Fill ‘er Up

FILLING THE COMMUNITY SWIMMING POOL

this season brings up several cost and maintenance decisions. First, owners must decide whether to keep their pools filled year-round or drain them during the off-season. When re-filling an old pool, or filling a new one, there are choices for both water source and water-billing method.

Keeping the pool filled, no matter the climate, is the best option, according to Paul Rhodes, Supervisor/Lead Instructor, Customer Training, HD Supply Facilities Maintenance. This will help to prevent problems that could occur with an empty pool, among them: plaster staining, pool deck and waterline tile cracking, hydrostatic pressure problems (where the pool “floats” up out of the ground), shortened life for plaster and filter and the potential for vandalism.

To keep the pool filled, the property must either maintain the pool chemicals or cover the pool. Maintaining chemicals is easiest during the active swim season. There are several effective pool safety covers available that keep debris out of the pool with minimal care. With the pool covered, the property staff only realistically must check the pool approximately once per month.

With proper care, Rhodes says, it is typical for pools to be filled only once. He says pools should not be drained unless major repairs (such as plaster replacement) are required. With proper care, plaster can last 10 years.

The reason proper care is so important, Rhodes says, is that pool water is constantly refreshed through bather splash out, backwashing, water balance and disinfection. This refreshing action allows the water to remain safe year-round.

Draining the pool each year is a waste of water and could damage the pool, adds Cindy Nissen from Berger Rental Communities. She says when Berger drains its pools (even if only partially), it could use a hose, but that option is expensive and it takes a long time. To fill a 35,000-gallon pool at four gallons per minute, she says, the hose must run for 24 hours a day for six consecutive days. The better option, Nissen says, is to pay for water to be delivered by a truck. “This works well because the truck can flow in the water in a matter of minutes,” she says. “And for new pools, this rate is necessary as they must be filled immediately after the cement hardens.”

A water truck costs less than what the local utility company would charge via the sewage rate, which varies based on location, Nissen says.

Owner Frank Barefield encourages owners who fill their pools with water from the local utility to be sure to insist on being billed at the “irrigation rate” and not the “sewage rate.” He says the irrigation rate is less costly at the majority of local jurisdictions.

–NAA’s Paul R. Bergeron III

CONFERENCE CALL FOR IROS—2:30 ET APRIL 20

ONE PHONE CALL could help owners save more than $70,000. This isn’t hype. This is the NAA Independent Rental Owner (IRO) Chair Frank Barefield speaking to the value of NAA’s regular IRO “Problem Solving” conference calls among owners.

The next call is April 20 from 2:30 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. ET.

“I was very impressed with the wealth of information exchanged during the most recent NAA best practices conference call,” says Barefield, President, Abbey Residential.

“As a result of my participation I was able to procure a more cost-effective means for lead paint testing (saved $7,000 per property) and identify a cheap tub liner ($10) which made it unnecessary to continue the painting of my units’ bath tubs.

“I saved thousands of dollars as a result of the call. Take an hour out of your day and listen in. It could save you thousands too.”

Contact NAA’s David Edwards at davide@naahq.org for details on the call, which included more than 55 owners when it was last held in December. Barefield will moderate the call. Topics planned for April include apartment ratings websites, the HVAC refrigerant transition and implementing required renters insurance.

Additionally, to stay informed or ask other IROs for their opinions throughout the year, you are invited to join the IRO Community and Forum online at http://community.naahq.org.

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