



# THE HOUSEKEY

The key to owning a successful rental property

Winter 2012

## Bright ideas for managing your home

• *During the holiday season, I have an extremely limited budget for sprucing up my rental home. What can I do on a shoestring?*

Fortunately, it's possible to completely change the look of any room in the house for as little as \$100. All you need to do is focus on the design elements that will deliver the most impact for the least cost. Here's a room-by-room guide for redos that cost \$100 or even less.



A fresh coat of paint is an essential foundation for virtually any room makeover. One gallon will cover most rooms, meaning you can get a good start on your redesign for around \$25 — even less if you luck out and find a deal.

Your table and chairs are the centerpiece of your dining room. While a new set might not be in the budget, you can easily dress up your old one. Replacing old fabric on dining chair seat cushions can give the set a whole new look. Depending on the fabric color and style

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## Positive news from FY 2011

Let's work together for an even better 2012

While much of the national news reports the real estate market overall is struggling in both sales and rentals, Prudential Gallo, REALTORS® reports a strong 2011. Both the Lewes and Rehoboth Beach rental departments posted significant increases in booked rentals and rental volume for the year to date compared to 2010.

### Sustaining momentum

Of course, once you accomplish a goal, the question is, how do you keep it? In other words, how to we not only sustain these figures, but add to both columns? Here are some ideas.

• Keep your rental home in tip-top condition. If you are looking for an objective opinion, have a friend or family member stay at your home for a winter weekend.

Have that test-guest make notes about what is missing, what is in need of repair, or what should be replaced.



**Esposito**

"This is critical," Michelle Esposito, Rehoboth Beach rental manager, said. "We are in such tight competition for vacationers that we have to be perfect in every way."

• Look at comment cards and take action. If a guest noticed a tear in a screen in 2011, it should be fixed by the start of the rental season of 2012.

• Consider offering specials on your home, perhaps offering a steep discount on a long winter weekend if the guest commits to a full-price week later in the summer.

• Rely on your agent's judgment on rates in general. The agents will be most in touch with what the market will bear.

### Marketing

"Our superb, state-of-the-art website gives our owners and clients fantastic service," Adriane Gallagher, Lewes rental manager, noted.



**Gallagher**

Expect to see improvements to the website in the coming year.

Between the website, billboards, newspaper advertising, e-cards, the rental brochure, and the company's well-trained agents, both rental departments make sure that your home is presented in the best light. ⚙

## New FEMA maps to be released in summer 2012

The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have been revising the mid-Atlantic flood insurance risk maps and storm-surge maps since the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

The revised, updated maps will be released during the summer of 2012. There will be one public meeting for all of Sussex County, probably at Cape Henlopen High School. Experts will be present to discuss the findings and how residents

can get the most insurance protection for the lowest premiums.

Currently, the website at [www.R3Coastal.com](http://www.R3Coastal.com) has information on the project, and soon there will be a property locator website, where you can enter your address for specific data.

The public meeting will be advertised in local newspapers and on local city websites. All homeowners are encouraged to attend. Bring your current insurance information for comparison. ⚙

## Look for 2012 rental brochure in late December

The 2012 Rental Brochure is completed and at the printer. Copies will be mailed to homeowners and customers during the week between the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

The mailed copies of the 64-page brochure will be polybagged, ensuring that recipients will discern them from retail catalogs.

This year, the printed catalog will also be available on the Internet as

a digital book, combining the traditional format with the latest technology. This e-mail address will be part of an e-card advertising campaign.

While other companies are doing away with the printed brochure, Prudential Gallo, REALTORS® continues to produce the book as a handout to walk-in customers all year long and for distribution up and down the state. ⚙



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## Sea-Level Rise estimate maps issued

The Delaware Sea Level Rise Advisory Committee has issued a report of its preliminary findings, which it released in a series of public meetings.

The committee, under the auspices of the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, is composed of representatives of agencies, companies, local governments, and others from around the state.

The assessment will help guide the state's plans and expenditures for now, such as coastal-storm flooding and evacuation, and for the next 100 years, such as road and bridge enhancement.

The report notes that the level of sea rise is amplified by the data showing that the mid-Atlantic landmass is sinking, a result of glacier movement thousands of years ago.

