



# COMMUNITY CONNECTION

FALL 2019

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Board Education & Open House

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### MISSISSIPPI FLATS

How Doing the Right Thing  
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Fire Extinguishers





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Message from the

# FirstService Residential Minnesota President



Mark Gittleman, President  
FirstService Residential Minnesota

*“We hope to see you  
at our Open House on  
September 26th and  
share our excitement  
around our new  
corporate office  
with you.”*

*—Mark Gittleman*

**Dear valued client,**

We are delighted to share our fall client newsletter. As we close out the summer, our team is busy closing out seasonal projects, preparing for 2020 operating budgets, and completing the rollout of our updated client website interface.

We are also in the midst of follow-up to our annual Associate Experience Survey, which gives us valuable insights and perspectives of our associates. We use this feedback to inform our plans for the coming year, particularly in people development, communication, and engagement. We strive to be a great place to work for a number of important reasons. At the top of the list is knowledge that our associates' satisfaction has a direct correlation with your customer experience!

Since our June newsletter, we have been very busy responding to three separate hail storms on June 4, July 18, and August 5 that impacted groups of our clients primarily in the suburbs. We are working diligently to assess damage from the storms and to assist our clients in a thorough process of damage assessments, claims support, and restoration where applicable and helpful.

The August 5 storm alone may result in over \$1 billion in insurable losses within the Twin Cities metro area. We are anticipating insurance carriers to respond to the spike in insurable losses by a mix of raising rates, writing new exclusions, or leaving the Minnesota wood frame insurance market. We are preparing now for future insurance market changes for the suburban market. We are educating our clients and managers and engaging insurance carriers through our insurance team in an effort to maintain carrier continuity and quality coverage that's competitively priced.

We hope to see you at our Open House on September 26th and share our excitement around our new corporate office with you.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Gittleman'.

Mark Gittleman  
President

FirstService Residential Minnesota



**FirstService**  
RESIDENTIAL

COMMUNITY

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CONNECTION

# Board Member HOA Insurance Training

*On July 9, FirstService Residential held two Suburban Board Member HOA Insurance Workshops attended by forty-seven board members. These were the first board training sessions held at the new FirstService Residential Bloomington corporate office.*

Our board attendee survey from the sessions rated it as a 9 out of 10 with feedback that the board insurance workshops offered excellent, relevant material on the latest trends and were well-presented by experts in the industry. Many were new board members who found the material, discussions, and examples to be especially helpful.

**Suburban Townhomes and Condos Board Member HOA Insurance Basics Workshop** was led by Sean Kent, Senior Vice President of FirstService Financial and Alicia Smith, Insurance Manager of FirstService Residential. This session focused on the basics of homeowner association insurance for suburban townhome and condominium accounts.

**Suburban Townhomes and Condos Board Member HOA Insurance Level II Workshop** was led by Sean Kent, Senior Vice President of FirstService Financial and Eric Skarnes, Principal of The Insurance Warehouse. This more in-depth workshop covered insurance topics that impact suburban accounts including underwriting trends, per building deductibles, and important Directors and Officers liability insurance considerations.

Participants at the Level II Workshop were impressed with the speakers' expertise and the relevance of information covered



*First Board Training held at the new FirstService Residential Bloomington office was a success!*

on managing risks, differences between the association insurance and homeowners' liability, and case studies.

**The Urban Mid-rise and High-rise Condominium Board Member Insurance Workshop** was led by Sean Kent, Senior Vice President of FirstService Financial and Eric Skarnes, Principal of The Insurance Warehouse. Twenty-eight board attendees learned about trends in underwriting related to water losses and risk management.

## Suburban and Urban Board attendee comments:

"Most professional presentation of my 33-year experience with five separate HOA management companies. A Wow!"

"This session vastly improved my knowledge. The quality of the presenters and material was A+."

"I am a newly-appointed Board Member and as such don't know what I don't know, but the presentation seemed to be comprehensive and FirstService Residential's knowledge is very extensive."

"Excellent presentation from knowledgeable speakers."

