



COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Summer 2021

Inside THIS ISSUE

Message from President
Mark Gittleman

Board Member Training

Associate Training

Connect Update

When to Press Send..

Asphalt & Concrete
Maintenance Tips

Team Spotlight-Gittleman
Maintenance

Social Purpose

Your First Service
Residential Team



BOARD MEMBER
TRAINING



CONNECT UPDATE



ASPHALT & CONCRETE
MAINTENANCE

FirstService Residential Minnesota President

Dear valued client,

Over the last few weeks, we have been delighted to welcome more of our team members back to our office as we safely return to a hybrid work model. The exchange of smiles, laughter, and in-person collaboration has brought renewed energy to our offices (the weather hasn't hurt either). We are also pleased to engage with our client Boards to offer a greater mix of meeting formats, including in-person, virtual, and a combination of the two!

Whether an in-person or virtual format for Board meetings, email communication remains central for our customers. Many of us spend much of our time on efforts and tasks related to email communications. Luckily, we have resources and support! Did you know that there are best practices and science to writing effective email communications?

We are pleased to include highlights on this topic from Aram Arslanian, Principal of Cadence Leadership Development. Aram is a regular consultant to our company, leading a multitude of training and development sessions for our teams in person and virtually over the past few years. The issues and solutions that he covers have been invaluable and we are happy to share his perspectives with you. Please give his column a read – we hope you find it informative and helpful as a Board member and beyond!

Finally, the sophistication of our platforms, systems, performance data and operations continue to be imperative to improve service to our clients continuously. We are excited to announce two new positions and team members to further our initiatives in those arenas. Bryan Vargas has assumed the role of Director of Operations with our company and will be joining our Executive Leadership Team. Additionally, Josh Halverson has joined us in a new role as Data Analyst/Programmer.

We look forward to sharing more about the work we are doing in operations and performance management in future editions of Community Connection.

Yours truly,



Mark Gittleman
President
FirstService Residential Minnesota



Mark Gittleman, President
FirstService Residential Minnesota

***Congratulations to
Mark for celebrating 26
years with FirstService
Residential!***

“Many of us spend much of our time in efforts and tasks related to email communications. Luckily, we have resources and support! Did you know that there are best practices and science to writing effective email communications?”

~ Mark Gittleman



Board Member Training

As Minnesota's association management leader, we continue to find that education and training for board members is a key means of assisting Board members in fulfilling their responsibilities. Over the last four years, we have held an ongoing education series on key industry topics for urban and suburban communities, including Board Basics, Insurance and Financials. Thus far in 2021, we have held six sessions on various board topics with an average of 100 board participants per session. We have a team dedicated to making these sessions as engaging and informative as possible and have had great feedback from board participants with an average score of 9 out of 10 so far this year. We have an active calendar with sessions on HOA Financials held on June 23rd and the Effective Leadership webinar scheduled for Wednesday, July 14th at 12:30 p.m.



UNDERSTANDING HOA FINANCIALS

HELD ON JUNE 23RD, 2021

Many board members find themselves looking at financial reports and realizing they don't understand what they are looking at. The truth is, not all of us have the experience or education in reviewing financial numbers and reports. Subject matter experts Amanda Kelzenberg and Daphne Moran of FirstService Residential led participants through understanding balance sheets, income statements, general ledgers, and collection status reports.

FIRSTSERVICE RESIDENTIAL INSURANCE SERIES

HELD ON JUNE 16th-17th, 2021

The insurance industry is constantly evolving; as your management leader, we have you covered.

FirstService Residential hosted an Insurance Series focused on workman's compensation, D&O and cyber liability. Sean Kent, with FirstService Financial, Alicia Smith, with FirstService Residential and Eric Skarnes, with The Insurance Warehouse, led 100+ participants through insurance market trends, related factors, and future risks and losses.

FIRSTSERVICE RESIDENTIAL RESERVE STUDIES SERIES

HELD MAY 10TH AND 26TH, 2021

Reserve funds are crucial to the long-term health of a community association, yet many boards find themselves in deficits or requiring special assessments to be levied.

