

Community *by* Empire



Community by Empire

Community by Empire is Florida’s premier lifestyle magazine for HOA and condo communities. Each monthly issue brings inspiration for vibrant community living featuring design tips, wellness ideas, events, and expert insights on smarter association management. Powered by Empire Management, we connect homeowners and board members with everything they need to build beautiful, well-run communities across Florida.

President & CEO

Jose Ramon Riestra

Chief Technology and Growth Officer

Amanda Ortiz

Message from CEO	04
<hr/> <hr/>	
Prepare Your Home	06
<hr/> <hr/>	
Maintenance Preparedness	08
<hr/> <hr/>	
Preparedness in the Digital Age	12
<hr/> <hr/>	
Events Guide	14
<hr/> <hr/>	
Banana Protein Baked Oatmeal Bars	16
<hr/>	



Preparing for the Unexpected

When it comes to community living, safety is always in season. This edition is focusing on emergency preparedness helping HOAs and condos across Florida build resilience through clear communication and strong emergency plans. From evacuation routes to stocked first-aid kits, we're here to keep your neighborhood confident and ready.

As the leading association and lifestyle management company serving Orlando, Tampa, Sarasota, St. Augustine, and beyond, we know preparation is more than a checklist it's about creating peace of mind. That's why we encourage board leaders to host preparedness workshops, share vital resources, and organize community-wide safety drills. Together, we can make readiness part of every community's lifestyle.

“Prepared communities are resilient communities safety starts with planning today for tomorrow’s unknowns.”



MESSAGE FROM CEO

This September, our theme is clear:

be prepared for the unexpected.

Emergencies whether it's a hurricane, a power outage, or an everyday disruption remind us that resilience is built long before a challenge arrives.

At Empire Management, preparation isn't just about having a plan on paper. It's about giving families confidence, equipping boards with the tools to lead, and making sure every resident feels supported. From community-wide safety drills to up-to-date emergency contacts, readiness is one of the strongest ways we can care for one another.

This focus on safety aligns with Florida's new HB 913 legislation, which strengthens accountability for inspections and building safety.

For associations, it means being more proactive with milestone inspections, ensuring reserves are funded appropriately, and staying ahead of potential risks. These updates reinforce what we already know: safe, well-prepared communities are stronger, more resilient, and more united.

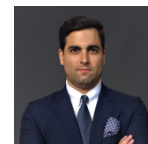
In that same spirit of preparation, a new feature is now live in the Vantaca Home mobile app, giving Empire homeowners even more convenience:

- Push notifications when payments are due.
- One-tap access to a prefilled payment page.
- Expanded reminders coming soon for other important updates.

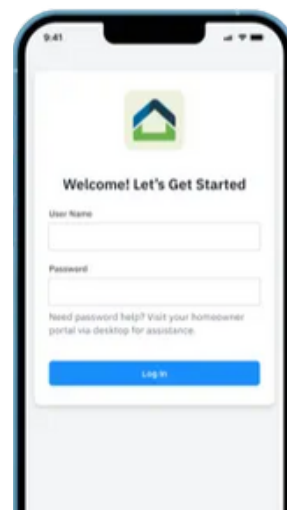
Safe, well-prepared communities are stronger, more resilient, and more united. But most importantly, preparation is never just about checking a box it's about protecting the people and places we call home.

As we move forward together, I encourage every board member, resident, and partner to take this season as a reminder: readiness is an investment in peace of mind. Whether it's through new technology like the Vantaca Home app, updated safety practices, or stronger connections between neighbors, every step we take today builds a safer tomorrow.

At Empire Management, we remain committed to guiding you through every challenge, equipping you with the tools to thrive, and standing beside you as your trusted partner in community success.