"Very good information that will help a lot with understanding the annual insurance renewal."

"Since I have no insurance background, I was made aware of things I hadn't thought of before."

"Extremely relevant - thank you!"



*Urban board member insurance training featured trends in underwriting related to water losses and related risk management.*

# UPCOMING EVENTS

*You are invited*  
**OPEN  
HOUSE  
& MIXER**



## FirstService Residential Open House

*FirstService Residential will be having an Open House at their new Bloomington office on September 26, 2019 from 3 PM-6 PM.*

Enjoy drinks and appetizers while you visit with your FirstService Residential Association Manager, Regional Director, and members of the Minnesota Leadership Team.

Check out our new digs, take in fun-sized education sessions, and live music.

### Training Schedule:

3:15 PM – 3:45 PM: Insurance Claim Process

4:00 PM – 4:30 PM: Understanding HOA Financials

4:45 PM – 5:15 PM: Insurance Claim Process

5:30 PM – 6:00 PM: Understanding HOA Financials

*FirstService Residential will make a social action donation of \$10 in honor of your attendance! Each attendee will have the opportunity to choose from one of our partner community organizations.*

To RSVP, email [missy.beal@fsresidential.com](mailto:missy.beal@fsresidential.com)

### UPCOMING BOARD TRAINING WORKSHOPS: Reserve Studies & Project Funding Options

Presented by Tanner Oldenburger, PE, RS – Engineering Manager of Reserve Advisors, Shaun Zavadsky – VP of Community Management of FirstService Residential, and Andrew Ahrensdoerf – VP of Cash Management and Lending of FirstService Financial.

This expert panel will provide guidance on reserve studies and the various options of funding projects within communities. There will be time for Q&A to ask the experts specific questions that matter to you and your community.

#### Urban Session

Tuesday, September 10, 2019

#### Suburban Session

Wednesday, September 11, 2019 from 6-8PM at FirstService Residential, 8100 Old Cedar Ave. S., Suite 300, Bloomington, MN.

RSVP to [Tuyet.Do@fsresidential.com](mailto:Tuyet.Do@fsresidential.com).



# CASE STUDY: MISSISSIPPI FLATS

*How doing the right thing saved the client \$500,000*

*Mississippi Flats is a four-story, 93-unit riverfront condominium community with two commercial spaces, managed by FirstService Residential Minnesota. Located in historic St. Paul, it offers scenic views of Harriet Island, walk ways along the Mississippi River, and lots to do with nearby shopping, entertainment, and world-class dining.*

Gittleman Construction and Maintenance (GCMC) and several other competitor contractors responded to an invitation to bid a capital improvement project for Mississippi Flats. It included the removal of existing siding to address complications related with water intrusion and to install maintenance-free, heavy-gauge, corrugated sheet siding that would also provide an updated and unique aesthetic.

## The problem

During GCMC's bid formulation and due diligence, GCMC identified that most of the community's existing HVAC units were nearing the end of their useful life and replacement parts were no longer available. This meant if one of these HVAC units were to fail during a cold Minnesota winter, some of Mississippi Flats residents would be left in the cold.

In consideration of site conditions, access and rigging, a one-by-one HVAC unit replacement would be very costly—perhaps twice the cost of a new HVAC unit itself.

## Gittleman Construction & Maintenance offers a proactive solution

It didn't sit right with GCMC to simply bid for siding replacement and not also recommend that the Association consider replacing, in concurrent fashion, the HVAC units nearing their end of life.

Mike Laukka, Senior Vice President of Gittleman Construction & Maintenance and Kirk Stifter, one of Gittleman's Senior Project Managers, met with the Mississippi Flats Board of Directors. They laid out the cost/benefit of replacing 85 HVAC units during the course of the facade replacement project.

"Even though replacing HVAC units wasn't part of the



bid documents, we included it in our bid," says Laukka. "Knowing that the obsolete HVAC system was nearing its end of life, GCMC was willing to lose out on the bid process than go forward with facade replacement alone."

The Mississippi Flats Board of Directors unanimously agreed with GCMC's rationale and accepted GCMC's bid.

