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RESIDENTIALResource



THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY MANAGERS

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for all the event details.



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EDITORIAL MISSION

Since 1989, the NARPM® news magazine has been a key focal point for the organization. The *Residential Resource* keeps members up-to-date on association events, and provides valuable industry advice and insight.

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PRESIDENT'S Message

The culture of NARPM® offers us “Endless Possibilities” for sharing information among our members.



AS CHILDREN we are encouraged to share our toys and our treats. However, in our competitive “adult” world, we sometimes forget the lessons learned in our childhood. We forget that we are interconnected and what helps one and is shared helps the entire industry. What helps the entire industry comes full circle to help each individual. The culture of NARPM® offers us “Endless Possibilities” for sharing information among our members.

During a Colorado State Conference a few years ago, Carolyn Rogers, MPM® RMP®, of All Seasons, LLC in Colorado Springs shared her experience of creating and using a video to present the terms of the lease to each new tenant. Several conference attendees implemented that idea into their businesses. We created our DVD lease presentation saving about an hour of my time on each lease signing! Greg Fedro, MPM® RMP®, of Recar and Associates in Austin, TX has implemented his tenant orientation in a PowerPoint Presentation. While not an exact duplicate (video, DVD, PowerPoint), the knowledge and experience shared has affected the operations of managers in Colorado, Arkansas and Texas. Thank you Carolyn!

Attending national, regional or state conferences gives you the best opportunity to participate in information sharing. Attendees of the 2008 California State Conference were “Leaping to New Heights” with the quality of information shared. Their alliance

with the California Apartment Association set a standard for offering their members an opportunity to get up close and personal with state legislators.

At the Northwest Regional Conference, each registrant received a customized “NARPMOPOLY” board game. Everyone was a winner with the education shared on how to “Take the Chance Out of Our Game.” After all, effectively managing residential rentals is not a game—it is serious business. The “Get Out of Jail Free” card did come in handy after an enjoyable evening of one-on-one information sharing at the Old Idaho State Penitentiary!

There is still time for you to attend this year’s Colorado State Conference on May 15th in Littleton, CO. Join in and learn new ways of “Creating Opportunity” in your business. I am wondering what we will learn from Carolyn this year!

Visiting a colleague’s office offers another great opportunity to share information. Jim Pickett, RMP®, and his wife, Debbie, visited our offices during a trip through Arkansas. We shared copies of forms used in our company. Jim reworked them to fit his operation and then shared them back with us. We immediately incorporated his improvements into our existing forms. Not one of us is perfect; there is always room for improvement!

The *Residential Resource* offers excellent articles every month by NARPM® members who share their experiences and lessons learned. There are articles on exactly

how to perform a particular function, as well as articles on how *not* to perform that particular function. Not only do we learn without having to acquire the same bruises and bumps, the authors earn points towards their chapter’s quest for Chapter Excellence and towards their individual professional designation. Now that is a win-win situation!

Every day members of the NARPM® CEO ListServ pose questions and offer answers on a wide variety of topics from members across the country. Ever wonder exactly what others consider a maintenance emergency? What do you do when a tenant receives a Notice of Foreclosure? When extending a lease, should the tenant sign a whole new lease? The information shared through this forum is priceless! Not signed up? Visit the Members Only section at <http://www.narpm.org/members/list-serves.html>. Don’t forget to log in!

While sharing information is always encouraged, you are reminded never to share prices or discuss fees. Be careful to avoid even the appearance of price-fixing!

Because of my fellow NARPM® members, information is freely shared and available to me. This fills my future with “Endless Possibilities.” Thank you!

Betty Fletcher

Betty Fletcher, MPM® RMP®
2008 NARPM® President

From the **DESK** of the *Executive Director*



Gail S. Phillips, CAE

I believe NARPM® will continue to grow because it is a fantastic organization with a strong vision for the future of all residential property managers.

THINGS ARE ALWAYS BUZZING around the National Office and, just like Spring, we have new projects blooming! We are growing the amount of services that are provided to and from NARPM®. It was requested that I take time in this article to share with you how we became your management staff for NARPM®.

In 2005, NARPM® hired our company, Organization Management Group (OMG), to provide management services for NARPM®.

Through our interview process, I was impressed with the leadership of NARPM® as they always kept the needs of the members in the forefront when talking with us. During the interviews, Marc Banner, MPM® RMP®, Sylvia Hill, MPM® RMP®, and Rose Thomas, MPM® RMP®, came to Virginia to meet us and see our operations. We spent the entire day together—they met our staff, they saw our systems, they previewed programs we did for other associations, we shared their vision for the future of NARPM® and everyone left the meeting excited.

When we were hired, we were told our first task was to attend the Salt Lake Convention and observe a NARPM® event. One week later the call came; NARPM® didn't have anyone on staff to handle the convention—could we do it? In six weeks, our company and NARPM® volunteers put together a great convention that people are still talking about. It was a learning experience for us. I was introduced as the NARPM® interim executive director. Since things were moving in the right direction and we were having such a great time, I was asked to stay on and I agreed. Since the days of Salt Lake, we have rewritten the Policy and Procedures Manual so future leaders and managers know what is expected of them and why things happen the way they do. We have also improved the look and feel of the NARPM® Con-

vention and Trade Show and it keeps growing. The NARPM® publications have won print media awards for their design and content.

The NARPM® leadership is the strategic planning body for the benefit of all members. They rely on the committees for their contributions and organization of the chapters and members. The Long Range Planning Committee plans five years ahead to meet future challenges and prepare our leaders and members for the exciting opportunities available to them. It is gratifying to see what we have accomplished and exciting to envision what is on the horizon.

The main vision of the leadership through the entire process of hiring us was two-fold. First, they wanted to free up the volunteers' time. Second, they wanted to hire a management company that would take NARPM® to the next level and truly empower the organization. We handle the day-to-day responsibilities and operational decisions for NARPM®. As a result, we have improved the organization's appearance and professionalism. Just look at the new public relations campaign that was designed by NARPM® staff. This past year, NARPM® had the most successful financial year in their existence thanks to the chairs and Board members. I believe NARPM® will continue to grow because it is a fantastic organization with a strong vision for the future of all residential property managers.