Jose Ramon Riestra
President & CEO
LCAM | CMCA | AMS
| Registered Notary



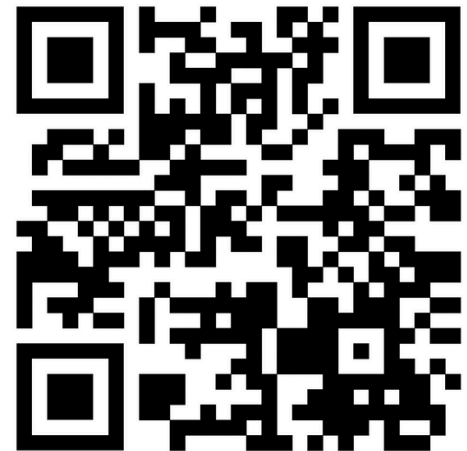
BOARD MEMBER CERTIFICATION



CONDOMINIUM BOARD MEMBERS

Join Kaye Bender Rembaum attorneys Kerstin Henze and Alan Schwartzseid, BCS for this Condominium Board Member Certification Course. Note that this is not a Board Member CEU, and it is the 4-hour Certification session. Co-hosted with Empire Management

When: October 24 2025
at 10:00 AM Eastern Time



This NEW Condo board certification course satisfies the educational requirements of the new legislation which went into effect on July 1, 2024. Board members will receive a comprehensive education of the statutory requirements and responsibilities that each volunteer must know to more effectively serve on the Board of Directors of a Condominium Association.



*Dedicated To The Representation of
Community Associations in
Central and West Florida with Offices in
Winter Springs and Tampa*

Among the services Kaye Bender Rembaum provides for its clients:

- | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Assessment collections | Covenant amendments | Master & sub-association issues |
| Contract negotiation | Covenant enforcement | Fair housing |
| Document review | Construction defect claims | General litigation |

The Firm provides personalized, professional services regardless of community size, taking into consideration your community's needs and financial concerns. We proudly offer numerous resources at KBRLegal.com, including free education for CAMs and Board Members, and the latest in community association news with 'Legal Morsels' and 'Rembaum's Association Roundup'.

KBRLegal.com | (800) 974-0680 | Info@KBRLegal.com

Office locations: Pompano Beach | Palm Beach Gardens | Winter Springs | Tampa | Miami (by appt.)



HOW TO PREPARE YOUR HOME AND FAMILY FOR EMERGENCIES

Emergencies whether expected or unexpected can affect every member of your household. That's why it's essential to create a family emergency plan that includes everyone. If your household includes elderly family members, children, or individuals who may need assistance, make sure their needs are considered.

Start by gathering your family to create the plan together. This not only ensures everyone is informed but also makes the process inclusive and engaging. For children, turn it into a fun activity: draw a map of your home with clearly marked exits and let them color it in with their favorite shades.



Here are a few simple steps to help you prepare ahead of time:

- **Designate a Safe Meeting Spot:** Choose a location in your home—like a closet or bathroom—where everyone should go during a storm. Let the kids decorate the door with a drawing so it's easy to identify.
- **Create an Emergency Supply Closet:** Stock it with essentials like batteries, flashlights, candles, matches/lighters, canned goods, snacks, and water. These items are crucial during hurricanes or power outages.
- **Clear Pathways:** Remove clutter from exits and windows to ensure quick and safe evacuation if needed.
- **Inspect the Exterior:** Trim trees, discard old items that could become projectiles, and secure outdoor furniture before storm season begins.
- **Keep Essentials Handy:** Always have medications, keys, wallets/purses, and important documents easily accessible.

Emergency planning doesn't have to be stressful it can be empowering and even fun. The key is making sure everyone knows the plan and feels prepared.



Kristi Lambert
Vice President of Community Management

FAMILY & INDIVIDUAL PREPAREDNESS

Natural disasters can strike with little warning, but families and communities can take proactive steps to stay safe and resilient.

Start by securing vital documents birth certificates, insurance papers, medical records in waterproof containers or digital vaults. Next, assemble a “go bag” for each family member, packed with essentials like water, non-perishable food, flashlights, medications, and chargers.

Don't overlook tech tools: apps like FEMA, Red Cross Emergency, and local alert systems can provide real-time updates and guidance during a crisis.

Text: "GETEMERGENCY" to 90999



Homeowners Associations (HOAs) and Condo Boards play a crucial role in fostering preparedness in partnership with their Association Management firm and local emergency preparedness agencies.

By hosting workshops on emergency planning, distributing checklists, and organizing safety drills, they empower residents and build a culture of readiness. Boards can also partner with local agencies to share evacuation routes and shelter information, ensuring no one is left behind.

Preparedness isn't just personal it's communal. When families, boards and Management work together, neighborhoods become stronger, safer, and more connected in the face of uncertainty.



