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NEWS RELEASE

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Policy Changes for Rental Property Management Begin July 1

DUBUQUE, Iowa -- Beginning July 1, Dubuque rental property owners/managers must perform criminal background checks on all rental applicants.

The Dubuque City Council recently amended the City Code of Ordinances to include this requirement and another for mandatory training for rental property owners/managers. Both changes are based on recommendations to the City Council from Dubuque's Safe Community Task Force.

Property owners, managers, or licensed real estate professionals must conduct background checks for all prospective tenants whose tenancy commences on or after July 1, 2011. Background checks may be performed using the City's free service or by another service approved by Dubuque's city manager.

The Dubuque Police Department performs the free criminal background checks. Property owners and managers wishing must fill out and sign a "Prospective Tenant Background Check Consent Form" available at the Dubuque Police Department (770 Iowa Street) or the City Clerk's Office (50 W. 13th Street); online at www.cityofdubuque.org/police; via fax if a number is provided; via e-mail if an address is provided; or via postal mail if a mailing address is provided. Completed forms can be submitted in person to the Dubuque Police Department, via fax at 563-587-3849, via e-mail at mderby@cityofdubuque.org, or postal mail at 770 Iowa Street, Dubuque, IA 52001. After the report has been received, property owners and managers will be provided with a synopsis of the results. Background checks may take up to 72 hours to complete.

If a property owner, manager, or licensed real estate professional opts to perform their own criminal background checks on rental unit applicants, the following requirements must be met:

- 1) A criminal background check must be run on all adult applicants in any state where the applicant has reported residing in the last three years.

- 2) The criminal background check must include a check for felony and misdemeanor charges and convictions.
- 3) Criminal background check records must be maintained by the property owner, manager, or licensed real estate professional for:
 - a. The duration of the tenancy if the applicant becomes a tenant of the property owner, manager, or licensed real estate professional
 - b. One-year when an applicant is rejected for tenancy.

Failure to comply with the new background check policy may result in, but is not limited to, suspension of a rental license, relocation of tenants at the expense of the property owner, manager or real estate professional, and the issuance of a municipal infraction. A municipal infraction could result in a fine of up to \$750 for a first offense plus court costs and a corrective court order. Any subsequent offenses would be subject to a civil penalty of up to \$1,000 plus court costs, a corrective court order, and a civil contempt charge.

An additional ordinance change includes a requirement that all Dubuque property owners and managers who manage over 10 rental units attend the City's Crime Free Multi-Housing Program, or a program of continuing education approved by the city manager, by February 7, 2012. Those who manage between five and nine rental units must complete the program by February 7, 2013, and those who manage between one and four rental units must complete the program by February 7, 2014. Licensed real estate professionals and/or property owners or managers who have completed the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program since 2000 according to the City's records, or who can provide other proof of completion, are exempt from this requirement. Until this requirement is met, only a temporary rental license may be issued. The next licensed Crime Free Multi-Housing Programs will be offered on October 13, 2011, and November 19, 2011, at Northeast Iowa Community College Town Clock Center.

For more information, contact Dubuque Police Chief Mark Dalsing at 563-589-4410 or mdalsing@cityofdubuque.org.

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