On behalf of our entire staff, I want to thank each of you for all of your efforts. The future looks bright and NARPM® truly does have "Endless Possibilities!"

Gail S. Phillips

Gail S. Phillips, CAE
Executive Director



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250 - 499	\$199	\$1,791	\$149.25	\$2,189	\$182.42	\$299
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REGIONAL Communications

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Tony A. Drost, MPM®
RMP® is the founder and owner of First Rate Property Management, Inc., located in Boise, Idaho. Tony earned a BA degree in Operations Management, which he credits as giving him the tools to be an effective manager. Although licensing is not required in Idaho, Tony is a licensed agent to provide additional support and service to his clients. Tony can be reached by phone at 208-794-6424 or by e-mail at region4vp@narpm.org.

The RVP Bulletin

In my opinion, the greatest asset NARPM® has is our volunteer members—past, present and future. Whether it is at a local, regional or national event, the classes and workshops are usually presented by members of our association. The keynote speakers are almost always fellow property managers. They intimately know the challenges that we all face and, because of that, a connection is made. Unlike most associations, we really see each other as colleagues and not competitors. More times than not, strong friendships are built.


Our volunteers devote hours upon hours, as well as money, to the benefit of the organization and its members. However, our volunteers have families to take care of and businesses to run as well. As urgent family and business matters arrive, volunteer work can become delayed. The biggest frustration I hear within our membership is the lack of response or someone waiting until the last minute to complete a task. Imagine one volunteer needing some information from another volunteer. They leave messages for one another and after a couple of weeks, finally connect and are able to complete the task. Unfortunately a five minute task just took two weeks. Again, I truly believe that our volunteers are our largest asset. When they have time, their contributions are great and very beneficial. When they don't have time, members feel that their needs are not being met.

NARPM® addresses the time constraints of volunteers in two ways. The first is that we contract to a professional management company, who we refer to as NARPM® staff. They are not property managers and they are not NARPM® members, but they know how to manage associations. They are paid staff that fulfill the association management duties of keeping the behind-the-scenes aspects of NARPM® running. They manage the organizational operations that include answering our calls and e-mails, updating the website, planning conferences and conventions, accounting, keeping up with membership records, offering educational opportunities, and much more. Unlike volunteers who come and go, paid staff is a consistent force

that meet our immediate and future needs. They retain the knowledge of how the association operates.

Recently, NARPM® approved the hiring of an additional staff member who will be completely devoted to the support of chapter leaders and the regional vice presidents. Besides holding a position on the Board of Directors, the RVP's role has been to support the chapters. The RVP's will still be there to help the chapters, but this new staff member will serve as the consistent person right in the middle of things and will help ensure that your needs are met quickly. As I have stated before in these articles, to me, the future of NARPM® rests with the chapters and the delivery of NARPM® benefits on the local and regional level. With a staff member there to help, I see our chapter leaders less burdened, more organized and able to concentrate on being available to local chapter members. I see NARPM® membership growing but more importantly, I see our retention improving.

Earlier, I said that there were two ways to address the time constraints of our volunteers. The structure of the other is already there but it is often not utilized. We need more volunteers, and we need them to be organized. Think about how structure fires used to be put out. It was done by creating a line of volunteers and passing a bucket of water from one to the other. This method is far more effective than if you just had one or two delivering the water from the source to the fire. Those volunteers would tire quickly and the amount of water would be much less. It is also more effective than if all of those volunteers filled, transported and threw the water on the fire themselves. That approach lacks planning and organization and will delay results. The bottom line is that a chapter cannot deliver great benefits if just one or two volunteers do all of the work. We need many volunteers to help divide up the work in an organized fashion.

I encourage all of you to get involved with the leadership of your chapter. Recruit as many volunteers as you can and divide up the work to different areas. Your chapter will flourish, and you and your fellow chapter members will surely benefit. 

- Region 1:** R. Scott Corbridge, RMP®
Region 2: Elizabeth Morgan, MPM® RMP®
Region 3: Susan Alber, MPM® RMP®
Region 4: Tony A. Drost, MPM® RMP®
Region 5: Harold E. Kalles, MPM® RMP®
Region 6: James Emory Tungsvik, MPM® RMP®

Region 1: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Washington D. C., West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia

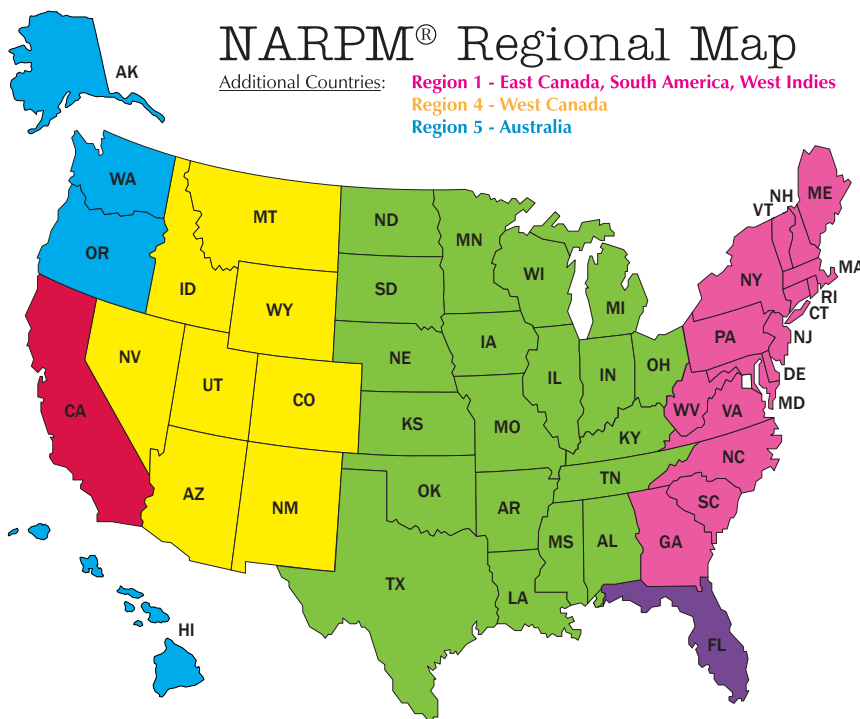
Region 2: Florida

Region 3: Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas

Region 4: Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Idaho, Utah, Arizona and Nevada