In the final analysis, the Association was able to address its facade issues and replace 85 HVAC units in one project. That concurrent effort saved the Association over \$500,000 compared with replacing HVAC units individually or as a separate project.

Now Mississippi Flats residents can enjoy a modern and attractive exterior without water intrusion while staying warm through the cold Minnesota winters ahead.

## GITTLEMAN

This type of innovative approach is made possible by the experience Gittleman Construction & Maintenance has gained serving the Twin Cities condominium and townhome market in maintenance, construction, insurance restoration, and capital replacement projects.

Gittleman Construction & Maintenance Corporation is an affiliate of FirstService Residential Minnesota, Inc., formerly Gittleman Management Corporation. Gittleman was founded by Mel Gittleman, a pioneer in the community association management industry and an innovative condominium developer who built the foundation for many successful residential communities in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area.

# OUR SOCIAL PURPOSE

## MILL CITY FARMERS MARKET: *Supporting Community Excellence*

*Mill City Farmers Market is a non-profit organization founded in 2006 by farm-to-table chef and restaurateur Brenda Langton, in collaboration with the Mill City Museum. It brings fresh local and organic food, educational cooking, and live entertainment to the Minneapolis community from over 120 local farmers, food makers and artists.*

Through the Grants for Community Excellence program, FirstService Residential Minnesota has contributed over \$16,000 since 2014 through the Minneapolis

Foundation to support the local work of Mill City Farmers Market and the important difference they are making in our community.

“Grants from FirstService Residential have made a huge impact in our organization and programming,” says Jenny Heck, a Manager at Mill City Farmers Market. “With their support we have been able to expand our many educational wellness and cooking programs like our Mill City Cooks free weekly chef-led cooking classes, Meet Your Vegetables nutrition demos, Power of Produce kids’ vegetable tasting club and weekly yoga classes.”



*Mill City Cooks offer free chef led demos*



*Free weekly Market Yoga classes*

These free programs have been inspiring thousands of visitors each season to cook healthier, eat more vegetables, and become more active.

Another way the FirstService Residential Minnesota Grants for Community Excellence program has supported the Mill City Farmers Market is by awarding grants to local, sustainable farmers and food makers who are working to improve sustainability of the farm and move to the next stage of their businesses.

“All people deserve access to healthy food, but many communities lack equitable access,” says Heck. “Grant support from FirstService Residential has helped us expand food access programs like SNAP EBT matching and our food donation program.” The Mill City Farmers Market Greens for Good program donates healthy, local and sustainable food to under-resourced communities such as the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood.

*Continues on page 8*



*Photos courtesy of Mill City Times.*



# OUR SOCIAL PURPOSE



Fresh locally grown tomatoes and peppers at Mill City Farmers Market

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“Our community’s health is improved with access to local, organic food and opportunities to learn about healthy cooking and eating from trusted sources,” says Heck. Making healthy food choices can prevent and reduce chronic conditions like diabetes, cancer and heart disease and can lead to a fuller life.

“We are particularly impressed with the impact Mill City Farmers Market has had in the Minneapolis communities we serve,” says First Service Residential Minnesota President Mark Gittleman. “FirstService Residential manages many condominium associations in Minneapolis including Mill City Association where residents can enjoy all that the Mill City Farmers Market offers.”



Selection of beans



Northern Fires Pizza

**Visit Mill City Farmers Market.**

## FirstService Residential MN Grants for Community Excellence

Each year, FirstService Residential Minnesota donates \$25,000 to FirstService Residential Grants for Community Excellence through the Minneapolis Foundation. Our primary focus areas are health and wellness, the environment, public spaces, and housing and cultural organizations in neighborhoods and communities we serve. In our seventh year of the program, we are delighted to have donated over \$175,000 to great organizations in the Twin Cities.

FirstService Residential Minnesota’s Grants for Community Excellence program is supporting these seventeen non-profit organizations in 2019 through the Minneapolis Foundation.

