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Summertime and the living is supposed to be easy

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Summertime and the living is supposed to be easy...but for CAI-NE it represents a busy and productive period.

I am proud to highlight that the month of July represents the culmination of a great deal of effort to feature Condo Media magazine, the official publication of the CAI New England Chapter, in a completely electronic and online version. As CAI-NE continues to expand our membership and readership throughout our New England states, this supplement to our print copy represents the most recent way in reaching the changing demands of our thousands of readers. In addition to reducing paper, this new medium will allow members to quickly access Condo Media from anywhere. For those of you that are like me and enjoy reading Condo Media at the beach during the summer...fret not, it will still be available in print form. To receive a digital edition of this monthly publication addressing the ever changing issues of condominium associations throughout New England email your email address with your name, company, street address and phone number to condomedia@caine.org.

The staff at CAI-NE and the program advisory committee are working diligently to put the final touches on the fall program schedule. The coming lineup promises some great opportunities to brush up on the latest trends and information effecting common interest communities as CAI-NE continues its efforts to educate members throughout New England.

As discussed in this month's issue of Condo Media, when it comes to the successful maintenance of a property there is no doubt that a reserve study analysis is an invaluable tool. Just like a well-run community, CAI-NE utilizes a guide to ensure that the needs of members are addressed and met. Next year represents the 5th anniversary of the implementation of CAI-NE's Strategic Plan, and like any useful plan it requires periodic updating as the organization expands and meets goals. We are fortunate to have CAI-NE past president, Tony Chiarelli heading up the Strategic Planning Task Force Committee. Chiarelli was instrumental in the plan's initial development and implementation and we are looking forward to having him on Board as we re-evaluate the CAI-NE mission as well as chapter goals and objectives.

Even though CAI-NE will be working diligently through the summer, we hope our members and readers take some time to relax and have a safe and enjoyable summer. Say hello if you see me on the beach, I'll be the one with the bottle of SPF 85 and my head buried in the latest edition of CondoMedia.

New Legislation Gives Vermont Home Owners the "Right to Dry"

"Live Free to Dry," could become Vermont's new state motto now that the state Legislature has approved a measure prohibiting homeowner associations and landlords from banning the use of outdoor clotheslines. That action capped a 10-year effort by supporters to promote this environmentally friendly policy.

Vermont joins a small but growing number of states - including Florida, Colorado and Maine, that have adopted right-to-dry measures. While Maine legislators passed a "right to dry" bill this legislative session the bill excludes common area of condominiums; the New Hampshire and Connecticut Legislatures both failed to approve right-to-dry bills.

The Vermont measure, included in a comprehensive energy bill, was sponsored by senator Richard McCormack, who has been promoting the right-to-dry bill in the state for more than a decade. The largest obstacle, he told reporters, "was getting people to take the issue seriously."

Lawmakers included the "right to dry" measure (minus the solar panel language) last year as part of a broader energy bill that won legislative approval but was vetoed by governor James Douglas, reportedly for reasons unrelated to the "right to dry" provision. During committee hearings earlier this year, attorneys cautioned legislators that the measure would run afoul of contractual requirements and covenants in common interest ownership communities that govern the use of common areas.

Community associations opposing right-to-dry measures elsewhere have argued that "unsightly" clotheslines in common interest communities would offend neighbors and reduce property values. Supporters have emphasized the energy conservation benefits. A Department of Energy report estimated that electric dryers are responsible for nearly 6 percent of the energy consumed annually in U.S. homes.

A blogger, responding to the passage of the Vermont law, noted other benefits of permitting clotheslines in multi-family dwellings. "We live far too isolated from each other," this blogger said. "Our modern conveniences make us less connected and minimize even the small social interactions, such as saying hello to a neighbor while collecting the laundry. In apartment complexes or condominiums," this blogger suggested, "[clotheslines] can become a place where neighbors can actually get to know each other, share a few social moments, and make connections."

Vermont Program and Updates

More information about how this law will impact Vermont condominiums and homeowners will be addressed in Condo Media magazine. In addition, a program will be held in Burlington, Vermont in the coming months for homeowners and community association managers and will provide guidance on what associations can and can't do to stay in compliance with this new law. For a copy of the legislation and more information about the Burlington program visit our website at www.caine.org

Jared McNabb, CMCA, AMS, PCAM, is the 2009 president of CAI N.E. and director of acquisitions at Crowninshield Management, Peabody, Mass.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540