Welcome New Staff

Luis Pena is a Kalamazoo native with an interest in history, architecture, and all things Kalamazoo. Raised in the Westwood neighborhood, Luis attended Kalamazoo public schools and graduated from Kalamazoo Central before attending Western Michigan University. After earning a bachelors degree, Luis worked with the planning department as an AmeriCorps member. It was during his AmeriCorps membership that Luis learned about the profession of Historic Preservation and decided to pursue a graduate degree at Eastern Michigan University. Luis took over the reins from Sharon Ferraro as Historic Preservation Coordinator in December 2021.

Kevin Staten has joined the code administration team as a Housing Inspector. Kevin has a strong customer service background and most recently came from the insurance industry. Kevin has a degree from WMU in Public History with a concentration in architectural preservation, and is currently working on a graduate degree from WMU in geography focusing on community development. Kevin will be replacing Kris DeBarmore, who will be moving over to building trades as Building Trades Code Compliance Officer.

Free Power Washing

Is your house looking a little dirty? Have some moss or mildew growing along that north side? The city is continuing the free power washing program for 2022. There is limited funding available to power wash the exterior of the dwelling to remove dirt, mildew and/or moss from viny siding, brick, stucco and/or the roof.

If you are interested in the free power washing program, please contact Marvella Vincent (vincentm@kalamazooicity.org) or Rachael Luscomb (luscombe@kalamazooicity.org) for additional program info and obtain a program application.
If you have moved and your rental registration isn’t up to date, you won’t receive important info. Please keep your owner and agent contact information current! Submit all address, phone and email contact info using a Rental Registration Application within 10 days of a change. Registrations can also be updated online at:

www.kalamazoocity.org/rentalregistration

* Address changes must also be reported to the City Assessor at 269-337-8036 *

Tire Blitz to Return in 2022

The 2021 Tire Blitz was a huge success and will be back in 2022. Close to 4000 tires were collected in 2021, four times more than anticipated. For 2022, the city will be joining forces with the Kalamazoo County Conservation District to bring the program to more households and additional locations in Kalamazoo County. Details have not been finalized, but watch for additional information and event dates at www.kalamazoocity.org. There are expected to be new program guidelines in place.

RentAble

A New Pilot Program to Help Landlords & Tenants in Kalamazoo County

The RentAble program is designed to assist households obtain stable housing, as well as provide additional protections to landlords renting to tenants protected by Kalamazoo’s expanded Civil Rights Ordinance. The RentAble program is administered by the Kalamazoo County Continuum of Care, which is part of the United Way of Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region.

The program covers the security deposit for participants in the form of a security deposit replacement. This provides the full security deposit amount plus an additional $1,000 of coverage. The deposit coverage is held in escrow and administered by QIRA/HelloRented, a company specializing and experienced in offering security deposit replacement programs.

Landlords gain the benefit of being able to recover unpaid rent as well as traditional damages to the property, while experiencing enhanced coverage and minimal time commitment. Benefits include:

- Easy digital signup and claim system
- QIRA/HelloRented is a trusted and experienced company
- Local RentAble Associate is available to assist
- New in 2022: All tenants receive an extra $1,000 in coverage
- Landlords will be able to choose between accepting the coverage or a cash buyout of a lesser amount.

For a tenant to qualify for the RentAble Program, they must reside or be seeking housing in the Kalamazoo County area, must have or be willing to open a banking account, and must be 18 or older. The potential tenant must also show proof of income that is between 65% and 120% of the Area Median Income (AMI). Finally, Participants must have at least one of the following barriers to securing housing:

- Prior eviction or adverse action
- Previous incarceration or arrest record
- Victim of domestic violence
- Nontraditional sources of income (government assistance or other)
- Poor credit history or prior bankruptcy

If you have questions or would like more information, please contact Pamela Dickinson, RentAble Program Associate, at 269.250.9836 or at rentable@uwbckr.org

Do You Have Vacant Units?

Housing Resources, Inc. needs stable housing for families in the Kalamazoo area. Landlords who would like to place vacant units on HRI’s Available Housing List can call (269) 382-0287 for information.

Help Keep Kalamazoo Clean!

Call 337-8221 to report trash on the curb lawn, trash on private property or herby curby trash containers out past trash pick up day.

Call 337-8847 to report tall grass and weed violations (annually May through October).
Eviction Diversion Assistance Available to Tenants & Landlords

Eviction diversion is a collaborative program to help tenants pay overdue rent and stabilize their housing situation. Tenants must be no more than three months behind in rent. Landlords must want the tenant to stay and the tenant must be able to sustain rent payments after assistance. Tenants may call 211 to be screened for eligibility.

Be Prepared for Inspections

Believe it or not, often the rental inspection is one of the only times property owners and/or managers enter a unit for inspection. It is wise to include the right to periodic inspections in the lease. Be proactive and regularly check exterior property areas for needed repairs. At minimum, it’s a great idea to check smoke detectors and fire extinguishers (most commonly cited items) before the rental inspector arrives to ensure they are working order and not past the manufacturer’s expiration. Finally, making sure hired contractors obtain proper permits for installation of water heaters, furnaces, and roofs mid-inspection cycle will save a lot of hassle down the road.

COVID EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FOR QUALIFIED HOUSEHOLDS

Is your tenant struggling to pay rent and utilities due to COVID? The COVID Emergency Rental Assistance (CERA) program may be able to help.

