

CEO

Barbara DeGarmo / barbara@bbcmag.com

PUBLISHER

Nancy McCain / nancym@bbcmag.com

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Masha Zager / masha@bbcmag.com

EDITOR-AT-LARGE

Steven S. Ross / steve@bbcmag.com

ADVERTISING SALES ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Irene Prescott / irene@bbcmag.com

EVENTS COORDINATOR

Dennise Argil / dennise@bbcmag.com

COMMUNITY NEWS EDITOR

Marianne Cotter / marianne@bbcmag.com

ART DIRECTOR

Karry Thomas

CONTRIBUTORS

Rollie Cole, Sagamore Institute for Policy Research

David Daugherty, Clarus Broadband
Heather Burnett Gold, HBG Strategies
Joanne Hovis, CTC Technology & Energy
Trevor Jones, OTELCO

Michael A. Kashmer, Digital Broadband Programming Consultant

W. James MacNaughton, Esq.
Christopher Mitchell, Institute for Local Self-Reliance

Henry Pye, RealPage, Inc.
Bryan Rader, UpStream Network
Craig Settles, Gigabit Nation
Robert L. Vogelsang, Broadband Communities Magazine

BROADBAND PROPERTIES LLC

CEO

Barbara DeGarmo

VICE PRESIDENT, BUSINESS & OPERATIONS

Nancy McCain

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Robert L. Vogelsang

BUSINESS & EDITORIAL OFFICE BROADBAND PROPERTIES LLC

1909 Avenue G • Rosenberg, TX 77471
281.342.9655 • Fax 281.342.1158

www.broadbandcommunities.com

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The MDU Moment

Multiple-dwelling-unit properties represent the fastest-growing segment of the housing market, and broadband remains the No. 1 amenity for MDU residents.

“Within the last five years, revolutionary changes have altered the entire industry,” says an MDU expert featured in this issue, and we think you’ll agree after reading the special section on MDU broadband. For a fascinating tour of the diverse world of MDU broadband, we thank guest editor Heather Gold, CEO of HBG Strategies and former head of the Fiber Broadband Association. Heather’s knowledge of the people, companies, trends and technologies in this area enabled her to put together an eye-opening collection of articles that feature a wide range of expertise, perspectives and opinions. (About the only thing everyone agrees on is that MDU residents demand great broadband.)

You’ll find out what big incumbents, scrappy competitors and municipal providers are doing to serve multifamily residents – with a special emphasis on those digital-native millennials – and why more real estate developers are taking broadband matters into their own hands.

You’ll learn about successful strategies for contracting, project management and marketing – and why owners who offer great broadband in their properties should shout this news from the rooftops. You’ll discover where bulk broadband makes sense and where it doesn’t and the special challenges student housing poses.

Remember the San Francisco ordinance that allowed residents in a building to request service from ISPs not chosen by the property owner? Before the law went into effect, we

reported on predictions that the results would be a) disastrous, b) amazing and c) insignificant. Find out how it turned out in practice.

TECHNOLOGY ISSUES

Then there’s technology. Wiring buildings for fiber to the unit is getting easier and less expensive, and we present an overview of what’s involved in making a building fiber-ready (and 5G-ready). But should every new MDU building have fiber to the unit? What are the implications for installation cost and net operating costs? What are the impacts on property values? Our experts give you a lot to think about.

What if there’s no reasonable way to get fiber to a building? Find out about new millimeter-wave technology that can beam multigigabit data to a rooftop, justifying fiber to the unit even when there’s no fiber in the street (yet).

For existing buildings, there are several good options that don’t require drilling holes and disrupting residents. The new G.fast standard is coming into its own as an MDU solution, and you’ll learn what the challenges of installing it are – and why overcoming those challenges is worth the effort. Though most people think of G.fast as a technology for copper twisted-pair wiring, it actually works even better over coax.

The special MDU section starts on p. 18. Enjoy! ❖

Masha Zager

masha@bbcmag.com