



DIY REAL ESTATE SOLUTIONS
Property Management Software

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO MANAGE RENTAL PROPERTY

NEWS YOU CAN USE

September 2007 ■ Volume 1, Issue 5

WELCOME!

Welcome to the latest issue of *News You Can Use*, your e-newsletter from **DIY Real Estate Solutions**.

Have we succeeded in providing informative and insightful articles on industry trends, our expanding offerings, and tips for optimizing your DIY property management software? [Click here](#) to share ideas for making this newsletter more valuable to you.

Future issues will also profile DIY users and integration partners so [click here](#) to be considered for this opportunity. Thanks again for your feedback!

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FEATURE FOCUS

Create Your Own Marketing and Tenant Websites

Industry research continues to show that tenants and prospects increasingly rely on the Internet to find rental housing and manage their busy personal life. This makes it even more critical for you to have your own marketing and tenant websites. **DIY Web Services** makes it easy with powerful and easy-to-use tools for creating a 24/7/365 virtual office for managing your business and your rental properties, while you focus on other critical activities that need your attention.

DIY Web Services includes Resident Portal, a convenient way for residents to pay rent and communicate with you, and Marketing Portal, your round-the-clock leasing agent. Take a look at how these hard working sites can make your life easier...

Marketing Portal

This full-featured marketing website allows you to list your available units for **free**, including personalized details, photos and floor plans for each unit. These online listings can also be uploaded and posted on Google, **free** of charge, helping you reach as many prospective tenants as possible. Prospects can obtain brochures and directions to each property, and fill out guest cards for your follow up. And for the ultimate in convenience, prospects can submit an online application that flows directly into your DIY data, simplifying setup when they ultimately become a tenant.

Resident Portal

Resident Portal adds a new dimension in servicing your tenants in ways that benefit both of you. Any time of the day or night, tenants can submit service requests and make electronic payments online. There are options to review their current balance, eliminating unneeded phone calls to you, and set up recurring payments so they're sure their monthly rent payments are already taken care of. And for your shared peace of mind, the site is secured with individual user names and passwords so that only authorized users can access the site.



DIY Web Services are so easy to use you can be up and running in a day, with an investment of only \$20/month no matter how many properties you set up. So take the next step! [Click here](#) to view a demo or [e-mail us](#) for more information on how **DIY Web Services** can increase productivity, generate more business and position your properties to compete over the Web. You can also call us at 866-602-9007 ext. 603.

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CLIENT FOCUS

Web Technology Enables Kenwood Village Renaissance

Kenwood Village Apartments, a 94-unit Colonial-style garden community, is experiencing a renaissance in every sense of the word – committed ownership, professional staffing, improved maintenance and tenant service levels, successful leasing programs, and more. Located in Euclid, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland, its California-based owners chose DIY Real Estate Solutions as part of their strategy for restoring the property's productivity and profitability.

According to Scott Miller, Managing Member of Kenwood Village, LLC, "Shortly after acquiring Kenwood Village two years ago, we knew we needed to overhaul just about every aspect of the operation. By the time we got financial and leasing information from our fee manager, potential issues had already become problems and we found ourselves fighting fires instead of proactively managing our investment. That's when we knew we needed a Web-based system like DIY so that remote owners and local managers could access real-time information and work together to restore the potential of this property, even though we are thousands of miles apart."



Portal technology and 24/7 data access via the Web facilitate enhancement projects and remote property management of Kenwood Village Apartments.

Since acquiring the property, the owners have invested over \$500,000 in deferred maintenance and improvements to ensure tenant safety and enhance the character of the stately brick buildings built in 1943. In addition to structural improvements like new roofs, asphalt, energy-efficient windows, tuck-pointing and interior and exterior paint, apartments are being updated with ceiling fans, appliances, tenant-controlled heat valves and carpeting. And more improvements are currently underway including hardwood flooring and a two-toned paint scheme that highlights the charming wood molding

in each apartment.



Cheerful, neutral colors and apartment upgrades are designed to accentuate the extensive wood molding and classic appeal of Kenwood Village Apartments.

