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Apartment conservation a matter of dollars and sense

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Energy efficiency, conservation and practical ways for buildings to go “green” are prominent topics of discussion among owners, managers and residents of multi-family residential properties nationwide. The recent run-up in oil and natural gas prices has sparked a renewed commitment to run these properties at peak efficiency.

At Kaled Management, we manage over 6,500 apartments in dozens of rental, co-op and condo buildings throughout New York City, but when it comes to energy efficiency, conservation and green building practices, every building is unique.

At Kaled, we treat every property we manage as if it were our own, and this means developing individual energy management, monitoring and conservation plans for each property.

While new technology such as solar or geo-thermal hot water heating and new energy efficient boilers may be right for some buildings, these new technologies often carry a hefty initial price tag, and Kaled Management is careful to balance the cost effectiveness in investing in such technology.

As a rule, we try to recoup any investment in new equipment through efficiency gains within the first 5 to 7 years.

Normally, simpler measures such as installing more energy efficient light bulbs and exit signs and monitoring heat and hot water usage for unusual spikes that may indicate a need for preventive maintenance are more cost-effective ways to save energy and improve the bottom line.

For example, Kaled Management currently works with a prominent national company that helps us moni-



tor water and energy use in all of our owned and over 80 percent of our third party managed properties. We track usage trends on a daily basis and investigate unusual patterns. Once identified, we conduct a unit by unit investigation to eliminate waste.

Developing a comprehensive plan for energy and water usage is often the best way to save our clients money. We are constantly monitoring and evaluating

usage to determine if our buildings would benefit from water metering as opposed to frontage charges. In general, we have found that metering can result in reduced charges if units are properly maintained and small leaks are attended to promptly.

However, by monitoring buildings carefully before making the switch, we have determined that in some cases it is best to keep buildings on frontage for the time being because metering would cost more.

Because once the switch to metering is made there is no going back, this constant monitoring gives us an opportunity to track down where the leaks are and make repairs before we are mandated to change to meter.

Kaled Management has also been slowly introducing the use of green cleaning products throughout our portfolio of managed properties.

What we've found is that educating our building superintendents about the proper use of these products is the key for a cost effective transition to these healthier cleaning products.

While costs for green cleaning supplies are becoming more in line with traditional cleaning products, these green cleaning supplies are often in concentrated form. We have created special control stations to insure that these concentrated green products are properly mixed and re-trained our employees that using less is better. Since these new products don't have the strong industrial smell of their traditional counterparts, employees must be educated on how to use them to do the same job using less.

The same holds true for new micro-fiber products that can be used multiple times and washed for re-use. We also utilize modern equipment such as high-speed floor strippers that allow the same job to be done using half the time and electricity.

At Kaled Management we stress the education of all our employees as a critical element in the success of our green cleaning and conservation initiatives. We treat every building as a unique project, and work closely with owners, boards and residents to create a conservation plan that works best for the budget, physical characteristics and tenancy of each property.

Ultimately, this approach has resulted in the most effective plans for the buildings we manage, making Kaled Management Corp. a distinctive company. ■