In May, participants heard from subject matter experts Eric Lewis and Megan Kucz, with FirstService Residential, Andrew Ahrens Dorf, with FirstService Financial and Tanner Oldenburger, with Reserve Advisors as they discussed reserve plans, FirstService Financial loans, as well as Minnesota Common Interest Ownership Act (MCIOA) requirements.

Suburban and Urban Board attendee comments:

"Knowledgeable presenters and panel. Thoughtful handling of questions."

"Continue to have these informational sessions"

"Concise and very relevant"

"On topic, seemed to hit all the major bases"

"The presentations increased my understanding of Reserve Studies and Funding issues."

"Knowledgeable speakers, easy to understand, relevant info."

Associate Training

At FirstService Residential, we know that Boards are looking for Association Managers who are well trained, knowledgeable about industry best practice and dedicated to the betterment of your communities.

Our comprehensive training program is focused on continuous learning opportunities—from onboarding to leadership development and beyond to ensure that our associates are constantly growing.

What differentiates FirstService from other companies is the investment in our people and their continuing development. In 2019, we hired Training Manager; Kelly Stevens, who holds a master's degree in Learning and Development, to work with our Regional and National training teams and our subject-matter experts. Kelly uses her understanding of how people learn to combine instructor-led training, online training through FirstService University, and experiential learning to provide associates with multi-faceted avenues to develop skills, learn new ones, and continuously improve.

Despite many associates working remotely last year, training has not slowed down; in fact, it has increased. We successfully migrated our training

programs to virtual platforms, making them more accessible to associates working remotely and on-site.



Kelly Stevens
Training Manager

Some of our recent training initiatives include:

- ▶ Community Association Manager Training: 4-Stage training program required for all new and newly promoted Community and Association Managers
- ▶ Taking Charge of Your Career: Career Development Workshops designed to encourage associates to be more proactive in their professional development and career progression.
- ▶ Emerging Leader: This year-long program builds on the strengths and skills of our high-performing, high-potential associates to prepare them for future leadership roles.
- ▶ Training-to-Go: Lunch hour training opportunities available to all associates covering topics such as organizational skills, technology platforms (Zoom, Microsoft Teams), operating systems and programs (Windows, Word, Excel, Outlook), and soft skills (effective communication, giving and receiving feedback).
- ▶ FirstService University: Our extensive array of courses and videos available to all associates for skill development and required compliance training on company values and ethics.



Residents

- ▶ View your account balance and make a payment
- ▶ Update contact information and review communication preferences
- ▶ Book an amenity reservation or submit a request for maintenance
- ▶ Stay up-to-date on community happenings through the community calendar

Board Members

- ▶ View board-only documents such as financial reports and service contracts
- ▶ Access account balance information for each owner
- ▶ Track progress on violations, service requests and resident inquiries through the reporting tool

Management Team

- ▶ Communicate with residents via email, letter, voice or text
- ▶ Manage requests for amenity reservations and maintenance
- ▶ Record and track violations

Our focus on training at FirstService Residential is centered around our employee growth and empowerment. We have found that well-trained associates are more knowledgeable, confident, competent and generally happier in their positions, leading to greater employee retention. FirstService strives to develop well-rounded associates dedicated to building great relationships supporting the boards and communities we serve. We look forward to keeping you informed about our ongoing training and development initiatives for associates and board directors.

Connect Update

FirstService Residential Connect™ is a key part of our commitment to delivering exceptional service to improve your lifestyle and make the most of your investment in your home and community. Connect is a unique online platform available 24/7 from any device, allowing residents, board members and the management teams to tap into its powerful features anytime, anywhere.



Angela Wood
Connect Manager



FirstService Residential
CONNECT

.....
Check out your new home away from home in **Connect**. Log in with your username and password to learn more about how Connect can help you and your community.
.....