From a financial standpoint, implementing DIY has helped the owners take a quantum leap forward in managing expenses, improving operational efficiencies, and proactively addressing delinquencies and other issues that affect the profitability of the property. “With DIY, everyone has 24/7 access to the most current property information, and they’re better equipped to make business decisions that will help us achieve our goals,” explains Miller. “Just the other day, we reviewed a real-time lease expiration report with our off-site leasing manager and saw that several long-time tenants had given notice. Rather than lose them, we used that information to proactively communicate and accommodate their needs wherever possible. That’s the value of DIY and the reliability of the Web... having visibility across our operation that makes it easy to retain quality tenants, reduce vacancies and eliminate the high cost of flipping an apartment.”

Kenwood Village recently implemented DIY’s Marketing Portal to begin marketing the property electronically. Through expanded marketing, better tenant screening and the focused efforts of their leasing staff, Kenwood has reduced vacancies and bad debts by 60%. “We’re thrilled at the progress we’re making and are counting on DIY for the technology we need to go the distance,” says Miller. “The Web is an important part of doing business these days, so we’re looking at DIY’s Resident Portal as a way to better service our tenants and improve cash collections, both of which help to create a great tenant experience and a profitable investment.”

More than just a Web-based technology provider, DIY Real Estate Solutions is proud to know that its people and industry expertise also contribute to Kenwood Village’s success. Miller concludes, “We have been extremely impressed with the knowledge and dedication of DIY’s staff. They truly stand behind the product and are a big part of what has made this software application such an operational success for us!”

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DIY NEWS

Announcing the Release of DIY Version 2.0

DIY is very excited to announce the release of Version 2.0, which is full of enhancements based on your suggestions. We're committed to providing you with a property management solution that increases your productivity. In fact, we're already working on enhancements for our next release, including forms design with merge capabilities, so now's the time to tell us how we can help improve your productivity and profitability. Just [click here](#) to keep those ideas coming!

Here's a recap of the major enhancements you can take advantage of immediately. If you'd like assistance optimizing these great new features, please [contact our support team](#).

Marketing and Resident Portal Updates

- **Convenience Fees** – This flexible new feature allows you to automatically charge tenants a convenience fee for electronic payments **and** specify different fees for credit card and ACH transactions.
- **MapQuest Link** – With DIY Web Services, you can help prospects quickly find your exact location with a link to MapQuest.
- **Google Base Listing** – By listing an available property on Google's marketing website, you automatically receive a free listing on Google Base.

Property Management

- **Customizable Home Page** – Get right to the data that's most important to you by displaying exactly that information on your home page.
- **Blocks Payments** – With a single click, you can flag tenants being evicted and prevent the system from accepting payments and potentially disrupting the legal process.
- **Smart Sorting and Filtering** – DIY remembers your preferences for the Tenant and Applicant Lists so you don't have to re-select settings each time you run them.
- **Manage Vacation Rentals** – Now you can manage vacation rentals by scheduling non-concurrent, back-to-back short-term leases.
- **Track Security Deposits Owed** – Quickly compare what security deposits are required and which have been paid so you can track and secure all outstanding monies.
- **Utility Billing** – With this convenient functionality, you can quickly recoup your utility costs by billing tenants for their appropriate costs.
- **Enhanced Check Writing** – A handy feature that allows you to print checks for Management Fees and Owner Payments in one integrated process.
- **Multiple Property Addresses** – The system now accommodates multiple addresses for a single property so you can distinguish between street, mailing and other types of addresses.
- **Document Storage** – To help you make the transition to electronic file storage, this feature allows you to upload and store documents with their respective leases and vendors.

Reporting

- **Enhanced Vacancy Report** – Uses informative lease statuses to help manage vacancies so that

at a glance, you can see which leases are renewed, on notice, vacating and leased.

- **Customizable Monthly Owner Statements** – An important option for fee managers, who can choose how much data to provide to their owners.
- **Pending Checks Report** – A concise new way to review outstanding accounts payable information.
- **Bank Reconciliation Report** – For your convenience, this report is automatically printed upon completion of the bank reconciliation process.