Region 5: Washington, Oregon, Alaska and Hawaii

Region 6: California



NARPM® Regional Map

Additional Countries: **Region 1 - East Canada, South America, West Indies**
Region 4 - West Canada
Region 5 - Australia



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VACANCY survey



Patrick "P.J." Chapman,
RMP® is the 2008

Southwest Idaho Chapter President-Elect and 2007 recipient of the prestigious Rocky Maxwell Award. P.J. is co-owner of Chapman Enterprises in Boise, Idaho and has been involved in property management for 13 years. Since joining NARPM® in 2006, P.J. has served as the 2007 Southwest Idaho Chapter Education Chair and received his RMP® designation at the 2007 National Convention. Outside of work, he enjoys snowboarding, backpacking, jet skiing and wakeboarding.

One of my most frequently asked questions from potential clients and investors, as well as other real estate agents, is, "What is your vacancy rate in Boise and what is your office vacancy rate?" The office portion of this question is easy for me to answer but I have always struggled to answer the other until now.

Our Southwest Idaho Chapter is one of the only chapters nationwide actively compiling data on vacancy rates for single-family and small multi-unit complexes. Over the past year and a half, I have been able to intelligently discuss the Treasure Valley vacancy rate with prospective clients, investors and real estate agents, and provide them with accurate written and graphical data. This has allowed my company to show our clients that we are in tune with what is happening in our entire market and not just within our company. This has proven to be a successful tool for our ongoing marketing strategy.

Starting a vacancy survey in your own chapter and surrounding area should become a priority; it has proven to be beneficial for everyone involved in our chapter. It all begins with a simple survey to all NARPM® members in your local chapter.

The key to this important information is *your* participation. All active members of our chapter are encouraged to participate in this free survey every quarter for several reasons. The more people we have submitting information, the more accurate the data becomes. Second, you can only get the results of each survey if you participate. Third, every quarter the results are released to the press with a list of those companies who participated. This leads to NARPM® media exposure and individual company exposure. Our survey started out just in our county but has recently expanded into the Canyon County area as well. We are always looking for more participants from that region. Most of the reasons and feedback for not doing the survey have come back to me as, "It is too difficult to compile the information." This statement may be true the first time you do it. After you have run the numbers once, it becomes a snap to go back and figure out the changes for the next quarter.

Our chapter has received a lot of attention from the local media on this survey. The media has shown great interest in what we, as professionals in this specific market of single-family homes, have to say in light of our current economic situation. I have been

interviewed twice by the Idaho statesman, our local newspaper and once by KBOI, a news and talk radio station. Others in our chapter have also received media attention and free company advertising and publicity such as our survey master, J.J. Winters, Tony Drost, MPM® RMP®, Mike Rampelberg and Owen Jones. Owen Jones was featured in a half page article written by our local newspaper, discussing current market trends and points of that quarter's survey. Our active chapter members participating in our surveys have found this information to be invaluable, and realize that it is our job to continue to make this unique survey successful. The benefits of any accurate vacancy survey have huge potential for everyone involved and is well worth the time it takes to submit the data every quarter.

We have even established a survey chair on our local Board of Directors. J.J. Winters compiled a survey on Survey Monkey, which is a free site that anyone can use to create and disburse surveys. We first started with e-mails to every member of our chapter with a deadline and strict direction on how to accomplish and complete the survey. The survey consisted of nine categories: 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 bedroom single-family units, studios and 1, 2 and 3 bedroom multi-family units. We asked each member to fill out how many units they manage per category and how many vacancies they have in each category as of a specific date. Once complete, the survey was sent back via fax, mail or e-mail. Now that we have it set up to be filled out online, it can be sent with a click of a button. We have also gone one step further by adding an average rent category to each of the previous nine categories. Once the deadline passes, the data is compiled and arranged in both numerical and graphical data. The results are then released to all participating NARPM® members and the press.

The NARPM® Southwest Idaho Chapter has created a successful and invaluable vacancy survey that benefits both NARPM® and its participating professionals, with NARPM® members being seen as the authority and go-to people for anything that is related to property management.

We encourage all chapters to start their own local vacancy surveys and reap the educational benefits that this data provides. Show your clients that you are the true professional in your industry!



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GOVERNMENTAL Affairs

KEEPING OUR MEMBERS CURRENT ON THE NEWEST INDUSTRY LAWS AND POLICIES NATIONWIDE.



Dena Watson is the Legislative Coordinator for the Western Colorado NARPM® Chapter. She is an Associate Broker/Leasing Agent for Premier Property Management in Grand Junction, CO. Dena is also serving on the National Governmental Affairs Committee. She can be reached at dena@premierpropertygj.com.

Legislative Scoop

In January 2008, Colorado saw the possibility of rent control introduced as legislation. Colorado NARPM® chapters were thrilled when the bill did not make it past the committee. State representatives had already heard from numerous property owners and managers. NARPM® sent out an e-mail blast to Colorado members, advising them to contact their local representatives. For many legislators, it was the first time they had heard from NARPM® members.

Building a relationship with your legislators is like building a house. You need a strong foundation before you can add any building blocks. Likewise, building a relationship with congressional staff members is just as important because staff members are usually more accessible. Legislators rely heavily on information provided by their staff in making decisions and taking positions on legislation. Spending time building a relationship throughout the year (not just when you want something during the general administration) makes you more likely to have the legislator's ear when an important issue arises.

The first steps on the way to building a relationship are to join an organization such as NARPM®, attend functions, introduce yourself and communicate. Know your organization. If you are speaking on its behalf you will want to be a credible representative. Be aware of your organization's positions.

If your legislator is holding a hearing or workshop, try to attend. Understand the purpose of the meeting. Is it a formal meeting or a chance handshake? Dress appropriately; if it is formal, wear business attire. Otherwise, neat and conservative clothing is appropriate.