Eddie Vargas
Director

MAINTENANCE + EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: WHAT COMMUNITIES CAN DO BEFORE THE STORM

In areas prone to storms whether hurricanes, severe thunderstorms, tropical cyclones, or even wild winds maintenance isn't just about keeping appearances. It's a frontline defense. When communities, homeowners associations (HOAs), condos, and commercial properties proactively maintain infrastructure and surroundings, they reduce risk, speed recovery, and protect lives and property. Here's how communities can integrate maintenance into their emergency preparedness, and how services like Wind Fire Water fit in.

Maintenance Task	Why It Matters for Storm Preparedness
Tree trimming and landscaping	Trimming reduces risk of them falling on buildings, power lines, or vehicles.
Storm debris cleanup	Timely cleanup prevents accidents and speeds up emergency response.
Fence repairs	Strong fences help protect property boundaries and reduce debris.
Pressure cleaning & gutter maintenance	Clean surfaces and unclogged gutters help drains function properly.
Sidewalk and exterior lighting upkeep	Lighting helps emergency crews move safely; clear walkways avoid trip
Clubhouse, amenity area, and shared structure repairs	Community gathering points must be structurally sound and safe. Preparing
Preventative maintenance scheduling	Regular inspections catch weak spots before they fail. Being proactive is

Visit > <https://windfireandwater.net/services/>

September is National Preparedness Month, reminding us that readiness goes beyond emergency kits it's rooted in relationships, trust, and community strength.

On September 6, our Orlando team embodied that spirit at The Retreat at Wekiva. Families gathered under the Florida sun for a morning of connection and celebration. From Alaskan ice treats to meaningful conversations, the event was more than a meet-and-greet it was a reminder of what it means to truly belong. Residents shared how EMG's presence felt refreshingly different, reinforcing that lifestyle management is about creating real moments that foster pride and connection. As stories and laughter filled the air, bonds were strengthened laying the foundation for a resilient community.

Because when challenges arise whether hurricanes or personal hardships it's our neighbors who become our first line of support. Preparedness starts with people. It's the check-in before the storm, the helping hand after, and the unity that carries us through.

Thank you to Enviro Tree Service and every resident who joined us. Together, we're building a community that's not only prepared but united.



Denise Nash
Community Engagement Manager

ABOUT US

Matt Stephens is the founder of Stephens & Company with over 20 years of experience in paint and construction. After earning his BA in Business Management from Florida State in Jacksonville, he spent a decade on the manufacturing and retail side before moving into contracting. In 2019, he launched Stephens & Company to specialize in large-scale exterior renovation and maintenance for apartments, condos, commercial buildings, HOAs, and estates.

Eric Gordon brings over 25 years of experience in the painting industry, including retail, management, and technical field work. His time as a coatings rep gave him hands-on knowledge of products, application methods, and common pitfalls. About 15 years ago, he transitioned fully into production management, where he's overseen work on tens of thousands of units. His culmination of experiences is yet another reason you can Leave It To Stephens.



**STEPHENS
& COMPANY**

OUR SERVICES

GENERAL CONTRACTING

ASSET PRESERVATION

ROOF COATING

ROOFING

PAINTING

With decades of combined experience in construction, logistics, and managing large-scale projects, we've become a trusted partner for HOA boards and property managers across Florida. We specialize in complex, multi-building communities, handling everything from exterior repaints to full roof replacements. Our focus is always on quality, clear communication, and long term value.

Our success is built on a hands-on leadership style that balances field performance with strong client relationships. From coordinating materials and managing crews to maintaining open communication with stakeholders, we make sure every detail is covered. With on-site project leadership and a proactive approach, we take pride in delivering projects on time, on budget, and to the highest standard.

CHECK US OUT



WWW.ALLSTEPHENS.COM

407.308.5344





SHERWIN WILLIAMS®

Helping your HOA in 3 simple steps:

- ① Color Support
- ② Product Specifications
- ③ Community Job Walk



Scan the QR code to visit the Sherwin-Williams HOA Archive Website. Contact your Community Manager today to add your community's colors!

Follow us for paint inspiration and more.





