosion. Inspectors keep an eye out for areas where rocks are missing or displaced.

Pipe separation: Over time, pipes made of concrete or corrugated metal can separate if the ground shifts, leading to dangerous bank collapses.

Animal activity: Rodents like nutria and muskrats burrow into pond banks. Their tunnel systems can weaken the structural integrity of the shoreline.

How can your HOA prepare for inspections?

Inspections are guaranteed sooner or later, and they often uncover stormwater pond issues that need quick action. Regulators may give as little as 30 days to make repairs—would your budget be ready to cover those unexpected costs?

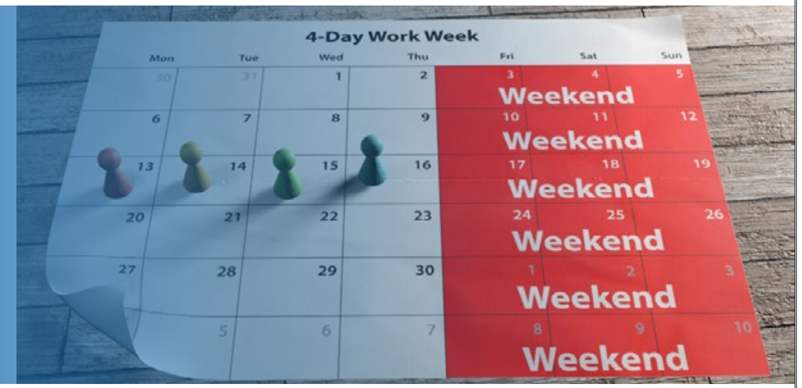
A proactive mindset can help your community avoid these situations. Working with a pond management partner can provide peace of mind that stormwater pond issues are identified and addressed before your next inspection. For example, removing small trees from a dam or hydro-raking organic build-up is far cheaper than repairing a collapsed shoreline or dredging a pond that's filled in—projects that can cost upward of a million dollars and typically take decades to budget for.

Experienced Aquatic Experts understand local regulatory requirements, which can vary between states and municipalities. They're also trained in properly interpreting as-built stormwater pond design plans and can help you access certified copies if you don't have them on hand.

You juggle enough responsibilities already. We'll help make stormwater pond management one less thing to worry about. Contact our Aquatic Experts to discover the benefits of an integrated annual pond management program. CAI

The four-day work week: Attracting talent with flexibility

By: Hazel Siff



Since the 1970s, the community association housing model has grown exponentially. And while compensation within the community management profession also continues to grow, data from the Foundation for Community Association Research's *Attracting Talent to the Community Association Management Industry* report reveals the demand for professional community management is outpacing the number of individuals entering the profession.

Observers say the talent shortage doesn't seem to stem from compensation or job availability issues. Rather, the industry faces perception issues. Community management has a reputation for being grueling. Managers often wear many hats, juggle unpredictable schedules, handle after-hours complaints, mediate tense homeowner disputes, and navigate complex financial and legal challenges. Without implementing strategies to improve the work environment, these pressures can lead to burnout and make attracting talent harder.

The Attracting Talent report reveals that prospective community managers are not just seeking adequate compensation and benefits. They also are looking for roles that offer them flexibility in how they work and opportunities for professional advancement.

According to the Foundation's *2024 Community Association Manager Compensation and Salary Survey*, many association leaders are rethinking the way they structure their teams and benefits to reframe the profession as a sustainable, appealing career choice. For some, this means creating workplaces that promote work-life balance and recognize the unique challenges of the role.

Enter the four-day workweek.

A recent rise in flexible work schedules has contributed to the increasingly popular idea that represents a bold take on job flexibility. For some companies, a four-day workweek may look like less time at work. For others, it may mean compressing 40 hours into four days. The idea is popular among the workforce. According to a Work in America survey, about 80% of respondents believe they would be happier and just as effective with four days at work. Research on the effectiveness of such a strategy is still in its early phases, but "trials show gains in worker well-being and satisfaction as well as improvements in retention and recruitment," according to the American Psychological Association.

MAKING THE CASE

While a four-day work week wouldn't erase challenges by itself, it could offer a viable method to alleviate stress and encourage management professionals to enjoy a better balance between work and home life.