For more information on the program including eligibility guidelines and application assistance, please contact Housing Resources, Inc. at 269-382-0287.

Fee Increases

The 2022 budget includes a couple rental program fee increases in relation to rental housing, as follows. If a fee type isn’t listed, it remained the same. Complete fee schedule is available at:

www.kalamazoocity.org/rental

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Rental Registration Database

To access the rental database go to:
www.kalamazoocity.org/rental
and then “Rental Database Search” from the listed links to other information

The City of Kalamazoo Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Program

The City of Kalamazoo, in partnership with Kalamazoo Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc., (KNHS), is removing and abating lead-based paint hazards in qualifying residential households without cost to the applicant.

According to the CDC, approximately 24 million housing units have deteriorated leaded paint and elevated levels of lead-contaminated house dust. More than four million of these dwellings are homes to one or more young children. Properties built prior to 1978 that have peeling or cracking paint most likely have lead paint chips and/or lead dust as well. Areas of specific concern are often around windows, doors, cabinets, stairways, porches and floors.

Lead-based paint chips and dust can be detrimental to a child’s health, resulting in behavior problems, learning disabilities and in extreme cases seizures or death. The toxicity of lead when absorbed in the body can also result in brain damage as well as damage to other vital organs such as the kidneys, nerves and blood.

Don’t chance the health of children. If you rent to tenants with children (or a pregnant woman) in properties built prior to 1978, and those tenants can meet eligibility requirements (low to moderate income), your property may qualify for the program. Contact KNHS today.

Applications are being taken and processed by KNHS located at:

1219 S. Park Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49001
269-385-2916
One Call to City Hall!

Have a question? There is a new way to reach City Hall. If you are located within city limits simply call 311. If you are outside city limits call 269-337-8000.

You can also reach code enforcement staff directly by email, all email addresses are: @kalamazooicity.org

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Schedule Rental Inspection: call 311 or 269-337-8000 or email: rentalinspection@

Debra Miller, Code Administration Manager .............................................................. millerd@
Randall Aldering .................................. Housing Inspector ((Vine, Central Business, S. Westnedge, Milwood) ................................ aldering@
Chris Ruohonenc .................................. Housing Inspector (Burke Acres, west part Northside, Stuart, Fairmont) ruohonenc@
Kevin Staten .................................. Housing Inspector (south Edison, Southside) .................................................... debarmorek@
Yvonne Wright .......................... Housing Inspector (Campus, Winchell, Oakwood, Westnedge Hill) ............. wrighty@
Charlotte Deur .......................... Housing Inspector (east Northside, Eastside, north Edison) deurc@
Karleen Steppe .................................. Rental Registration Coordinator (registration/billing) .................. steppenwolffk@
Laquana Coleman .................. Code Compliance I Inspector (north of Stadium/Mich Ave/East Main) colemani@
Rachael Luscomb .................. Code Compliance II Inspector (south of Stadium/Mich Ave/East Main) luscomb@
Laquana Coleman .................. Code Compliance II Inspector (north of Stadium/Mich Ave/East Main) vincentm@
Carmella Hostiguin Haba .................. Code Compliance II Inspector (south of Stadium/Mich Ave/East Main) hostiguinc@
Roger Iveson .................................. Building Official .................................................. ivesonr@
Shelby Donaldson .................. Building & Trades Permit Tech (permit questions) .................. donaldsons@
Casey Boekhoven .................. Community Development Secretary (permit questions) ................ boekhovenc@
Pete Eldridge .................. Assistant City Planner .......................................................... eldrigep@
Pete Eldridge .................. Assistant City Planner .......................................................... eldrigep@
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Avoid Nuisance Enforcement & Fees

Enforcement of City Ordinances may subject property owners to violation notices and subsequent cost recovery fees. Please be sure to share this information with tenants.

- **Curbblawn Nuisances**: Discarded items, brush and other unsightly materials that are placed in the curbblawn outside of bulk trash collection are considered a public nuisance and subject to immediate corrective action without notice. Clean-up costs are billed to the property owner of record.
- **Trash on Private Property**: Keep all litter, trash, junk and debris picked up. Property owners in violation are subject to nuisance violation notices.
- **Garbage Container Storage**: Garbage and recycling containers must be stored on private property in back of the front façade of the dwelling. Containers stored in violation of the ordinance are subject to immediate relocation which is billed to the property owner. Also, know your weekly trash pick up day and quarterly bulk trash pick up day, and only place items out for collection the day prior to scheduled pick up.
- **Junk Autos**: Any car that is not in operating condition, or is not properly licensed, is considered a junk auto. Junk autos located in the public right-of-way will be tagged by Public Safety for towing. Junk autos on private property (other than in an enclosed garage) also will be tagged and given a 10-day courtesy prior to towing referral.

Hot Code Topics

**Tall Grass**: In Michigan the grass grows. According to City Ordinance grass must be maintained under 8 inches. Don’t let “out of sight, out of mind” happen. It’s growing even when you’re not looking. Make sure your mower is ready & mow first by May 1st!

**Space Heaters** are a significant fire hazard. They should only be used for emergency heating, and not as a permanent source of heat. Be especially mindful to make sure any space heaters are plugged directly into the wall, and not via plug adaptor or extension cord.