Always address your senator or representative properly and identify yourself immediately at each contact. Public officials meet too many people to remember everyone. Be courteous and never argumentative. You will not win anyone over to your side by being loud and aggressive. Maintain eye contact and use a firm handshake.

Don't be surprised if it appears your legislator doesn't know about the bill or you know more about the issue than he/she does. Remember, no one can

know everything regarding an issue. Don't hesitate to admit your lack of knowledge on a particular point, and be willing to find out the answer and report back.

Personal stories are good, but don't overdo it. Keep the story to the point and relevant to your issue. Remember, their time is limited. When giving out literature make sure it is easy to read and highlight important facts and arguments.

The telephone is an effective tool. Remind the legislator of any previous contact. If the member is not available, speak with the legislative aide. Letters are important. The amount of mail on a particular piece of legislation frequently helps determine the legislators' approach to an issue. In all correspondence be sure to include your name (legibly), address and telephone number.

Know your legislator. Try to understand the basis for his/her position. Be aware of prior commitments favorable to your organization's positions. Know the status of the legislation and refer to a bill by number. Be an objective individual and sympathize with the concerns of both sides. Another great way to get to know your legislators is to invite them to speak to your organization. They may not even realize an organization such as yours exists.

Things to remember:

- Don't begin with, "As a tax payer..." (your elected representative knows you pay taxes).
- Don't apologize for taking his or her time. If you are brief and to the point, he/she will be glad to hear from you.
- Don't be arrogant, condescending or threatening toward legislators or their staff.
- Don't expect an answer/commitment right away.

Follow up and thank your legislator for taking the time to meet with you. If appropriate, follow-up with a thank you note. Remember to always be courteous; you never know when the opportunity may arise where your expertise may be needed and your legislator may call on you.



2007/2008 Designation Candidates

RMP® CANDIDACY

B. Scott Abernathy
Melva Albone
Linda Allen
Carrie Appling-Lake
Karen Ayers
Shawn Beard
Debbie Bennett
John Bradford
Tina Bradley
Alicia Brim
Charlie Brown
Lana Byrne
Sandra Clark
Marc Cunningham
Jerry Dean Holt, Jr.

Dianna Erickson
Dennis Flesher
Leeann Chiglione
Hardeman Godbee
Bob Gunson
Phillip Henderson
Ronald Herdt
Eric Hoglund
Cindy Hoover
Karl Jennings
W. Sean Kerr
Betty Kirby
Traci Lewis Van Camp
Donna Littleton
Dan Lopez
Tina Lopez

Anthony Marotta
Carolyn Matthews
Paul Matthews
Jackie McCormick
Barbara McDonald
Nancy Myers
Beverly Perina
William Rowan
Lynn Sedlack
Tom Sedlack
Taylor Simonton
Mark Smith
Kellie Tollifson
Mark Vonder Meulen
Leisa Marie Wells
Marc Witmer

MPM® CANDIDACY

R. Scott Corbridge, RMP®
Cary Efurd, RMP®
Lynda Farren, RMP®
Dorothy Hardee, RMP®
Linda Holzer, RMP®
Nat Holzer, RMP®
Michelle Horneff-Cohen, RMP®
Marty Hutchison, RMP®
Paul Irely, RMP®
Robert Lynde, RMP®
Kathryn MacGeraghty, RMP®
Barbara Mayo, RMP®
Anne McCawley, RMP®
Kandy Meehan, RMP®
James Pickett, RMP®
Barbara Smith, RMP®
Geri Stephens, RMP®
Gary Walker, RMP®
Chris Warren, RMP®
Sylvia White, RMP®

CSSsm CANDIDACY

Krista Alcott
Kimberly Cowen
Lynette Field
Kelly Willis

CRMC® CANDIDACY

Boardwalk Real Property Mgmt.
Stephen Foster, MPM® RMP®

Browning-Gordon & Co., Inc.
Beverly Browning, MPM® RMP®

IPM Corporation
Kittredge Garen, MPM® RMP®

Rollingwood Mgmt., Inc.
Michael Francis, MPM® RMP®

Terra Residential Services, Inc.
Mike Mengden, MPM® RMP®

Watson Realty Corp.
Wendell Davis, MPM® RMP®

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Virtual Outsourcing

OPENS UP A WORLD OF RESOURCES

Growing trend offers property managers the competitive advantage by accessing a virtually endless list of world-class services.

I will share a secret that is giving residential property managers, no matter how remote, economical access to world-class services.

Imagine a property manager rising one morning to embrace the challenges of her job. Maybe she commutes by subway to the Manhattan high-rise she manages, or maybe on foot, along a pristine beach to an oceanfront development.

At her office, she boots up her computer. Within an hour, her personal assistant presents the day's schedule, her ad buyer confirms placement in a travel magazine and her lawyer submits lease revisions. Later, her accountant mails the 1099 forms for the last tax-year, she finalizes open house plans with her event planner and hones communications strategies with her writer.

Only at day's end does she marvel at the global team she commands: an accountant in Denver, an ad buyer in Toronto, a writer in Minnesota and a personal assistant in Bangalore.

The "secret" is virtual outsourcing. It is letting property managers expand capabilities, despite limited resources locally, high prevailing wages or both. For example, from an isolated island in the middle of the Atlantic, our firm, Bermuda Realty, is meeting the demands of a clientele with expectations shaped by the global economy.

Large companies have long outsourced as a way to refocus on core competencies. It becomes virtual when the Internet allows delivery of outsourced services from great distances. It is also the virtual part that permits the seamless integration of services not traditionally outsourced.

While outsourcing accounting or marketing has become routine, our wired world now makes it practical to outsource less expected services such as tenant screening, scheduling and employee benefits management.

BIG BUSINESS BANG ON SMALL BUSINESS BUCKS

Once available only to large companies, the expanding information infrastructure now brings outsourcing's benefits to operations of all sizes.

EFFICIENCY Paying by the hour or project removes costs for downtime and the need to crunch payroll taxes.

FOCUS Property managers are renowned for being Jacks (or Jills!) of all trades. Being able to cope with a double-entry ledger or html code, however, doesn't make it cost-effective.