Alfred Logan, general manager at Spring Valley Lake Association in Victorville, Calif., says his community has been operating on a "4/10" work schedule for over 14 years. The community's four 10-hour shifts generally take place Tuesday through Friday, with event staff adjusting their schedules as needed. Security is excluded from this schedule due to the 24-hour nature of the role.

"The schedule was implemented as a department-wide shift rather than on an optional basis," Logan says of the transition. While staff appreciate the schedule, Spring Valley recently had to shift the maintenance team back to working five eight-hour shifts a week.

Brambleton Community Association in Brambleton, Va., has an even more flexible take on the work week. Core hours are Monday through Thursday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with the office open on Fridays for an optional half day. "Some team members also have opted for alternative schedules, such as four nine-hour days or four 10-hour days, giving them Fridays off entirely," says manager Rick Stone, AMS, LSM, PCAM.

The association transitioned to a flexible work schedule over a year ago "driven by our goal to recruit and retain high-quality employees and to stay competitive with the corporate work-place culture," he says.

HOW IT'S WORKING

At Spring Valley, the flexible workweek seems to alleviate the pressure. "Staff enjoy the extra day off and cite better work-life balance, especially those with young families," says Logan. However, he notes that the 4/10 model has not led to a reduction in sick callouts or measurable gains in productivity. He's also "noticed that productivity tends to decline during the last few hours of these longer shifts."

While he believes the overall work-place climate remains healthy and the model is popular among staff, he has concerns from an operational standpoint. He notes that if the board were willing to hire additional staff to provide Monday coverage, he could see the model being more viable long term.

At Brambleton, where the four-day week does not always entail longer shifts, the model seems to be working so far. "Resident response has been great," says Stone. "With our virtual environment, online resources, and now artificial intelligence tools in place, we've been able to meet resident needs seven days a week. Most residents haven't noticed any change in service.

"The flexible hours have been a win-win. Staff are more energized, morale is high, and service to the community hasn't been impacted. It's working well for both the team and the association."

GETTING CREATIVE

The community management talent shortage isn't going away on its own. Observers say associations need to think creatively, be willing to experiment with benefits, and stay committed to building workplaces where people want to stay. What works in one community or company may not in another, but the principles are universal: Prioritize work-life balance, tailor solutions to your operations, and create a culture where managers feel valued.

If the community management industry can shift from a reputation of relentless grind to one of professional growth coexisting with personal sustainability, it could attract new talent and also retain dedicated professionals who already know how to keep communities thriving.

>>Purchase the *2024 Community Association Manager Compensation and Salary Survey*.

>>Read more about the four-day workweek in *Community Manager* September/October 2025. CAI

DETRACTORS TO THE PROFESSION

Attracting Talent to the Community Association Management Industry Report

- 59% Toxic work environment
- 55% Unpleasant company culture
- 48% Poor benefits
- 47% Decreased morale
- 42% No advancement opportunities
- 36% Company's financial instability
- 28% Uncovered professional development costs
- 28% CEO's leadership style
- 20% Location of office or portfolio communities
- 20% Negative company reputation
- 19% Prohibition on remote work
- 17% Lack of on-the-job training
- 17% Company is too large or too small
- 16% Outdated technology
- 12% Lack of allowance for mobile phone or car
- 7% Poor appearance of office and/or communities
- 4% No company-provided laptop
- 24% Other (e.g., lack of pay raises, higher compensation elsewhere)

