



Dubuque Police Department

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NEWS RELEASE

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LANDLORD NOTIFICATION OF POLICE CALLS FOR SERVICE

DUBUQUE, Iowa -- On December 14, 2009, members of the Dubuque Landlord Association met with staff from the City of Dubuque Police Department, Housing & Community Development Department, and City Attorney's Office to discuss and implement new ideas and procedures to minimize problems and concerns associated with rental properties.

The group has been meeting for approximately 18 months to discuss opportunities to work together to combat crime and neighborhood issues related to rental property. During the meetings the landlords expressed a desire to be notified when crimes happened at one of their properties.

In response, City staff created a system that cross references approximately 40 "quality of life" police calls for service with the City's licensed rental property database. The "quality of life" issues represent police service calls that can potentially affect the quality of life for surrounding neighbors or the neighborhood and include disturbances, assaults, loud music/persons, thefts, disorderly conduct, etc.

The system automatically generates a letter to the property owner and/or property manager informing them of the incident and provides the responding police officer's name and contact information for additional information. These letters are designed for informational purposes and do not necessarily require a response by the landlord or property manager. This service is being offered free of charge.

This initiative represents an expansion of an existing program through which the Police Department notified landlords or property managers when they were called to their properties for loud parties or parties involving underage alcohol use. The City also works with local landlords and property managers on two additional programs.

Staff from multiple City departments annually offer the Dubuque Crime-Free Multi-Housing Program (DCFMHP). The DCFMHP was started in 1995, and provides comprehensive information on all aspects of managing rental housing, with special emphasis on how to reduce crime in rental property.

In addition to free local criminal background checks of prospective tenants offered by the Dubuque Police Department, the City currently has a program to fully reimburse landlords for all fees related to background checks of prospective tenants. In an effort to keep neighborhoods safe, housing well-maintained, and tenants accountable, the City initiated a program last year to reimburse landlords and property managers for 100 percent of the costs of Iowa or out-of-state criminal background checks.

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