CONTROL Engaging the right talent enhances control over a project. A designer with illustration skills may be overkill for a newsletter, for example, but key for a new logo.

ECONOMY Three forces work together to boost bottom lines.

- Competitive fees compound savings from increased efficiency.
- Recouped opportunity costs accrue when you focus on core (and income producing) capabilities.
- Efficient allocation lets you deploy the right skill set and rate card. Does your project, for example, require an editor, a writer or a proof-reader?

INDEMNITY Virtual outsourcing removes workers' compensation and other liability issues.

SAFETY Working with relative strangers presents a special concern for smaller operations. Fortunately, virtual outsourcing poses threats no greater than those handled by Net Nanny.

A GLOBAL ARMY AWAITS ITS ORDERS

Virtual assistants (VAs) are the foot soldiers in the virtual outsourcing movement. Mobilized by the growing capabilities of electronic file transfer, password-protected websites and web-based software, they stand ready to deliver high-calibre services from anywhere to anywhere.


Hourly rates start at about \$25 for word processing, data entry and other administrative duties. They can increase to \$50 and up for more sophisticated services, such as event planning, web development, design and copywriting.

As Michael J. Russer (www.russer.com) stresses in *The Obsolete Employee*, reasonable fees are only part of the appeal, "When you hire a VA," Russer writes, "you are hiring an independent contractor who is an expert." "What you get," he concludes, "are highly specialized 'technicians' who most likely love what they do."

That level of specialization can help VAs bridge distance challenges. Our firm, for example, has been calling on writer Paul Samuel Schuster (www.paulschuster.com) since 2005. With copy that evokes pink beaches and fresh seafood, it is easy to forget he is writing from frozen, land-locked Minnesota.

Finding talent is getting easier, too, thanks to the many online talent brokers and job boards. Besides Guru, eLance and REVA, the International Virtual Assistants Association (www.ivaa.org) offers a robust member directory. Search-savvy property managers can go directly to VA websites that often feature portfolios and testimonials.

All this information should get you thinking. For more details, expect future articles to address the reservations some may have to virtual outsourcing, share tactics for finding VAs and reveal tips for hiring, evaluating and compensating VAs. In the meantime, Michael Russer's *The Obsolete Employee* offers an in-depth look at the topic.

Look forward to the next article, "Obstacles to Virtual Outsourcing Easily Overcome," in the upcoming June issue of the *Residential Resource*. 



Paul Matthews is a Professional Services Manager at Bermuda Realty Company Limited. He uses virtual outsourcing to help maintain the firm's position as the island's largest, most-comprehensive real estate company.



Purchase *The Obsolete Employee* and help NARPM® at the same time! Visit www.narpm.org and go through our Amazon.com Affinity Program to buy this book and a percentage of your purchase will be given back to NARPM®.



Dick Jonilonis has, for many years, been a member of San Diego County Apartment Association as an owner, property manager and industry partner/supplier. His company, Dick Jonilonis & Associates, is an affiliate member of the San Diego Association of REALTORS® and the National Association of Residential Property Managers. He has authored over a dozen articles in a number of magazines relating to real estate and property management automation.

SHOPPING FOR SOFTWARE

Our company's specialized and lengthy experience in providing software, training and support for property managers and owner-operators in Southern California and the Southwest is often the basis for general questions related to property management and property management software. A key question from potential users is one directed at the process of acquiring property management software. The following observations and recommendations relate to the search, evaluation and selection of prospective property management systems. Special emphasis should be applied to the initial steps, since they provide the foundation for successful selection and implementation. Too often minimal time and effort are spent on proper preparation resulting in a poor to disastrous selection which, for some management companies, has necessitated the replacement of the software by DRE mandate. The steps in making a selection should include:

1) PREPARE A LIST OF REQUIREMENTS. This is a list of "must have" and "nice to have" requirements and a budget estimate for the program, training and support. It should also include a solid set of accounting, regional and technological requirements appropriately matched to fee management operations. The availability of both a "standalone" version (runs on a user's PC/network) and an "online hosted" version of the system provides additional options and alternatives to match to the user's needs.

A common mistake is the assumption that most property management systems include the necessary routines to satisfy the varied and special requirements of state and/or regional government. They don't. The various state DREs vary greatly in the extent and procedural requirements to satisfy DRE compliance. Some states apply sales tax to rental income. Their tenant/landlord laws are also varied and volatile requiring additional program routines to handle the variations. It is important to understand the special issues that relate to the state(s)/region(s) your company operates in and the appropriate due diligence

preparation in order to match those requirements. Much of the software advertising, however, tends to promote the somewhat utopian view that "one size fits all." The advertising and the associated products receive an additional benefit when they appear in magazines whose audience may have even more specific requirements and/or higher standards; such is the case with fee property managers. The recipients/readers of the magazines may assume some additional level of credibility/certification when none exists. The traditional caveat, "Buyer Beware" should be emphasized. The requirements list that was created in step one will then provide an agenda for the questions to be asked during the software presentations/reviews to follow.

2) OBTAIN REFERRALS. These are important "second opinions" derived from current users, trade associations and other sources that have some awareness of the program, developer and or dealer. Referrals may shortcut the search for programs and developers or dealers of interest as compared to searching the Internet which may provide thousands of property management software hits, many of which are not worth your time to investigate. Referrals need to be qualified. The source of the referral needs to be aware of, or working with, software that has the same generalized requirements as the company requesting the referral. Popular programs may be referred or recommended even when the program does not match the potential user's actual requirements, creating a mismatch of capacity, capabilities, and/or cost. The inappropriate recommendation unfortunately may take precedence over a proper investigation when abetted by a sales person willing to ignore a sales order opportunity.

3) REVIEW THE PROGRAM. This could be done by installing and then reviewing the system using a demonstration version of the program. A more detailed presentation of the program may be available at a scheduled live demonstration of the program or pos-



sibly over the Internet provided by the developer or dealer. Both reviews are preferred. Look for ease of use, required and enhanced functions. Examine the help routines and tutorials, reports and presence of current technology.

4) CHECK FOR UPGRADES AND IMPROVEMENTS.