Riance Realty, LLC

NEW SMYRNA BEACH PROPERTY
MANAGEMENT & SALES

BUY • SELL • INVEST • RENT

- VACATION RENTALS
- EXPERTISE IN THE MARKET
- INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE

**WORK WITH
THE BEST**



*The true value of property
management is peace of
mind knowing your
community is ready for
whatever tomorrow brings.*

Spotlight

Statistic	Aug		YoY		MoM
Total Sold Dollar Volume	6,291,537,412	-	5.2%	-	2.5%
Closed Sales	13,738	-	5.5%	-	4.5%
Median Sold Price	\$360,000	-	2.2%		0%
Average Sold Price	\$457,966	+	0.4%	+	2%
Median Days on Market	46 days	+	39.4%	+	7%
Average Days on Market	72 days	+	26.3%	+	4.4%
Average Price per Sq Foot	\$235	-	3.3%	+	0.9%

August Contract Snapshot





*The strongest communities prepare
for storms and budgets the same
way early, wisely, and with the
confidence to weather whatever
comes next.*

When it comes to community living, safety is always in season. For homeowners associations, lifestyle communities, and onsite-managed neighborhoods, technology is now one of the strongest tools for building resilience. Whether your association covers single-family homes, condos, or large onsite communities, digital preparedness can make the difference when emergencies strike.

Tech Tools That Keep Communities Ready

Digital Evacuation Maps – Upload evacuation routes, storm shelter locations, and even meeting points directly to your association's website or resident portal. With one click, families know exactly where to go

Have a Backup Plan – Keep a paper copy of critical documents like evacuation maps, emergency contact lists, and insurance info. Boards should ensure every resident knows how to access these offline if the internet is down.

QR-Enabled Emergency Kits – Forward-thinking HOAs are adding QR codes to first-aid kits, clubhouse safety boards, and pool areas. Scanning connects residents to digital preparedness guides, CPR instructions, or contact info for local emergency services.

Offline Communication – Don't rely solely on email blasts. Have backup systems such as printed flyers, bulletin boards, or even walkie-talkies in larger onsite communities to ensure no homeowner is left out.

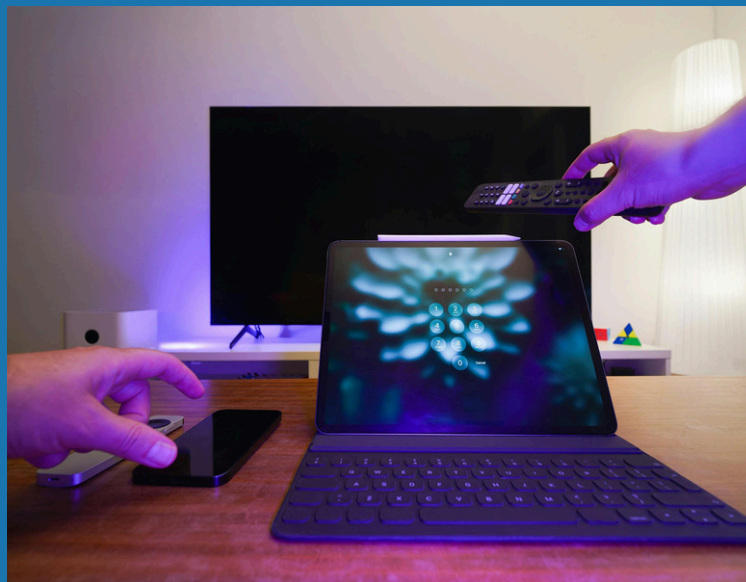
Technology helps, but people give it purpose. An HOA portal or cloud vault can hold plans, but it's neighbors and board members who bring them to life. Backups whether paper, digital, or a simple check-in remind us preparedness is about connection.

At Empire Management Group, resilience means peace of mind. Together, HOAs, condos, lifestyle and onsite communities can make safety part of everyday living and keep Florida neighborhoods strong.



Amanda Ortiz
Chief Technology and Growth Officer

👉 Learn more at empirehoa.com.



Empowering HOA & Lifestyle Communities

Homeowner associations and lifestyle communities thrive on connection, culture, and shared experiences. As we transition from September into fall, there are excellent local events across Lake Nona, Orlando, Maitland, Leesburg, Sarasota, St. Augustine, Clermont, and Kissimmee that bring residents together concerts, festivals, themed nights, and seasonal fun. If your HOA or association is looking to plan resident outings, social mixers, or community-building experiences, these are musts for your calendar.