[Contact us](#) today for more information on how Version 2.0 can simplify your operation and increase your productivity!

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QUICK TIPS

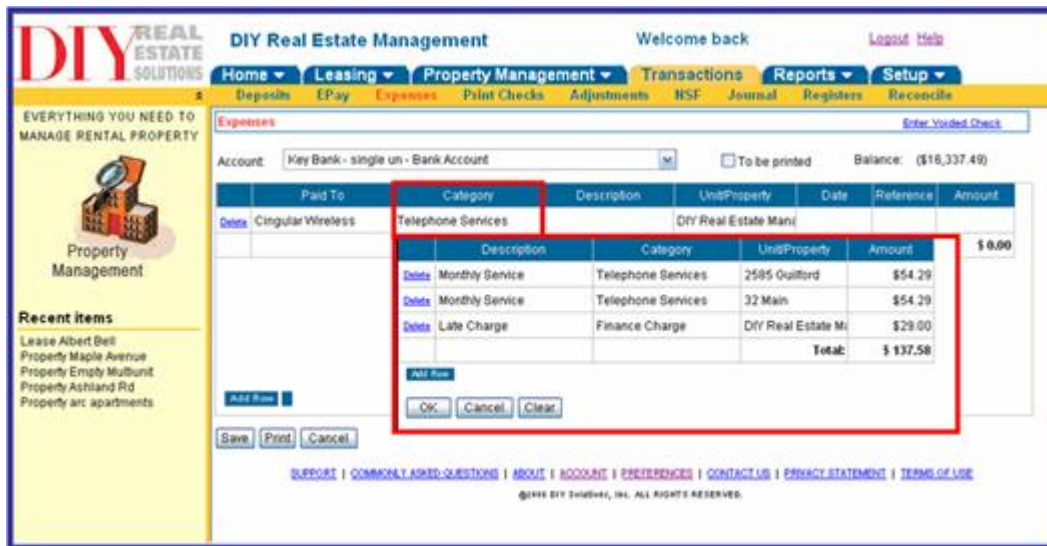
Allocating Expenses

Did you know that there are powerful expense allocation options available to you from the Category drop-down box on the Expenses page? Just expand the box and click the “Allocate” button to open the allocation window.

The screenshot shows the 'Expenses' page in the DIY Real Estate Management software. The interface includes a navigation menu with options like Home, Leasing, Property Management, Transactions, Reports, and Setup. The main content area displays a table with columns for Paid To, Category, Description, Unit/Property, Date, Reference, and Amount. A red box highlights the 'Category' dropdown menu, which is expanded to show a list of categories including Repairs 3, Repairs 4, Utilities, Water and Sewer, Trash Removal, Gas, Electric, and Telephone Services. The 'Allocate' button is also highlighted in red. The 'Amount' column shows a total of \$0.00.

Within this window, you can combine invoices and print one check per vendor. Enter one allocation line per invoice, even if they are for different categories or different properties. Each invoice will be

booked to the specified property and category, but only one check will be printed for the total of all invoices entered in the allocation window. Even if you only have one invoice but need to split that invoice between properties or categories, the allocation window will allow you to do that as well.



Have questions on using this convenient feature? [Contact our support team](#) for more assistance!

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DO YOU KNOW...

Have you considered how the prevalence of nationwide home foreclosures might affect your rental properties? An article in *Units* magazine, published by the National Apartment Association, states that in the next six to 12 months, apartment firms expect an increase in the number of inquiries from applicants with foreclosure on their credit reports.

Foreclosure negatively affects a person's credit history and while there are no statistics proving that an applicant with no foreclosure is a better credit risk, you may want to consider how you'll handle this very real situation.

According to one screening company, some of its clients are adopting stricter screening criteria for such applicants:

- The monthly rent amount must be less than their previous monthly mortgage payment.
- Other negative credit information must be minimal and along the same timeline as the foreclosure.
- Applicants must agree to "conditional" terms, such as an additional deposit or co-signer.

Every independent rental owner and manager must decide what, if any, adjustments they're willing to make to accommodate this growing trend. And be sure your on-site staff has specific guidance on how to handle inquiries from applicants regarding foreclosure before the inquiries become prevalent.

