

March 1, 2011

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Level 1 has been reached.

On Feb. 25, Community Resource Officer Michael Owen and a dozen rental property managers from Burleson gathered for an eight-hour Crime Free Multi-Housing Program training that qualified those managers for Level 1 certification in the program.

The participating complexes include Crestmoor Park West and Crestmoor Park South, Arbors of Burleson, French Quarters, Crestbrook Apartments, Town Villa Apartments, Shenandoah Townhomes, Fountains of Burleson, Garden Manor Apartments, Shady Vista Apartments, Newton Street Apartments, and R.A. Development.

The goal is to work with apartment complex management to reduce crime, drugs, gangs and gang activity at properties within the city limits. For a Level 1 certification, the apartment manager may include a Crime Free Lease Addendum in the apartment leases. This addendum gives the manager the right to immediately terminate a lease if the resident, residents' guests, or someone the resident has invited into the complex engages in specified criminal activity at the apartment.

"Through this training, we have been able to create a network to communicate with the complexes when a person is evicted from a property due to a crime. We keep everyone who has gone through this training in the loop," Owen said. "We have even had some management companies that rent single family homes, commercial property and duplexes express an interest in including those properties in the program."

The program was developed in Mesa, Ariz., eight years ago and is now being used in 44 states as well as internationally. In September 2010, Burleson City Council members approved an ordinance establishing the Crime Free Multi-Housing program.

The focus is on educating and empowering apartment managers; adding a lease addendum to lease contracts; creating partnerships between the community and the police department; and encouraging other forms of crime prevention such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

"The apartment managers do not take on the role of the police, but they do develop a relationship with the police department, they have access to more tools to assist them, and they know to call the justice of the peace and the constables for support if an eviction is necessary," Owen said.

The police department provides the training at no charge. Once trained, the apartment manager receives a Crime Free Multi-Housing License that is good for the time that the manager is employed as manager at that site. The program makes it unlawful for the owner to operate an apartment complex in the city without first registering it with the police department. No fee is charged for the registration.

The rest of the program is voluntary. To achieve the Level 2 certification, the apartment manager must include the lease addendum and pass a CPTED survey approved by the police. For Level 3, the apartment manager must complete the first two levels and host an annual social event for residents.

The next step may be adding hotels and storage units to the list of rental properties included in the crime free program as well as spreading the idea of the program to surrounding agencies and cities.

To register or to sign up for an upcoming training, contact the Community Resource officers at cro@burlesontx.com or call Officer Michael Owen at 817-426-9959.