Date	Event	Location
Sep 21, 2025	<i>Toppermost Beatles Tribute & Night Market</i>	Nona Adventure Park, Orlando / Lake Nona (Nona Adventure Park)
Sep 27, 2025	<i>Lake Nona Oktoberfest & Stein Hoisting Competition</i>	Lake Nona Town Center (Lake Nona)
Sep 27, 2025	<i>Lake Nona Community Day</i>	Nona Adventure Park (Nona Adventure Park)
Late Sept – Nov (Thurs-Sun)	<i>Fall at Southern Hill Farms Festival</i>	Clermont area (Orlando Date Night Guide)
Oct 4, 2025	<i>Dad Joke Championships</i>	Nona Adventure Park, Orlando / Lake Nona (Nona Adventure Park)
Oct 11, 2025	<i>Mimosa Fest</i>	Live! at the Pointe, Orlando (Live! at the Pointe Orlando)
Oct 25, 2025	<i>Spooktacular Halloween Event</i>	Downtown Avalon Park, Orlando (Avalon Park Orlando)
Oct 26, 2025	<i>Jetsetters for BIG BINGO</i>	Encore at Avalon Park Ballroom, Orlando (Avalon Park Orlando)

Fall in Florida means cooler mornings, afternoon rains, and plenty of curb appeal opportunities. For homeowners associations (HOAs) and lifestyle communities, this is the perfect season to refocus on lawn care. Keeping up with your yard isn't just about personal pride it's about maintaining the beauty, value, and harmony of the entire neighborhood.

Why Lawn Care Is So Important

Healthy, well-kept lawns create a ripple effect:

- Stronger property values – Attractive landscaping boosts curb appeal for every home, benefiting the entire homeowners association.
- Unified community look – Consistent care helps onsite community management keep neighborhoods looking polished and inviting.
- Lifestyle benefits – Beautiful outdoor spaces encourage walking, gatherings, and pride in the place you call home.

When everyone does their part, the community as a whole thrives.

Hosting “Best Yard” Contests

A “Best Yard Contest” is a simple way for HOAs to build pride and curb appeal. With categories like Best Overall, Most Creative, or Seasonal Theme, these contests turn lawn care into friendly fun that brings the community together.



**We care for
Your Oasis!**

outdoor-care.net | 833.33. OASIS



Lawn and Shrub Care
Pest Control
Termite Prevention
Mosquito Control

Irrigation and Backflow:
- Repair
- Maintenance
- Installation
- Testing

FRESH PEAR COBBLER

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Ingredients

Ingredients:

- 6 ripe pears, peeled, cored, and sliced
- 1 cup granulated sugar, divided
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted
- 1 cup self-rising flour
- 1 cup milk
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon



Instructions:

- Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C).
- In a bowl, toss the sliced pears with 1/2 cup of the granulated sugar. Set aside.
- In a separate bowl, whisk together the remaining 1/2 cup sugar, self-rising flour, and milk until smooth.
- Pour the melted butter into a 9x13-inch baking dish. Pour the batter over the butter, but do not stir. Spoon the sugared pears evenly over the batter. Sprinkle with ground cinnamon if desired.
- Bake in the preheated oven for 45-50 minutes, or until the top is golden brown and the batter has set.
- Allow to cool slightly before serving. Enjoy it warm, possibly with a scoop of vanilla ice cream or whipped cream.

Estimated Nutritional Values per Serving:

Calories: 280

Total Fat: 11g

Saturated Fat: 7g

Cholesterol: 30mg

Sodium: 150mg

Total Carbohydrates: 45g

Dietary Fiber: 3g

Sugars: 30g

Protein: 2g

Vitamins and Minerals:

Vitamin C: 6mg (about 10% of daily value)

Calcium: 60mg (about 6% of daily value)

Iron: 1mg (about 6% of daily value)



Janet Washington

HR Manager, LCAM Association Management

■ ■ Community Emergency Plan Template

Board Members:

Vendors (landscaping, pool, roofing, elevator, security	
Utility Providers (electric, water, gas, internet):	
Responders (fire, police, EMS):	
Insurance Agent / Policy	
Captains / Volunteer Leaders:	
Other:	
Primary Evacuation Route:	
Secondary Route:	
Nearest Designated Shelter (address & phone):	
Community Meeting Spot:	
Pet-Friendly Shelter Location:	
Association Website/Portal:	
Mass Email / Text Alerts Provider:	
Bulletin Boards / Flyers (locations):	
Backup Plan (walkie-talkies, phone tree, door-to-door):	
Local Emergency Alert Systems Enrolled? (Yes / No):	