>>Download *Attracting Talent to the Community Association Management Industry*.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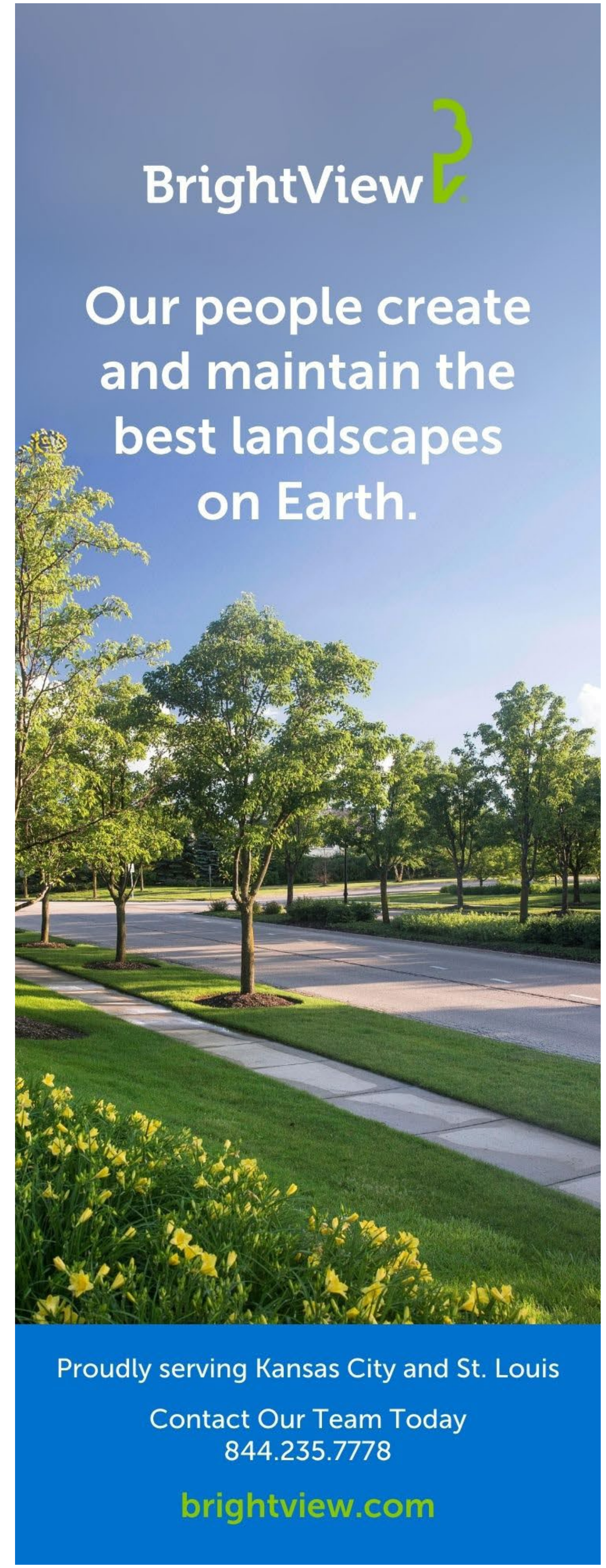
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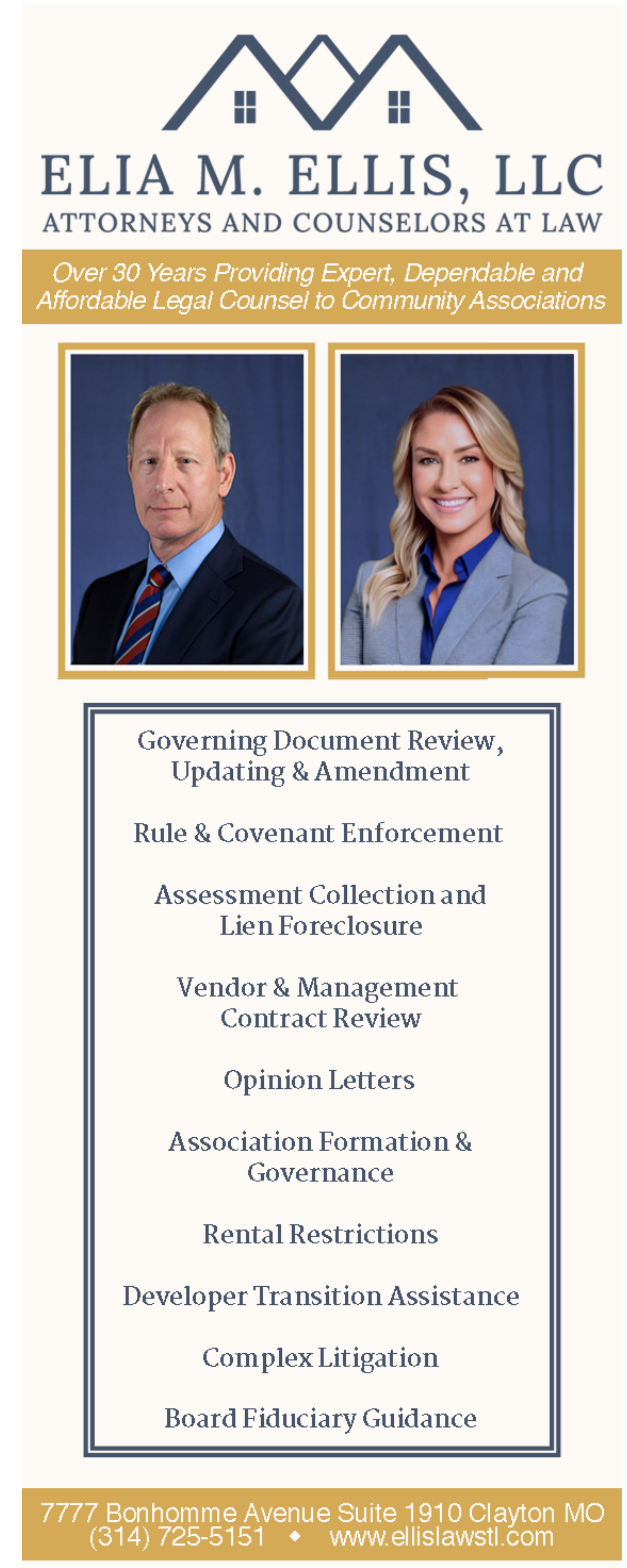
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Fire Pits: How HOA & Condo Boards Can Safely Permit this Popular Trend

