

# Nobody Does it Better

*Keith T. Becker, owner of Dede's Rentals and Property Management is a dynamic housing provider, educator, and advocate in Santa Rosa's booming rental market.*

*By Jim Brumm*

Many people have purchased a rental property with visions of creating an easy, passive income flow from the rent. Others inherited a home, or moved to a smaller home and decided to rent their extra property. Pretty straightforward, right? Just find a renter and collect the check each month.

But too often owners don't realize what managing a rental property actually entails. How do you choose the right tenants? What happens when the roof leaks during a storm or the toilet overflows on Thanksgiving? Whose phone is going to ring at 2:00 a.m. when the heater fails? What if a tenant gets behind in the rent, or is damaging the property? What are the owner's options and obligations? It can get very complicated very quickly.

Keith T. Becker is one of Sonoma County's preeminent experts in the field of residential property rental management. As president and owner of DeDe's Rentals in Santa Rosa, California, Keith knows the answers to all of those questions, and many more that will invariably arise when one rents out a residential property.

In his office near Coddington Mall, Keith sits before two large, linked computer screens. Awards, certificates, and other accolades from the property rental industry surround him. Affable and attentive, he is deeply in his element.

Keith is a good listener, with a focused, engaging demeanor, and a wry sense of humor that quickly reveals itself when he speaks. When asked a question, he often pauses for a moment, then answers with a



story, combining incisive analysis with an irreverent perspective on life.

DeDe's Rentals was founded in 1972. Yes, there was a DeDe in the beginning; she sold the business to Carl Pearson, who hired Keith in 1994 shortly after Keith and his wife, Zoe, moved to California from Cape Cod.

"I was the receptionist," says Keith, laughing. "At that time DeDe's managed less than two hundred properties. Then I was put in charge of maintenance, then I became operations manager. My job was changing on a weekly basis. It all happened very fast."

Soon Keith earned his property sales license, then his real estate broker's license. When Carl Pearson retired, Keith purchased the business and took on the roles of president, broker, and general manager.

Today, DeDe's Rentals manages over 500 properties throughout Sonoma County. The company has eight full-time employees deployed into two teams that manage around 250 properties each.

Keith's approach to a complicated business is simple: "Tenants deserve a safe, secure home," he says. "Owners deserve rent, and tenants that don't wreck the place or create disputes with neighbors. At DeDe's, we try to find that balance and make it work for everyone."

Keith knows owners can manage their own properties if they wish. He encourages it and does what he can to help them succeed. "But when you're



Keith T. Becker, owner of Dede's Rentals and Property Management, Inc., in Santa Rosa, CA

fed up with it, give me a call," says Keith. "When things happen at your rental—and they always do—we're there to handle the problem for you. When you manage your own property, it's easy to get into uncomfortable situations. For example, when a tenant is struggling to pay the rent, many owners want to be understanding. They say to their tenant, no problem, you can catch up next month. This can quickly lead down a dead-end road from which it's difficult to return. At DeDe's, we help keep people accountable. Late rent payments, roommate hassles, fighting with a neighbor, sneaking a dog or cat in; we handle all those things. I tell my owners, we will always be fair, but we'll do the difficult things for you—the awkward things."

In addition, when DeDe's is managing your property, *theirs* is the phone that will ring at 2:00 a.m., not the owner's. Broken appliances, leaky roofs, backed-up plumbing, whatever the problem, DeDe's has an insured, licensed, and trusted team of professionals who can be contacted any time of day or night to quickly resolve issues.

"If DeDe's is managing your property, you can let go of all that," says Keith. "But we'll always keep you informed about what's happening, and we'll never call with a problem without also offering our best solution."

Choosing the right tenants can be difficult, and, according to Keith, the selection process should not be subject to emotion or unrealistic expectations. The staff at DeDe's Property Rentals has a time-tested tenant vetting process which includes credit checks, financial and rental reference verifications, and much more that helps ensure owners find reliable, trustworthy tenants ready for a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship. DeDe's staff also knows housing law well and can help avoid discrimination issues that may arise even when the owner has the best of intentions.

Along with collecting rent for their clients, DeDe's can also take on the tasks of making timely mortgage and insurance payments, paying property taxes or whatever else

is needed. Each month, property owners receive a statement clearly showing income and expenses generated by their property.

Keith Becker's experience and knowledge in property management is widely recognized in the industry. Professionals in other areas of the business, including sales agents, appraisers, and even other property managers frequently call him to ask advice when they run into situations they've never encountered before.

"When someone want to know how to do it right, it seems they call me," says Keith. "I'm happy to help, and I'm willing to share my own knowledge and experience with anyone for free."

Keith has frequently been requested as a featured presenter at meetings of the National Association of Residential Property Managers (NARPM) throughout the state.

With nearly a half century of doing business in Sonoma County, DeDe's Rentals gives back to the community, supporting organizations such as *Habitat for Humanity*, *Social Advocates for Youth* (for whom they recently raised over \$13,000!), and *Meals on Wheels*.

Over the years the staff at DeDe's Rentals has created an elegant, robust network connecting hundreds of homes, and thousands of owners and renters. Keith T. Becker has established himself at the center of that network, calmly, professionally, directing his team and doing what needs to be done to keep things humming along smoothly for both the property owners and their tenants. It's a big job, and no one does it better.

One satisfied property owner wrote, "*We used to manage our own rental property. The time, money, and stress of following up on things was difficult to keep track of. After one nightmare tenant, we turned our property over to DeDe's. In our first year, DeDe's saved us a lot of time and money. We would not dream of managing our properties again.*"

"People choose DeDe's because of our longstanding, institutional knowledge and experience," says Keith. He smiles, adding, "Believe me, whatever crazy issue you may have in managing your property, we've seen it before. I enjoy taking a complex situation, peeling it down to the core of the problem, and finding a creative, fair solution. If you're the owner of a rental property, we can make your life much easier."

---

**DeDe's Rentals and  
Property Management, Inc.**

1311-A West Steele Lane  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

**707-523-4500**

**[www.dedesrentals.com](http://www.dedesrentals.com)**