Developers vary significantly in their policies and performance related to upgrades. This is an important issue if the user intends to maintain a competitive edge and lengthen the life of the software.

5) EVALUATE THE ADD-ONS. Many specialized property management routines and enhancements of value currently are being offered by other developers. They can be implemented much easier if the main program design is integration oriented.

6) CONSIDER GROWTH AND EXPANDABILITY. What financial and systems issues are activated when it is necessary to expand or upgrade the program? Consider costs and ease of implementation. This again will provide the competitive edge and extend the life of the program.

7) REVIEW THE PRICING AND POLICIES. Is the program for sale, lease or both? The developer or dealer may have additional financial options and resources to assist in program training and support acquisition. Some leasing programs are designed to discourage the purchase of the software and to encourage leasing of overpriced software. A weak, minimal upgrade policy just decreases the cost to value ratio and shortens the life and usability of the software.


8) EVALUATE TRAINING AND SUPPORT OPTIONS.

They will play a very large role in establishing a successful implementation plan. Training and support that is available from out of state may entail additional cost and time limitations. Availability of local support and training may be of special interest to some users. Are phone and e-mail support the only support

options? Internet based desktop support and training is becoming a practical alternative to traditional training and support techniques. Bundling (paying for training and support at the same time the software is acquired) may provide some cost savings and often aids in the planning and implementation efforts. Well-written and detailed documentation accessibility is important during implementation and in assisting new staff in working with the system later.

9) OTHER DEVELOPER ISSUES. Other issues that are of concern include the developer's financial stability and the developer's target market. Over the years, we have seen a number of users that gave up on their software based on the developer leaving the business and abandoning the users. We have also seen companies with a national presence refocus their efforts on a different market. They no longer match the developer's new market profiles and are abandoning their original long time customers by lack of support and suitable upgrades and new products.

10) DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE TECHNOLOGY. Properly implemented technology will translate into labor reduction, increased services, lower costs and an improved bottom line. It is a "force multiplier." It also promotes growth in an increasingly competitive industry. It is, however, of a lesser value for fee managers with smaller portfolios since most technology is effective operating with higher volumes of properties, units, tenants and or owners.

Systems should be thought of as more than just software. Systems should be considered as encompassing software, required hardware, staff and procedures required to accomplish the necessary operations and results. The proper software allows all of the system components to be elevated to new levels of innovation, service and productivity. Make your choice carefully and your company, clients and tenants will benefit greatly. 

The traditional caveat, "Buyer Beware" should be emphasized.

Did **you** miss it?

the experience of East Coast Leadership Training



Lynda Farren, RMP® CCIM is the broker/owner of Mountain Manager & Associates in Hiawassee, Georgia. Lynda has been a broker for 30 years and began her company four years ago when she saw the need for quality property management in the North Carolina/North Georgia Mountains. Lynda has been a member of NARPM® since 2004. She has been active in the Atlanta Chapter and is currently serving as vice president. She believes in NARPM® and drives two and a half hours each way to attend monthly NARPM® meetings. She is married with two grown children and nine grandchildren.

Going to Charlotte for Leadership Training was quite an experience. The first day was spent at the Board of Directors meeting. One of the first people that I met was Michele Brassard, the editor of the *Residential Resource*. We hit it off immediately. She is a smart lady. What credentials! I was so impressed by how easy it was to get to know her. Do you think this will help get my article into an upcoming issue? [Editor's Note: Apparently!]

Michele was attending the open Board of Directors meeting along with myself and about five other interested people. Even though I have attended three conventions, I had never gone to a Board of Directors meeting. They are open to anyone and everyone, but I just never felt the need to go. I am not really sure why I decided that I needed to go this time, but I am sure glad that I did attend. In fact, I told several Board members that maybe all new NARPM® members should be required to attend all or part of a Board meeting.


As the meeting progressed, President Betty Fletcher, MPM® RMP®, made sure that every member, including people like myself, had an opportunity to comment on any of the discussion. What a wonderful feeling to know they were interested in what I thought. It was very impressive that each Board member had the best interest of NARPM® at heart. They truly are working hard to promote NARPM®



and work on the "Endless Possibilities" that can make NARPM® the very best that it can be. Executive Director Gail Phillips, CAE, helped guide the Board. It was exhilarating to see how she guided them to follow Robert's Rules of Order and how she did her best to keep them on track. It did not always work, but she made a valiant effort.

The next day was spent with either past presidents or Board members conducting classes. You could tell they had spent a lot of time making sure that they had done their homework on preparing for these classes. The classes were structured around what makes a leader and how to be a better leader. We learned the dynamics of being in groups with everyone being a leader and having a common goal.

There were around 45 in attendance and having a small group like this, it gave us the opportunity to meet and talk with everyone. When attending a conference, it is sometimes easy to lose the intimacy of getting to know everyone. This was a refreshing and relaxed atmosphere.

The one thing that I would like to point out to everyone is that you do not have to be one of the officers of your local chapter to attend. It is a great opportunity to spend time with your Board of Directors and learn how to be a better person, a better property manager and a better NARPM® member. Let's have more of these! 


“Chapter leaders who attended have gone back to their chapters and shared the wealth of knowledge they took with them when they left.”

Now that Leadership Training is over, I am sure that many of the chapter leaders who attended have gone back to their chapters and shared the wealth of knowledge they took with them when they left. I am also sure many of you who were unable to go will want to plan on attending next year after you hear what a fantastic experience they had.

Don't wait until next year to start learning. Use your chapter meetings to go over the information they brought back to you. Each chapter leader was given a great book of very informative and useful documents. A CD was also included with all of the same information for easy use with computer access.

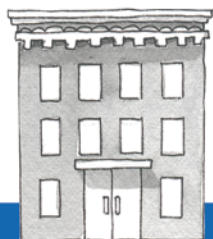
They were also trained on using the incredibly valuable NARPM® website. If you have not had the opportunity or time to use it lately, you really should take a look at it. You can now add up to 10 zip codes

so that when the public searches for a property manager you can show up in more than one area instead of just the area your office is located in. This feature is one of the many things you have been waiting for. The website is a toolbox filled with all kinds of tools to help you succeed. Using it can make a big difference in your life as a property manager.

