



Services, Inc.

BRISTOL MANAGEMENT SERVICES, INC.

Bristol Update – December 2003

CUSTOMER SERVICE & TECHNOLOGY

Last year, we wrote to you in our Newsletter about changing to new property management software. The year before, we installed a Web Site so homeowners can conveniently access information on their own and we also added an advanced Voice Mail System. Many people like the efficiency of these new tools. Nonetheless, all these tools can take the personal touch out of the process. For some homeowners, these tools create a disconnect, which could lead to frustration. To correct this, we are streamlining how we manage incoming information by having all calls go to the appropriate Administrative Assistant for your Manager. The Assistant creates the Work Order for the Association and discusses the issue with the Manager. The Assistant can also suggest you leave a detailed message in the Manager's Voice Mail if you so desire.

Of course, there still may be times when both the Manager and the Administrative Assistant are out of the office. Consequently, Voice Mail, facsimile or email can be productive alternatives. All messages going to Voice Mail are logged in to insure a response. Concerning the Work Orders, we are doing a good job by processing over 500 Work Orders a month and tracking their completion. Many Boards have found the Work Orders and Voice Mail lists very useful. In addition to these systems, we are going to implement two new systems. One is an information door hanger to be completed by the vendor/contractor who has been assigned the job and who has completed the job for the homeowner. The other way is for our property management software to print out a postcard to be sent to the owner informing the owner that according to the vendor, the service request has been resolved.

The new software also facilitates the ease of sending out Covenant Enforcement (violation) letters. Concerning these letter's, the Board and Management will improve making sure the violation letters are of the tone your community expects. Unfortunately, Violation letters are a necessary evil. Consequently, responses to them are best received when they're of a business-like manner. Remember, please don't shoot the messenger! The intent of the Covenant Enforcement letters are to protect the property values for everyone in your community.

A NOTE FROM OUR BOOKKEEPING DEPARTMENT

If you do ***ON-LINE BANKING*** to pay your bills, please have your payment addressed to your Association c/o,
Bristol Management Services, Inc.
1930 Commerce Lane
Suite 1, Jupiter, Florida 33458

and not the bank's address. Because the on-line banking payment does not include a coupon, the bank cannot process your payment and thus, it would reject it, thereby delaying the receipt of your payment in a timely manner.

Thank you for your cooperation.

ASSOCIATIONS NEED TO BE INVOLVED

On a local and State government level, Associations need to be involved. The Board of Directors should inform owners of issues that are going to have a direct effect on the community and the property values of the Association. More and more developers are having to place the responsibility on the Associations for items that were once always considered a municipal function (roadways,

streetlights, sidewalk maintenance, storm water). Regretfully, municipalities don't give a tax credit for these items.

RiverWalk of the Palm Beaches, with over 1,400 homes, has been able to get the attention of the Council for the City of West Palm Beach on many of these issues by having over 80% of the owners who vote, vote as a block. Predictably, the Mayor and the Council are always willing to speak at RiverWalk meetings. At Abacoa, the Town of Jupiter has mandated all sorts of items that normally would have been the Town's responsibility i.e., landscaping right of ways, maintenance of large open spaces within the community and all of the preserve land and storm water drainage. Quite often, Bristol has to deal with the local governments on tree trimming, lighting, drainage and parking issues (Americans With Disability Act). Many times the municipalities try to deal with the Association as if they were the "big bad developer", when in fact, the Associations are their constituents. Unfortunately, Associations seldom talk from a unified voice. Therefore, many associations are missing a very good opportunity to influence their local governments.

Seventy five percent of Associations' owners, by way of the Community Association Institutes Survey, say they are satisfied with their Association and its protecting of their property values. Disappointingly, there are some "Bad Boards" who abuse their power and give Associations a bad reputation.

The State of Florida recently formed a Blue Ribbon Committee to look at the "abuse of Associations" with the idea of enacting additional legislation on Associations and on Board of Director powers. Paradoxically, at the same time the State is thinking of repealing the law requiring Property Managers to be licensed and to require them to take continuing education classes and pass a criminal background check. Licensing was enacted approximately fifteen years ago and I know at the time the Association's attorneys saw a significant drop in revenue. So much so, that the Florida Bar Association came out with a very formal "Unlicensed Practice of Law", which made sure Associations still need to use attorneys. Interestingly, the State now wants to adopt more laws for Associations, but do away with the licensing of Association Managers (L.C.A.M.).

Finally, politically active Associations can have a positive effect on other items which cost Associations and individuals a lot of money, such as tort reform (lawsuits). Insurance has skyrocketed for Associations and owners. Workers Compensation rates for many of the service companies Associations use are outrageously high, thus driving up & up the cost of maintaining the Associations. This year the State of Florida had three special sessions to try to fix these problems. Finally, these items affect you financially and are very hard to deal with effectively as an individual against the well organized lobbyists, but a unified active Association can deliver votes and as we all know, that is what the politicians will respond to the most.

GOOD LUCK!