

Strata living just got a lot easier

Online service eases load for condo owners



BY BOB RANSFORD
VANCOUVER SUN

PROPERTY MATTERS

When you live in a condominium you have a number of unique relationships outside your own home.

Often these relationships are quite different from those commonly associated with homeownership. We all know that the key to all successful relationships is communication.

It's not surprising then that many of the headaches that arise for condominium homeowners start with a breakdown in communication.

Professional strata property manager Ben Larsson believes that the financial

losses from the leaky condo crisis in B.C. could have been mitigated with earlier detection of the problem.

Professional property managers, had they known the full extent of the problem earlier, might have been able to intervene sooner, saving strata corporations thousands of dollars.

Better communications between all parties — individual strata owners, strata councils, property manager and outside contractors — would have helped strata property managers detect the problem earlier, according to Larsson.

He has spent the last two years developing Web Page Condominium News (www.wpcn.com), an Internet-based resource centre for strata corporations, to help improve communications.

The on-line service provides strata corporations with a range of resources that help strata corporations manage their affairs and communicate.

WPCN has region-specific pages that provide general resources about government regulations, condominium news, articles, tips and links of interest to condo homeowners and strata corporations. You can also download official documents, like gov-

ernment forms and contracts.

Just managing the reams of official documents connected with the many relationships strata owners have can be a huge chore in itself. Anyone who has sat on a strata council knows that there are pages of monthly meeting minutes to distribute to owners, countless official notices and tons of other paper.

Accessibility, storage and retrieval of documents have always been labour intensive and costly for condo homeowners, strata corporations and property managers.

WPCN is the first and only on-line service that streamlines this. When strata corporations subscribe to WPCN's online service, they are provided with a secure area on the site to post all of their official documents. Individual passwords are provided to owners, allowing them to retrieve documents online and communicate with their strata council and strata property manager.

Financial statements, quotes from contractors and

suppliers, and a host of other documents can be made available online. Other resources help educate strata owners, who often struggle with the complex regulations governing strata ownership.

There are more than 22,000 strata corporations in B.C. and those numbers are growing steadily, paralleling the continuing local multi-family housing boom. But WPCN hasn't restricted its scope to the B.C. market. The service has a global reach, with resources for condominium owners in markets as distant as Australia.

Strata corporations can subscribe to the service with an online application. Full service subscription rates are based on the size of the strata corporation, ranging from \$150 annually for strata corporations with less than 25 housing units, up to \$600 annually for corporations with more than 100 units.

For more information, you can visit WPCN online at www.wpcn.com or e-mail Ben Larsson at info@wpcn.com

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