Remember, information is power and the NARPM® website is chock full of information. You owe it to yourself to schedule time every day to visit the website and see what new information you can pick up. Read it religiously, like you do the local newspaper or Wall Street Journal. As a member, you do not want to be left behind because you did not take the time to keep up with the latest trends and happenings in your association. 



Cher Leadbeater is the administrative assistant for NARPM®. She can be reached at NARPM® National at 800-782-3452 or info@narpm.org.



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GET TO KNOW Rentals.com

Checking the dictionary for a definition of the word “partner” revealed some pretty interesting descriptions, some of which I will omit from this article. The most applicable definition for our company’s relationship with NARPM® is “somebody who is involved in an activity with somebody else.” I suppose that one could substitute “company” and “organization” for “somebody” in this definition.

Yes, going back and including the RentClicks days, our company has been the Official NARPM® Partner for five years now. Wow, that is longer than Heather Mills and Paul McCartney were partners. Now the bad news—should we ever get a divorce there won’t be a \$108 million settlement. It just isn’t going to happen. Hopefully not the divorce and definitely not the settlement. Our five-year relationship is the result of the inherent and vital role that both NARPM® and Rentals.com have played in each other’s development.

As with many privileges in this world, we feel our partner status with NARPM® brings responsibility. We are committed to helping NARPM® thrive and grow as evidenced by our plans and actions.

Here are some of the specifics:

EFFECTIVE MARKETING

First and foremost, we are determined to bring you the most comprehensive and effective marketing vehicle for your vacancies on the Internet today. We continue to devote significant resources to the further development and maintenance of our website for your businesses.

CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT

In places where we have a large database of customers and there is no local NARPM® chapter, we see an opportunity to significantly assist in starting up a new chapter. It’s a win-win situation for NARPM®, local property managers and our company. We have done this in the past and we will continue to look for chapter candidate cities.

STRUGGLING CHAPTER REVITALIZATION

Chapters frequently experience cycles in strength. When the chips are down in a particular chapter, especially one where we have a large customer database, we have sponsored lunches in conjunction with national NARPM® leadership visits for assisting in chapter revitalization. We plan to continue this practice.

REGIONAL AND STATE NARPM® SPONSORSHIPS

We have a track history of sponsoring state and regional NARPM® conferences. They give us an opportunity to meet and greet many of our customers and help NARPM® at the same time.

PROMOTION OF NARPM®

We attend many non-NARPM® events all over the country. At these gatherings, we regularly promote NARPM® to licensees who are involved in the management of single-family homes.

So while some of the definitions of “partner” don’t apply in our case, Rentals.com truly has gotten “involved with the activity” of NARPM® and we think that our marriage—er, partnership—is pretty cool.



Rob Massey, Jr., CPM®

has served as a local president for NARPM®, the Institute of Real Estate Management, and the Apartment Association in his hometown of Louisville, KY. He has taught various property management classes and managed nearly 1,000 apartments and houses before scaling back his property management company to pursue the national Internet listing service he founded known as RentalHouses.com. He is now vice-president of industry development for Rentals.com since Primedia, Inc. acquired RentalHouses.com in January of 2007. He can be reached at rob.massey@rentals.com.

Rentals.com works closely with ApartmentGuide.com and RentalHouses.com to bring single unit listings (houses, condos, etc.) together with multi-family housing (apartment complexes) on one easy-to-use, enjoyable website.



TAKE THE PLUNGE

Buying Your *first* Property



Chris Warren, RMP® is the owner and broker for SmartSource Realty (sales), Chris Warren Realty (leasing and property management), and Maintenance Made Simple. He received his BBA in Marketing in 1991 and his MBA in 2000. Chris is a licensed real estate broker and loan officer.

As a professional property manager, we are experts in our field and speak to prospective investors every day about our local rental market, vacancy levels and rental price trends. We are highly knowledgeable and successfully sell our services every day. Yet many of us don't take the opportunity to practice what we are already experts in—leasing and managing rental property.

Have any of you had properties you manage go into foreclosure because the owner was delinquent in making their mortgage payment? Have you received a call from a tenant who just had a REALTOR® knock on their door informing them the home they are renting is scheduled to be foreclosed next month? Has an investor contacted you about selling his home and found out that he can only sell to an investor because they are obligated to lease the property and cannot breach the lease agreement?

My personal favorite is the investor who purchased a rental property on speculation of appreciation with an ARM mortgage. The owner had a \$200 monthly negative cash flow year one. Now, he has a \$400 monthly negative cash flow and cannot afford to cover the shortage. Secondly, the new house they purchased is worth less than what they paid for it three years ago. Worse, they tried unsuccessfully to sell the home with the tenant occupying the property only to find out they can't refinance the mortgage. Many lenders will not refinance a home that was recently listed for sale in the MLS system.

Rents are increasing in some markets because many tenants can no longer qualify for a mortgage to purchase a home. I can't think of a better opportunity to purchase a property than from your own client. The investor is highly motivated, needs to sell asap


and cannot afford to have a home stay vacant on the market without collecting rent.

As a licensed real estate professional, you must disclose fair market value to the owner. You cannot take advantage of a consumer or owner. Interest rates are still very low, even for investors. Most lenders require proof of down payment, closing costs and six months reserves (monthly mortgage payment x 6) to qualify for a non-owner occupant mortgage. Lenders will allow the seller to pay a 2% seller concession towards your closing costs, and all commissions are negotiable.

Sound too difficult to qualify? Not at all. You can still purchase your property with little to no money down but must have the down payment and reserve funds in the bank to qualify for the mortgage. A retirement or IRA account can be considered for the six months reserves.

Here's how to do it. In my last transaction, I negotiated a 4% commission and a 2% seller concession to pay the majority of my closing costs. I walked away at closing with a 4% commission and used my business line of credit to pay back my actual out-of-pocket expenses. I even received the tenant's pro-rated rent and security deposit after closing. It was better than playing Monopoly!

I purchased the property just below market value. My investor received his sales proceeds within 30 days and avoided thousands of dollars in vacancy and repair costs. He is very happy to get rid of the property without paying thousands of dollars, and I now have a rental property with a paying tenant!