Issues are different around the state. In New Castle County, many important industries are located waterfront. In Sussex County, the beautiful coast and Inland Bays are what attracts tourists and visitors.

To see what the committee envisions in the future, go to the website located at [www.dnrec.delaware.gov/Pages/SLRMaps.aspx](http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/Pages/SLRMaps.aspx).



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## Local news briefs to keep you in the know

### Gallagher recognized for charity work

Adriane Gallagher, manager of the Lewes Rental Department of Prudential Gallo, REALTORS®, has been named as one of 27 outstanding local women in the Eagle 97.7 Delmarvalous Women Program.

Gallagher has been involved with Sussex County Association of REALTORS® Community Service Foundation for over 10 years and has been the chairman of the annual auction committee for the past two years. The foundation's auction each October generates funds for its community-service arm. In the past seven years, the foundation has channeled over \$420,000 back to those in need in Sussex County.

"I believe strongly in commu-

nity service," Gallagher said, "and I do what I can all year long. The Prudential Gallo, REALTORS® motto includes the phrase 'community-minded,' and the company supports reaching out to those in need."

She also donates her time and energy to Habitat For Humanity, Extreme Makeover: Home Edition, and local food drives.

### Time-lapse video of high tide available

While flooding is expected during times of major storms, visitors can be caught unaware of just how much water a high tide can affect. Dr. Wendy Carey, coastal processes/coastal hazards specialist from the University of Delaware College of Marine Studies, took time-lapse footage

of a particularly high tide in late October. The video was filmed on Savannah Road, across from the Daily Market.

Viewers can see on day 2 and day 3 that roads can become hazardous or impassible quickly. Do not drive into deep water, especially brackish or salt water.

You can see the film at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BL0F6WKTft4>.

### Buy local, fresh dairy products all winter

The local farmers' markets are closed for the winter, but local fresh dairy products are available Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Rustic Acres Farm, Holland Glade Road, Rehoboth Beach. For details, call 226-2571.

**Our staff makes all the difference . . .**

**. . . with teamwork and commitment**

### Lewes Rental Department



From left: Julia Walls, Rachel Cooper, Kristen Seal, Manager Adriane Gallagher, Maureen Kyritsis, Melanie Anderson, and Carolyn Turner.

### Rehoboth Beach Rental Department



From left: Michelle Trasatti, Laura Hickman, Kim Lawson, Alyssa Bishop, Manager Michelle Esposito, Kari Munsell, Assistant Manager Stacy LeGates, and Angela Yerton.



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## IDEAS, From Page 1

you choose, you can create looks that range from modern to traditional. Top off the table with a decorative runner in a complimentary pattern and you've redone your dining room for less than \$100.

Accessories are the way to achieve a big impact for not much money in the living room. Replace old throw pillows with new, brightly patterned ones. Switch out wall decor with new pieces. Cover up worn wooden floors or shabby carpeting with an elegant area rug. It's possible to change several accessories and still bring your costs in under the \$100 mark.



Hang a simple, functional vinyl shower curtain on existing shower rod, then place a pressure rod just outside it. Add attractive, floor-length curtains from the local discount store; they'll cost a lot less than comparable versions made for bathroom use.

Replace towels with a matching set of new ones in an appealing pattern or color. Finish up by adding a decorative frame around the existing vanity mirror.

It's easy to spend a bundle on a kitchen rehab, but it's just as easy to make small changes that have a big impact. Rather than sinking a lot of money into changing countertops or cabinets, consider simple upgrades like new cabinet hardware, a new kitchen faucet and a new light fixture. You can also use a wall mural in the kitchen to dress it up. Whether you're looking for a rustic theme that would fit with Italian murals or a nature scape that turns a blank wall into a view on another world, you can find a wall mural to fit virtually every decorating theme for as little as \$60.

• **Because of my family's schedule, we can't come to the beach to spend a week on refurbishment during the winter. How can we plan for this for the year?**

With the new year just around the corner, planning for home improvement projects now can help you prioritize and budget.

Spending more time indoors at home might be bringing some potential projects to your attention. Maybe you've noticed fraying carpet under your toes, chipped paint on a window frame or a paint color that feels outdated — whatever needs to

be addressed should get marked down on your fix-it list.