- Citizens for a Loring Park Community
- Friends of Loring Park
- Friends of Mears Park
- Loring Greenway Association
- MacPhail Music for Life
- Midtown Greenway Coalition
- Mill City Farmers Market
- Minneapolis Parks Foundation
- NiceRide Minnesota
- North Loop Neighborhood Association
- Second Harvest Heartland
- St Paul Parks and Recreation Conservancy
- St Paul Winter Carnival
- The Loft Literary Center
- The Loppet Foundation
- Three Rivers Park District
- Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity

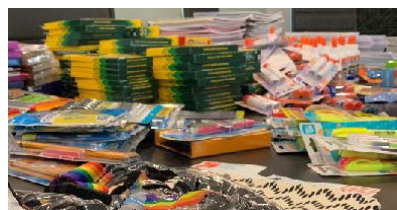


# OUR SOCIAL PURPOSE



## School Supply Drive

Members of FirstService Residential Bloomington and Minneapolis offices donated school supplies for students in need at Indian Mounds Elementary School in Bloomington and Lake Nokomis Community School Keewaydin in Minneapolis.



We collected about 2,000 school supplies in all including 30 backpacks, 300 crayons, markers, pens and pencils, 60 notebooks and loose-leaf paper, and lots of glue bottles, glue sticks, pocket folders, rules, and erasers. "Thank you for all your help with this," says organizer Alicia Smith. "I am very proud of our First School Supply Drive. YAY!"

*Thank you to Alicia Smith, FirstService Residential Minnesota Insurance Manager, for her efforts in coordinating the School Supply Drive.*



## Emotions in Motion

Not only did members of FirstService Residential Minnesota participate in the Emotions in Motion 5K Run/Walk at Lake Harriett on Sunday, August 3, the group was the top fund-raising team at the event! Some even brought members of their family (including fur babies).

*Special thanks to Annika Christensen for coordinating this event.*



## #FirstServeOthers

Throughout FirstService Residential, we are not only driven by our strong desire to deliver exceptional service and solutions to our managed communities, but also by our compassion for others. We instinctively direct that compassion to our customers, to the underserved people in our communities, to causes that help those in need and to each other in times of suffering and crisis.

It is our proven passion for caring for others that has sown the seeds of our company's Social Purpose. We,

together with our sister companies at FirstService Corporation, engage in socially responsible activities in our local markets, in our regions and as an organization. Our core values unite our efforts and further define and reinforce our commitment to helping our local communities and each other. As a company with the strength of more than 14,000 associates throughout North America, our ability to impact the lives of others is limitless!

To learn more, visit [www.oursocialpurpose.com](http://www.oursocialpurpose.com)





## ADMIN TEAM SPOTLIGHT

*Lindsey Hruza supervises a fun-loving Team of Administrative Coordinators at the FirstService Residential Bloomington office.*

“We like to think we bring the laughter to the office and keep things upbeat during stressful and busy times,” says Lindsey.

This resourceful Team enjoys their role in supporting Association Managers and the Communities they serve utilizing great time management skills. Their eagle eyes provide proofing and editing to ensure that client correspondence looks spot-on professional.

Another area the Admin Team supports Association Managers is with Connect resources in order to best serve the Associations we manage.

Along with other groups, the Admin Team played a major role in coordinating and executing our move into the new office in May while maintaining support needs to Association Managers and the Associations they oversee.

*The Admin Team is made up of Lindsey Hruza, Administrative Supervisor; Michaela Bykowski, Senior Administrative Coordinator; Paige Ecker, Administrative Coordinator; Rachel Henry, Administrative Coordinator; Karen Jackson, Administrative Coordinator; Steven Kensinger, Administrative Coordinator; Alyssa Miller, Administrative Coordinator; Matt Prokop, Administrative Coordinator; Megan Ralston, Administrative Coordinator; and Hunter Armstrong, Administrative Coordinator.*

### *Fun Fact:* WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?

Interesting to note that most of FirstService Residential Minnesota Administrative Coordinators began their working careers in the food industry.