When to Press Send:

How to Take Your Emails to the Next Level

Did you know that 10% of all emails are completely ignored? Most people have received bad emails and most people—even you—have sent them. A bad email can be unclear, inappropriate, or even career-limiting—and they last forever. Email is the most high-stakes form of written communication you'll do at work. Unfortunately, most people hardly give it a second thought—they dash off quick notes without considering the weight that each email carries.

How you communicate through email matters. Your goal is to create communications that are conversational, clear, and easy for your audience to understand. Doing this demonstrates leadership and increases other people's confidence in you, the information you share, and your capabilities. Here are some easy tips to make your emails more effective. First, you need a clear subject line and a salutation - all emails should start with these. Your subject line should precisely reflect the content of the email. Instead of having a broad subject line that states "Project X", try "Project X, our team's role on it and our project deadlines".

Also, a salutation should not just include the person's name, as it can be intimidating. Greeting them with a simple "hi" softens the email immediately. When addressing more than three people, using "team" or "everyone" is appropriate.

Rules for Paragraph Readability:

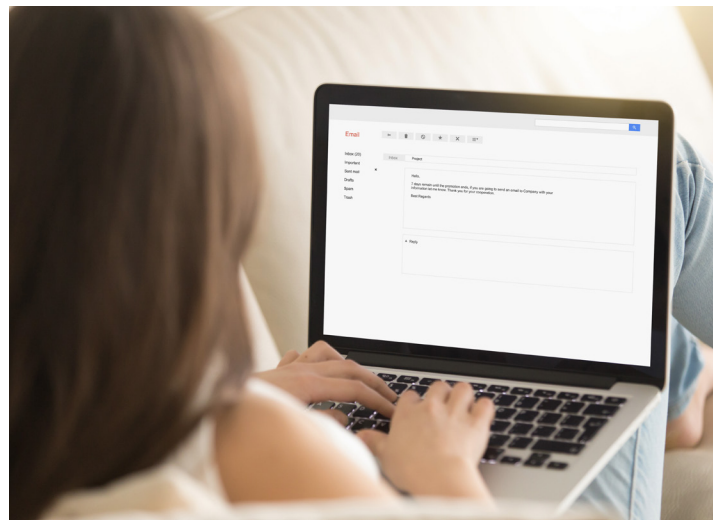
- ▶ Have a maximum paragraph length of five sentences.
- ▶ Sentences should be 22 words or less for 80% of your sentences.
- ▶ More than three paragraphs per email is way too long.
- ▶ Use an attachment with additional information where necessary.

This brings us to our second lesson - you need to decide how long your email needs to be. By asking a few questions you can determine if it needs to be micro, short, medium, or long. Ask yourself, is this an introductory email that requires a detailed description of the project? Or is it a simple request you have for someone? Does this require a warm

introduction before you get to the heart of the matter? Or is the bulk of it something that would be better discussed in person?

Guide to email length:

- ▶ Micro is one line of content.
- ▶ Short has one paragraph/set of bullets.
- ▶ Medium has two paragraphs.
- ▶ Long has three paragraphs.



A micro email has a direct question, answer or call to action after the salutation. The more straightforward and concise the call to action, the more efficient the exchange of communication will be.

For emails that need a bit more context, the inclusion of a warm handshake is necessary. This will inject warmth into the beginning of the interaction and set the right tone. Within your first paragraph include context and introduce the point of your email. Up to three sentences can be used to set context with you outlining the main point by your final sentence. For many emails this is all you need - a good short email includes a warm handshake, context, and the main point.

Examples of Warm Handshakes:

- ▶ "Hope this message finds you well!"
- ▶ "It was great to talk to you last week."
- ▶ "Thank you for the conversation the other day!"

ANNIVERSARIES & PROMOTIONS

37 Years

Lori Wyman
Sr. Accountant

32 Years

Linda Sarazin
Assistant Association Manager

28 Years

Kevin Bennett
General Maintenance Technician

25 Years

Conrad Teves
Desk Attendant
Dave Lemerand
On-site Maintenance Technician

20 Years

John Lyon
General Maintenance Technician

continued...

A medium length email includes a second paragraph elaborating on the context and what needs to happen next. The final sentence of the second paragraph should be the call to action.