By: Laura Otto

Apopular outdoor housing trend is fire pits. As residents look for ways to socialize, some are asking board members to allow propane-operated fire pits for outdoor enjoyment during the fall, spring, and summer seasons.

"Fire pits are a hot commodity as they are being advertised by every big box store," says Alan Goldberg, board president of Tara at Barrington Estates in Aurora, Ohio. "Living in Ohio, having a fire table provides owners an opportunity to use their patios during the cooler spring and fall seasons," says Goldberg, whose condominium community has 84 units across 21 buildings. Each building has four attached units without balconies, and owners have a private patio next to their front door.

Safety concerns such as height of the flame, size of the table, location on the patio, and proximity to the next home or nearby shrubs and trees have kept many associations from permitting fire pits. Ursula K. Burgess, a shareholder at Rees Broome in Fairfax, Va., a fellow in CAI's College of Community Association Lawyers (CCAL), and CAI past president, notes that association boards are concerned about damage or injury to persons or property.

"Obviously we do not want homes or condominium buildings to catch on fire or for people to be injured. These events could be catastrophic for an association and its residents," she adds.

How do boards safely allow residents to use fire pits, especially if it's currently prohibited because of small patios and homes being close together?

Burgess notes that her clients are currently regulating fire pits in the same manner as other open-flame devices or addressing them specifically in the rules and regulations, with requirements on location and storage/coverage similar to those for gas grills.

In Ohio, fire tables fall under the same state regulations as gas grills, according to Goldberg. "The code states that any propane, natural gas, or gel open flame device must be at least 10 feet away from a multi-unit building. Many of our owners have gas grills and we found that some of these grills were closer than 10 feet from the buildings," he explains.

Goldberg's community created a policy to regulate fire pits and other open-flame devices such as charcoal burners and gas grills. These are permitted with prior written permission from the board so long as they are used in accordance with state, county, and local fire codes. "It is each owner's responsibility, and we highlight that the fire department may fine an owner if they do not meet fire standards," he says.

In addition, the policy details that fire pits must adhere to the following:

- Must be propane, natural gas, and gel only.
- Must have a tempered wind guard of at least 6 inches in height.
- Wood burning fire pits are not permitted.

A unit owner must be present to monitor the area when an open-flame device is in use, and is responsible for any damage to the structures, patio fences, and landscaping.

Any damage caused by an open-flame device that requires repair or replacement will be billed to the unit owner.

Boards contemplating a similar policy should have little difficulty implementing it in their association. "Our community had no difficulty with enforcement of this new policy. If we see a clear violation, the board will inform the owner before further action is taken," Goldberg notes. CAI