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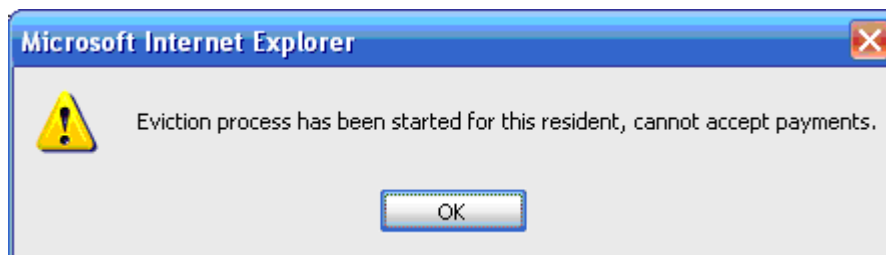
NEW ON YOUR SCREEN

Blocking Payments for Evictions

The Resident page contains a new checkbox (noted below) where you can indicate that you have started the eviction process for a tenant. Once checked, DIY will not allow any payments for that tenant to be entered in the system, regardless of where the payment entry is attempted, to prevent any activity that might interfere with the legal process.

The screenshot shows the DIY Real Estate Management web application interface. The main content area is titled "Resident - Albert Bell: 32 Man". It contains several input fields for lease details: Lease Start (5/1/2006), Lease Term, Lease Expire (4/30/2007), Notice to Vacate, and Lease Vacate. There are also fields for financial information: Deposit Required (\$0.00), Monthly Rent (\$1,900.00), and First Month's Rent (\$1,900.00). A checkbox labeled "Eviction Process Started" is checked and highlighted with a red box. Below these fields is a table of occupants with columns for Occupant, Phone Number, Move In Date, and Move Out Date. The table lists Albert Bell with phone number (334) 234-3234. There are also links for "Attachments", "Other Charges/Concessions", "Payment History", "Statement", "Service Requests", "Register", "Renew Lease", and "Statement of Deposit". At the bottom of the form are "Save", "Cancel", and "Delete Lease" buttons.

If you try to enter a payment from the Deposits page, you will receive the following error message:



If a scheduled electronic payment is due, it will not be processed. Even if the tenant tries to make a payment via the Resident Portal, it will not be accepted and the tenant will be notified that payments can not be processed due to a pending eviction.

Have other ideas on how DIY can better meet your needs? [Contact us](#) and share your thoughts so our flexible and friendly property management solutions continue to add value to your business. We look forward to hearing from you!

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INDUSTRY TRENDS

Affordable Housing...

A Critical Concern for Employers and Employees

In May 2007, the Urban Land Institute published the results of its survey gauging how a perceived lack of affordable housing near places of employment impacts U.S. employees and the companies they work for. Responses varied by part of the country, but there were clear indicators that long commutes negatively affect the employees' quality of life and diminish their commitment and effectiveness on the job.

How **companies** are affected:

- Up to 70% of companies believe that a lack of affordable housing near their location has a negative effect on recruiting and retaining (67%) entry and mid-level staff.
- 58% of companies with 100+ employees have lost employees due in part to long commuting time.
- Companies that report having lost employees due to long commuting time believe that it increases employee stress (77%), negative emotion (70%), absenteeism (66%) and attrition/turnover (59%).

How **employees** are affected:

- 74% of employees believe their daily commute has a negative effect on their overall quality of life, including the balance between work and personal life.
- Up to 67% would be more likely to move closer to work if more affordable housing options were available, with younger workers at 76%.
- Up to 64% would change jobs if given an equal opportunity for half the commute, with younger workers at 76%.

What does this mean to the **independent rental owner/manager**? Clearly, there is growing demand from both employers and employees for safe, clean, affordable housing in close proximity to job opportunities. By investing in housing that supports the needs of business and their employees, you have an opportunity to fill a vital need in our communities, and at the same time create an asset that can deliver a positive ROI for you or your client. For more information on the Workforce Housing Research study, [click here](#) to visit the Urban Land Institute website and access the report.

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