Give yourself a deadline for completing the list and then call a household meeting to start prioritizing. One of the most important things you can bring to that meeting is an idea of how much you can afford to.

Setting a home improvement budget gives you parameters to work within as you weigh the importance of each project on your list. However, you should also come to the table with a reasonable idea of how much it will cost to complete each of the tasks you want to finish.

Armed with your list and your budgetary figures, go through each item, weighing the pros and cons of both doing it now and letting it wait. You'll inevitably have a lot of options, including putting things off and saving more money throughout the year, or



investing some money in repairs now and letting your savings grow for midyear projects.

• **Can I put home renovation expenditures on a credit card? Or should I consider a loan for the costs?**

Credit can be a good tool to help you fulfill your decorating dreams, provided that you use it wisely. Before you give your bank card a workout, or sign up for a new credit card with your local home-improvement store, take these credit-conscious steps:

1. Assess your current credit status. Whenever you're considering a significant credit expenditure — like financing a remodel — it's important to understand your credit and how your spending might impact it.

2. Estimate the cost of your project. Spending without a plan is one of the surest ways to overspend, especially when it's a home-improvement project. In order to create a plan, you need to know the likely cost of your redecorating project.

3. Determine if you can do some of the home-improvement work yourself. Be honest with yourself and think about which tasks you're skilled enough to tackle and which ones you'll need to leave to a professional.

4. Establish a budget. Once you have a cost estimate, and know where you can find DIY savings, you'll be able to establish a budget for your remodeling project. To prevent overspending, pad your budget as much as 10 percent to cover cost overruns.

When your budget is set, you're ready to begin. Keep a running log of all expenditures and refer to your budget frequently to stay within costs.

— ARA Content

## Lewes to hold Yellow Ribbon Day June 10

The steering committee for a new Lewes event is holding organization meetings over the winter. The event is called the Yellow Ribbon Family Appreciation Day, scheduled for Sunday, June 10 in the City of Lewes.

The purpose is to recognize, thank, and extend appreciation of the families of active military members.

Current plans include a barbecue and formal ceremony.

The events will take place in the Canalfont Park and will include music, pirate ship and boat rides, and more.

Churches in the city will open their doors for refreshments, and storefronts will be decorated with yellow ribbons.

Dr. Jill Biden, wife of Vice-President Joe Biden, has been invited as a speaker. Raising awareness of the difficulties that military families endure is one of her personal campaigns.

Other dignitaries will attend as well.

If you would like to be involved with the event, perhaps by offering your home a reduced rate to a participating family, please contact your rental agent. ⚙️



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## Calendar of Upcoming Events

The Rehoboth-Dewey Chamber of Commerce and the Lewes Chamber of Commerce are compiling their calendars of events currently for the coming year.

Consider special deals for the big weekend during the winter and early spring. Once a guest sees how nice your property is, hopefully they will book a longer vacation during the summer.

### January

- Sunday, Jan. 1: First State, First Day, First Hike at Cape Henlopen State Park.
- Saturday, Jan. 7: Annual Meeting of Friends of Cape Henlopen State Park, 9 a.m. at Officers' Club.

- Monday, Jan. 16: Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

- Saturday, Jan. 28: Program on U-boats at 2 p.m. at Fort Miles Historic Area, Cape Henlopen State Park.

### February

- Tuesday, Feb. 14: Valentine's Day.

- Monday, Feb. 20: Presidents' Day.

- Saturday, Feb. 25: Program on the Cold War 11 a.m. at Fort Miles Historic Area, Cape Henlopen State Park.

### March

- Saturday, March 17: St.



Patrick's Day.

### April

- Sunday, April 8: Easter.

### May

- Monday, May 28: Memorial Day.

### June

- Sunday, June 10: Family

Yellow Ribbon Appreciation Day.

### July

- Wednesday, July 4: Independence Day.

### August

- Sunday, April 8: Easter. Visit the websites at [www.beach-fun.com](http://www.beach-fun.com) and [www.leweschamber.com](http://www.leweschamber.com). Call the state park at 645-6852. ⚙

## Suggestion Box

We welcome your feedback. Is there a question or topic that you would like to see discussed? Please contact us and let us know.



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