If you need a third paragraph to discuss the call to action, use no more than five sentences or bullets that are easy to process. This is a long email and you are at risk of losing your audience's attention. When using bullet points, your points should be a sentence each and should have up to one supporting point.

After you've written the email put some thought into who you are sending it to. Only include people you expect to participate in the conversation. If it's important people reply all, use your first sentence to say "Please reply all" so there's no miscommunication.

Quick Tips:

- ▶ In the body of your email, don't use all caps, bold, or underline.
- ▶ Stay away from using emojis unless it's appropriate within an established relationship.
- ▶ Use white space to make your text more easily understood - this will help people stay focused.
- ▶ Think twice before hitting reply all.

We take our ability to instantly communicate with people for granted, and we forget that how we communicate virtually is as important and memorable as how we do so in person. Let's not bore and confuse our audience members anymore - we can all master the art of writing emails!

Aram Arslanian is a therapist, coach, and facilitator with over 19 years of experience supporting individuals and groups in their development. He has worked globally with leaders and



their teams, from the C-suite to the front lines. Launched in 2016, Cadence Leadership + Communication helps professionals learn to lead and communicate in an authentic, consistent, and inspirational way. The Cadence approach is unique in creating a lasting impact for individuals and organizations. Through programming and coaching focused on mindset shifts, Cadence has earned a reputation for progress and results.

To learn more about our offerings and connect with us, visit www.cadenceleadership.ca

Asphalt & Concrete Maintenance *TIPS*

There are many important benefits to seal coating your asphalt driveway or parking lot; protection from the elements, improved appearance, faster snowmelt and protection from caustic chemicals. Much like painting your

Asphalt & Concrete Maintenance

TPS cont.

home, waxing your car or staining a deck, you want a maintenance product that lengthens the life of your investment. A high-quality sealer that allows excellent coverage with a thin coating is the best step to protect, maintain and improve the overall appearance of asphalt.

The primary purpose of seal coating asphalt is to help slow down or even prevent long-term damage from the sun, sleet, snow, ice, hail and rain. Sun can wear down asphalt over time and rain can cause soft spots in the asphalt that can lead to cracking or potholes. Winters in the Midwest can take years off a driveway or parking lot's life. A thin layer of seal coat applied every 2-3 years protects the asphalt from the initial damage of environmental elements. If left untreated, the sun will fade new asphalt to a dull grey color.

Seal coating improves the appearance of the asphalt. The extra layer makes the asphalt look clean, black and well maintained, adding to the curb appeal of your property. An additional benefit is the black sealer heats up faster and warmer in the winter, helping to increase the rate of snow and ice melting off your driveway or parking lot...[MORE](#)



ANNIVERSARIES

Continued

15 Years

Margarita Carter
Regional Director

Herb Ringheim
Desk Attendant Float

10 Years

Joshua Musikanstow
Desk Attendant

Todd Schumacher
Resident Caretaker

5 Years

Jen Litynski
Senior Accountant

Michael Sayen
Desk Attendant

Nancy Ritter
Desk Attendant Float

Jody Abramson
Community Manager

Inez Walton
Desk Attendant Float

Matt McCarty
Association Manager

Steven Tuffin
Desk Attendant Float

Steven Tuthill
Chief Building Manager

Kelly Gerten
Collections Specialist

Promotions

Movin' on up!

Amanda Kelzenberg — Associate Vice President

Greer Gentry — Association Manager

Greg Nelson — Associate Vice President

Jenna Bursch — Assistant Association Manager

Lauren Michaels — Desk Attendant at Grant Park

Lorin Mustafa — Senior Accountant

Maggie Mahmood — Regional Director

Wolf Madsen-Forrest — Senior Accountant

Team Spotlight:



Gittleman Maintenance

Gittleman Construction & Maintenance employs over fifty experienced technicians specializing in electrical, low voltage, plumbing, drain cleaning, and HVAC services. Our maintenance division provides carpentry, drywall taping, painting and miscellaneous maintenance services.