In my next article, I will discuss how you can leverage your rental property to generate additional business and tax savings. 

It was better than playing Monopoly!



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PayLease, Inc.
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Peak Inside, LLC
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Renters Legal Liability, LLC
Roper Lock Box, LLC
Runzheimer International, Ltd.
Signet Mortgage Corporation
Special Asset Management, LLC
Starker Services, Inc.
Sylvan Electronics, Inc.
Synergetic Systems, LLC
Two Men and a Truck International
Western Pacific Claim Service

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AudioVu.com
Cbeyond
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Info on the Web
Innercircuit, Inc.
LeaseBuyOption.com
MyNewPlace
Oodle
Point 2 Technologies-Propman
Property Bridge, LLC
Rent Marketer, Inc.
Rent.com
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MEMBERSHIP Growth

A WARM WELCOME TO ALL THE NEW MEMBERS WHO JOINED FROM FEBRUARY 22-MARCH 21.



NARPM® offers different types of membership so that everyone in the residential property management industry can participate.

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AMBASSADOR Program

EARN REWARDS AND ACHIEVE AMBASSADOR STATUS FOR REFERRING NEW NARPM® MEMBERS.

Who better to spread the word of the benefits of NARPM® than its members? To achieve Ambassador status, you must refer five new members in one year. You will then receive an award certificate and a \$245 NARPM® credit that can be used toward your annual dues, upcoming events, education classes, and more! You can earn multiple award certificates in a 12-month period, so be sure you continue referring new members even after you have achieved Ambassador status.

1. Contact NARPM® National for Membership Application brochures. Upon request, National can mail the application directly to the prospective member.
2. The 12-month period to obtain five new members starts the day the first application is processed.
3. When the fifth application is received, an award certificate and a recognition certificate will be issued and dated. A \$245 NARPM® credit will also be issued.

What Would **YOU** Do
with \$245 NARPM®
Dollars?



FEBRUARY 22, 2008–MARCH 21, 2008

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Kevin Martin

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Pamela Taeuffer
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Melissa Prandi, MPM® RMP®
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Nancy Ryan, MPM® RMP®
Jock McNeill
James Pickett, RMP®
James Pickett, RMP®
Dawn Crawford
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Anne McCawley, RMP®
Brian Birdy
Fred Thompson, MPM® RMP®
Ted White, MPM® RMP®
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DESIGNATION Classes

DEMONSTRATE THAT YOU HAVE EXPERT KNOWLEDGE ABOUT RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT.

Interested in Sponsoring?

Opportunities are available to chapters that would like to further member education and increase their chapter funds. However, it takes time to plan a class so give your chapter five to six month's lead-time if you wish to sponsor.

DATE	LOCATION	CLASS	INSTRUCTOR
May 13, 2008	Littleton, Colorado	Ethics	Susan Alber, MPM®
May 13 & 14, 2008	Littleton, Colorado	MPM® Owner/Client	Peter Meer, MPM®
May 14, 2008	Littleton, Colorado	RMP® Marketing	Dave Holt, MPM®
June 26, 2008	Stuart, Florida	RMP® Marketing	Fred Thompson, MPM®
July 16, 2008	San Antonio, Texas	RMP® Marketing	Betty Fletcher, MPM®
July 16 & 17, 2008	San Antonio, Texas	MPM® Risk Management	Dave Holt, MPM®
July 17 & 18, 2008	Atlanta, Georgia	MPM® Owner/Client	Fred Thompson, MPM®
July 17, 2008	San Antonio, Texas	RMP® Habitability	Betty Fletcher, MPM®
July 18, 2008	San Antonio, Texas	Ethics	Julie Potts, MPM®
Sept. 22, 2008	Kauai, Hawaii	RMP® Office Operations	Dave Holt, MPM®
Sept. 22 & 23, 2008	Kauai, Hawaii	MPM® Maintenance Co.	Ray Scarabosio, MPM®
Sept. 23, 2008	Kauai, Hawaii	RMP® Marketing	Dave Holt, MPM®
Sept. 25, 2008	Kauai, Hawaii	Ethics	Darryl Kazen, MPM®

Online Designation Courses are now available through America's Best Real Estate Education. For information and/or to enroll visit www.narpm.org.

- 1. Mail** form below to NARPM®, 638 Independence Parkway, Suite 100, Chesapeake, VA 23320.
- 2. Fax** your form with credit card payment to 866-466-2776. Please do not mail the original.
- 3. Online** registration is also available through Internet Member Services at www.narpm.org.

FEES

RMP® Classes	Early Registration*	Registration
Member	\$195	\$225
Nonmember	\$295	\$325
Retake	\$100	\$130
RMP®/MPM®	\$97.50	\$127.50

MPM® Classes

Member	\$395	\$450
Nonmember	\$495	\$550
Retake	\$300	\$355
MPM®	\$197.50	\$252.50

Ethics Class

Member	\$45	\$45
Nonmember	\$95	\$95

*to receive the early registration price, payment must be postmarked, faxed or e-mailed 30 days prior to the class.

CLASS INFORMATION

- See individual class flyers for times and additional information.
- Flyers may be downloaded from www.narpm.org.
- RMP® classes qualify for 6 hours of NARPM® certification.
- MPM® classes qualify for 12 hours of NARPM® certification.
- All materials will be given to students on the day of the class.
- All attendees are required to make their individual hotel reservations.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellations must be received in writing. If cancellation notice is received at least 30 days prior to the class, a full refund will be issued less a \$25 processing fee. If cancellation notice is received less than 30 days before the class, a 50% refund will be issued. No refunds will be made on the day of the class; however, the registration fee can be applied to a later class with a \$25 transfer fee.

If NARPM® cancels the course because minimum registrations have not been met or for any other reason, then tuition paid will be fully refundable. All courses are subject to cancellation by NARPM®.

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 Company _____
 Address _____
 City/ST/Zip _____
 Phone _____ Fax _____
 E-mail _____

Register for Classes

Name of Class	Class Date	Cost
_____	_____	\$ _____
_____	_____	\$ _____
_____	_____	\$ _____
Total		\$ _____

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