

Local property managers offer online payment solutions

Published on 02/18/2015 - 4:30 pm

Written by George Lurie

[0 Comments](#)



Manco Abbott of Fresno is one of a growing number of property managers offering tenants online rent-payment solutions. In an increasingly online world, a recent report found almost 75 percent of households with Internet access pay at least one of their monthly bills electronically.

So when rent or homeowner's association (HOA) payments are due, more and more property managers around the Central Valley are adopting electronic remittance systems that allow their tenants and members to pay online.

The results of a 2014 market survey published recently by PayLease, one of the country's largest online payment processors, confirms that an increasing number of property management firms now offer an online payment option.

And HOAs are also embracing the electronic payment method in collecting monthly, quarterly and annual dues.

Robert L. Jensen and Associates, one of the Valley's largest property management companies, began offering an online payment option several years ago.

The company, which utilizes PayLease as its vendor, has nearly 16 million square feet under management in the Fresno/Clovis area.

Andre Nicolet, residential division manager at Robert L. Jensen, said that about 10 percent of the company's tenants currently skip writing a rent check and submit their monthly payments electronically instead.

"The number of online payments tend to vary by property but are growing all the time," Nicolet said.

“It’s great for us because the money goes into the bank quickly. And tenants don’t have to bother stopping by the office or tracking down the resident manager.”

Robert L. Jensen’s on-site property managers receive an email when a tenant pays electronically.

“Managers still have to follow up and make sure the funds cleared and are recorded properly,” Nicolet said. “It doesn’t really decrease their workload. It’s more of a convenience and service we can offer our tenants.”

At Manco Abbott, another leading Valley property management firm, CFO Maureen Lewis said about 18 percent of the company’s commercial clients pay electronically.

“It’s a much simpler, faster process than paper,” Lewis said.

Adam Goldfarb, Manco’s vice president of multi-family, said, “We offer an online payment option at a majority of our apartments. When we started, we had about 15 percent penetration per month. That’s gone up to 25 percent.”

Goldfarb said the system makes it “easier for both sides. Residents don’t have to write a check and the money gets to our accounts faster.”

Lewis added: “Based on demographics, there will always be people who want to bring a check or money order into the office on the day its due. But any time you have less people touching something, the better off you are going to be.”

In 2014, according to the survey, 64 percent of companies managing multifamily rental units had systems that allowed tenants to pay rent online.

In the HOA arena, size is factor: In 2014, 85 percent of larger HOAs offered an online payment option but only 33 percent of associations managing less than 500 homes had an electronic payment system in place.

San Diego-based PayLease, which bills itself as America’s “leading online payment processor for property managers and HOAs,” sponsors the annual survey, which was first conducted in 2012.

Last year, about 40 of the 566 companies participating in the survey reported they had set up an online payment system for the first time and 73 survey respondents said they had made changes to their existing electronic payment options.

Most of the changes involved switching payment processing providers.

According to the survey results, improved integration between online payment systems and accounting software prompted “early adopters” of online payment systems to make the changes.

“The top reason companies made a change to their online payment solution was because they were unsatisfied with their vendor,” the survey reported, noting that in 2014, many online payment providers “improved their accounting software integrations and offered more features and payment types at an overall lower cost to management companies.”

The survey concluded: “Competition among payment vendors is fiercer than ever, giving management companies more leverage to change providers.”

[inShare](#)