

NEWS

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Reform bill a hot topic at tri-county condo series

Condo owner Mike Aliberti doesn't serve on his board in Coral Gables, but he was still looking forward to attending the recent condo and homeowner law seminar in Fort Lauderdale. The purpose of the seminar was to give owners and board members a better understanding of new laws affecting communities.

"I like to keep myself knowledgeable and informed," Aliberti said. "Ignorance of the law is no excuse."

Aliberti was one of about 50 residents who attended the free condo law seminar, which was part of an ongoing series hosted by Kaye & Bender P.L., a law firm that represents community associations throughout South Florida.

This is the third year Kaye & Bender has hosted the seminars, which are offered in the tri-county area as a way to reach out to the community, clear up misconceptions and provide free legal advice.

One of the main topics of discussion has been Senate Bill 1196, which was signed into law July 1. Michael Bender, a partner and lawyer in the firm, said the pros and cons of the bill are frequently debated.

"We want to give [participants] guidance on how the changes affect their community and for them to see how they can improve their community in regards to enforcement of their documents, collection of fees and what the board can and cannot do," Bender

said.

Along with a discussion of the changes to condo laws, residents are informed of the exact powers board members can exercise. Organizers also deal with misconceptions about how boards operate and the power that members can impose.

A question-and-answer session provides residents and board members with an opportunity to seek legal advice and dispel myths associated with SB 1196, which is considered a landmark condo reform bill. Participants have been seeking advice on how to incorporate the new laws into their communities.

Oakland Park resident Patti White serves on her condo board and attended

the recent seminar in Fort Lauderdale as she had the previous year. White said being informed about the latest Florida statutes not only helps her serve on the board, but also enables her to respond to residents' concerns within her community.

"It's a great opportunity to learn and get free legal advice on the issues that may arise throughout the year," she said.

Upcoming seminars will take place 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Dec. 8 at the Herb Skolnick Center in Pompano Beach, Jan. 18 at the Hallandale Cultural Community Center in Hallandale Beach and Feb. 15 at Florida Career College in Boynton Beach.

Call 954-776-1999, ext. 230.