■ ***Resource & Supply Checklist***

- First-Aid Kits (clubhouse, pool, gym)
- Flashlights & Batteries (common areas)
- Water Supply (minimum 1 gallon per person/day)
- Portable Chargers/Power Banks
- Backup Generator (for onsite/larger communities)
- Pet Supplies (if applicable)

Reach out to Empire Management if you need help today getting prepared.

LEARNING TOGETHER: EDUCATION FOR STRONGER HOA COMMUNITIES

Running a successful homeowners association takes more than meetings it takes knowledge. Whether you're a new board member in a condo community, part of a thriving lifestyle association, or a long-time leader in an onsite community, continuous learning ensures your neighborhood runs smoothly and residents feel supported.

WHY EDUCATION MATTERS IN ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT

- **Compliance & Confidence:** Board members who stay up to date on Florida statutes make better, faster decisions.
- **Financial Strength:** Understanding budgets, reserves, and vendor contracts keeps the community's future secure.
- **Community Unity:** Workshops give homeowners the chance to ask questions and learn how their association works, building trust and transparency.

In short, knowledge isn't just power it's peace of mind.



Community Governance Meetings
Made Simple



VIRTUAL
MEETINGS



HYBRID
MEETINGS



ELECTRONIC
VOTING



NOTICE
DISTRIBUTION

From distributing notice to collecting ballots and hosting your meeting, GetQuorum handles it all to make your Annual Meeting or Election a breeze.

BOOK A DEMO

www.getquorum.com | 1-877-353-9450

LOCAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES THIS FALL

Empire Monthly Board Workshops

Practical training sessions across Central Florida (from Sarasota to St. Augustine) covering governance, budgeting, compliance, and leadership. [Learn more »](#)

KBR Legal Webinars & Videos

Online classes and legal updates designed to keep board members informed, certified, and compliant. [Explore resources »](#)

Florida Community Essentials Directory

Keep this close, like grandma's chicken soup recipe.

Emergency & Safety Services

- Emergency (Police, Fire, Medical): 911
- Non-Emergency Police Line:
 - Varies by county
- Poison Control Center: 1-800-222-1222
- Disaster & Hurricane Hotline:
 - 1-800-342-3557
- Florida Department of Health:
 - 850-245-4444
- Florida Elder Helpline:
 - 1-800-96-ELDER

Animal & Wildlife Services

- Florida Animal Control Association:
www.floridaanimalcontrol.org
- Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission (FWC): 1-888-404-3922 (Wildlife Issues)
- Pet Poison Helpline: 1-855-764-7661
- Local Animal Shelter/Rescue: Contact your county shelter

Property & Storm Services

- National Hurricane Center:
www.nhc.noaa.gov
- Sandbag Distribution (during storms):
Contact your county emergency services
- Flood Zone Lookup: msc.fema.gov



Looking to Buy, Sell, Invest, rent?

Call Riance Realty or Visit website.

386 - 410 - 3757

<https://riancerealty.net/>

Need Help at the Property?

For pressure washing, junk removal, storm cleanup, painting & more.

386-410-3757

windfireandwater.com



Simplifying Community Living Across Florida

At Empire Management, we don't just manage communities we elevate lifestyles. As Florida's trusted HOA and condo association management company, we specialize in delivering efficient, transparent, and community first solutions for HOAs, condominiums, townhomes, lifestyle, and master-planned communities.

With our innovative tools, dedicated team, and hands-on approach, we proudly serve Maitland, Orlando, Tampa, Sarasota, St. Augustine, Leesburg, Kissimmee, and beyond.

Why Empire?

- Expert Community Managers
- Seamless Communication Tools
- Transparent Financials & Budget Guidance
- Custom Board Member Support & Annual Summits

Whether you're a board member seeking better oversight, or a developer launching a new association, Empire Management simplifies the complex so your community can thrive.

Ready to upgrade your management experience?

Visit www.empirehoa.com or call 407-770-1748 to request a proposal today.