Gittleman's Director of Maintenance Operations; Peter Ralph leads a team of 8 dedicated building service leaders, many with similar levels of experience focused on the needs of FirstService Residential managed facilities and homeowners. With four decades of experience in building and mechanical services, Peter's team of knowledgeable dispatchers work closely with our Operations Manager Jenessa Schwartz to schedule over 12,000 visits per year. Covering every aspect of plumbing, drain cleaning, electrical and security integrations, HVAC and construction/general maintenance, no job is too large or small for Gittleman Maintenance.



Peter Ralph

**Director,
Maintenance Operations**

To quote Peter, "When sharing your home with your neighbors, both central building systems and individual homes must be maintained optimally; a single incident can have much greater consequences than in a single-family home. We are here to preserve the integrity and value of your home while making your ownership and lifestyle experience as enjoyable as possible".

We understand the unique needs of homeowners, including those living in high-rise condominiums, townhomes and single-family communities. We are passionate about creating happy customers and are committed to delivering a higher standard of service—no matter your project or maintenance need. [Read our story here.](#)

Social Purpose

At FirstService Residential, we believe in the value that associates of different racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, religions, gender, sexual orientation, ages and physical abilities bring to our company and the communities we manage.

By promoting a diverse workforce, we build a solid foundation to serve our clients while cultivating an inclusive culture for teams and leaders to embrace differences and consider divergent viewpoints.

We embrace productive dialogue in our efforts to find mutually beneficial solutions for all of our stakeholders. We do not condone and do not tolerate

racism or discrimination of any kind. The most lasting and effective way to build great relationships is through respect, trust and communication, where everyone's voice is heard, respected and appreciated.

In connection with the themes of May and June, FirstService Residential would like to show support by providing information to bring awareness and support surrounding the importance of Mental Health, the Asian American and Pacific Islander people and celebrating the LGBTQ+ community.



COVID-19 has brought the importance of mental health to the forefront. We at FirstService Residential encourage other organizations to join us by spreading the word that mental health is something everyone should care about. Using tools such as social media, virtual events and online screenings, we invite you to spread awareness using the tools below to conduct awareness activities.

The National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI MN) offers events you can participate in. You can find them [here](#).

NAMI MN serves over 160,00 people across the state through efforts of advocacy, education and support.

Click the link to [get involved](#).



We are reaffirming our fight against hatred while also honoring the cultural diversity of the AAPI community. We are looking to educate, uplift, support and inspire. The links below showcase the art, poetry, stories and creativity of Minnesota's Asian and Pacific Islander community and how they have enriched the American experience.

[The Arts of Southeast Asia:](#) MIA offers a glimpse into the art of Southeast Asia. Features ceramics, textiles and other works created from 3000BCE to the present day.



FirstService Residential sponsored the [49th Annual Twin Cities Pride Festival](#) this year!

Pride celebrations will be held at Loring Park July 17th-18th from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. on both days.

Family Fun Day: Was held June 20th at 11:00 a.m. at the Como Park East Pavilions.

Rainbow Run: This year's run will be hybrid! That means you don't have to run at 9:00 am on Sunday, June 27th in Minneapolis, unless you want to. You can choose your own time and location between June 20th-30th. Virtual participants can upload their times using [this link](#).

For a list of Pride events in your area please click [here](#).

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



Shaun Zavadsky
Vice President,
Community
Management



Sally Andrist
Senior Director,
Human Resources



Eric Hennig
Vice President,
Financial Planning
and Analysis



Amanda Kelzenberg
Associate
Vice President



Greg Nelson
Associate
Vice President



FirstService
RESIDENTIAL

8100 Old Cedar Avenue South, Suite 300 | Bloomington, MN 55425
Phone: 952.277.2700 | Fax: 952.277.2739 | fsresidential.com/minnesota



Like us on Facebook
FirstService Residential Minnesota



Connect with us on LinkedIn
FirstService Residential Minnesota



Read our lifestyle blog
theelementsofliving.com



Subscribe to our YouTube channel
FirstService Residential Minnesota