Rachel and Lindsey were both Subway Sandwich Artists. Karen and Megan were both Servers. Matt was a Bus Boy at Bonfires Restaurant. Karen worked at Mister Pizza. Megan worked at Pizza Hut. Michaela was a Burger King Cashier, and Hunter was a Courtesy Team Member at Fareway Food Stores.

Non food industry first jobs include Paige who was a Walmart Fitting Room Associate. Alyssa who was a YMCA Lifeguard & Swim Instructor, and Steven who worked at NiceAshCigars.com where he fulfilled orders, maintained the website, and stocked the humidor.





## MINNESOTA'S FIRSTLEADERS

**Congratulations to the 2019 Minnesota associates who completed the FirstLeader Leadership Development Program** (pictured left to right): Greg Nelson, Regional Director; Daphne Moran, Client Accounting Director; Eric Lewis, Regional Director; Brenda Thomas, Regional Director; Sally Andrist, Human Resources Director; Amanda Kelzenberg, Regional Director; Mark Gittleman, President, FirstService Residential Minnesota; Jeff Peterson, Regional Director; Megan Kucz, Regional Director.

*Talent development and investing in our associates is a key foundation of our culture at FirstService Residential.*

In June, nine members of our Minnesota team traveled to Toronto to attend FirstLeader, a leadership development program unique to FirstService Residential.

This focused three-day program immersed our associates in learning three important facets about leadership:

- **Self Leadership** – improves self-awareness and strengthens individual leadership skills
- **People Leadership** – builds talent through improved coaching, motivation and empowerment
- **Organizational Leadership** – focuses on strengthening FirstService Residential through improved organizational health and change management

FirstLeader has been a transformative training program for associates throughout the FirstService Residential organization.

“FirstLeader was a great opportunity to learn new techniques and ideas in coaching and mentoring,” said Regional Director Jeff Peterson. “And also gave us a great opportunity to do a deeper dive into self-awareness.”

Minnesota associates have gained new skills and resources to help the overall team in continuing the FirstService Residential mission of “Making a difference. Every day.” for our clients, our teams and the communities we serve.

In the time following FirstLeader training, Regional Director Megan Kucz has been implementing some of the techniques she learned.

“Knowing what I know now, I would have definitely categorized myself as a Satellite Boss—honing in when I needed to but not really capturing or being involved at a closer level,” said Kucz. “I’ve realized that I was actually doing a disservice to my team. I’ve been working to touch base more frequently and provide more guidance. I also have an increased confidence in providing situation-specific feedback, and I know my team is appreciating it!”

“Equally impactful was the opportunity FirstLeader created for us to connect with other members of our local and international team,” said Peterson. “It was a first class learning and engagement opportunity that I was grateful to be part of.”

FirstLeader brought together associates throughout the FirstService Residential organization, which as an added benefit, allowed us to share best practices and further improve upon our service delivery.



# COMMUNITY NEWS

## Welcome New Clients

We want to extend a warm welcome to all of the new communities that joined the FirstService Residential family this quarter.

**Mill City Owners' Association**

**Heatherton of Edina**

**Willoughby I**

**York Condo West Association**

**Nordwall Estates**

**Wedgewood Golf Villas**

**Weston Woods of Peninsula Point**

*Welcome to the Family!*



Pictured are (back) Scott Chamberlain, Mike Laukka, (front) Tracy Gannon, and Soo Baker.

## Certifications

FirstService Residential Associates have 23 Association Managers with their Certified Manager of Community Association (CMCA) certification, 36 with their Association Manager Specialist AMS designation, and five with their Professional Community Association Manager (PCAM) Designation—the highest professional recognition available nationwide to managers who specialize in community association management.

### **Congratulations to our Associates who earned Certifications this quarter:**

Andrea Kalembe, CMCA

Matthew Natysin, CMCA

brian kechich, CMCA

Kim Schlauderoff, CMCA

Scott Chamberlain, CMCA

Jody Abramson, M-100

Chelsea Zoumides, M-100

Nikki Marie Coler, M-100

Sarah Frank, M-100

Nick Mabe, M-100

## National Steps Challenge

One hundred and twenty-four members of FirstService Residential North Region participated in a National Steps Challenge placing second overall.

The **top Minnesota walker is Hyesook Funk** from our Client Accounting Team. She accomplished **750,126 steps in six weeks** between June 10-July 19, 2019.

Congratulations!

## CAI Golf Event

FirstService Residential Minnesota participated at the Community Association Institute Best Ball Golf event held August 19 at Midland Hills Golf Course. The foursome shot 12 under par to tie for 4th place out of 35 teams.

*Congratulations!*





*Did You Know?*

## Fire Extinguishers

*“Not all fires react the same way. Choose the right class of fire extinguisher for your room and remember to inspect it so that it works if you need it.”*

—Peter Ralph, Director of Maintenance  
Gittleman Construction & Maintenance Corporation

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**Did you know** that two leading causes of fires are unattended candles and kitchen grease fires? Fire extinguishers can help save lives and property, and prevent catastrophic damage to your home. When well-placed and easy-to-access, extinguishers can be used to put out small fires, or to suppress flames while you escape to safety. Use the following tips to ensure your residential fire extinguisher will be ready in case of emergency.

### On a monthly basis:

- Ensure clear access to the extinguisher
- Check for proper pressure—needle should be in the ‘green zone’ on extinguisher with a gauge
- Check that nozzle, pin, and tamper seal are unhindered and intact
- Check for dents, leaks, rust, or chemical deposits
- Shake the fire extinguisher to prevent settling of powder

### Replace fire extinguishers if:

- Pressure needle is outside the ‘green zone’
- Handle is wobbly or broken
- Locking pin is missing or unsealed
- Hose is cracked, ripped, or blocked with debris
- Required by manufacturer’s instructions or if the extinguisher is more than six years old

Since 1998, FirstService Financial has been providing best-in-class financial services for condominiums, cooperatives, homeowner associations and commercial properties managed by FirstService Residential. We stand apart by combining the capital markets and treasury management expertise of a bank with a rare and in-depth understanding of real estate and insurance fundamentals. Our broad knowledge base allows us to create meaningful value for our clients through advisory services, individually tailored financial solutions, and insurance product offerings that set the industry standard.

Our experience is our clients’ resource—an experience that has strengthened our credibility and the relationships we enjoy with our partners. It allows us to leverage our pricing and to access capital and insurance markets both domestically and internationally.

FirstService Financial and FS Insurance Brokers are affiliates of FirstService Residential and subsidiaries of FirstService Corporation. All our programs are created for FirstService Residential clients and are optional; however, many FirstService Residential clients participate because of their added value.

[Learn about FirstService Financial»](#)



**FirstService  
Financial**

DISCLAIMER: All information provided by FS Insurance Brokers is advisory in nature. Any such information may not identify or contemplate all unsafe conditions; others may exist. FS Insurance Brokers does not imply, guarantee or warrant the safety of any of the client's properties or operations or that the client or any such properties or operations follow all federal, provincial, or local laws, codes, statutes, ordinances, standards or recommendations. All decisions in connection with the implementation, if any, of any of FS Insurance Brokers' advice or recommendations shall be the sole responsibility of, and made by, the client or other recipient of the information.



# Your FirstService Residential Minnesota Team

## OVER 80-YEARS OF MINNESOTA PROPERTY MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE.

Our team is committed to serving your association with excellence, striving to enhance your property values and enrich the lifestyle of your residents.



**Mark Gittleman**

President

.....



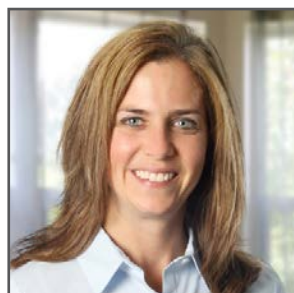
**Andy Gittleman**

Executive  
Vice President



**Mike Laukka**

Senior  
Vice President



**Tammy Johnson**

Vice President,  
Finance



**Shaun Zavadsky**

Vice President,  
Community  
Management



**Sally Andrist**

Director,  
Human Resources

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