

## **ATTENTION LANDLORDS: The New Meth Lab Bombshell!**

**Written By: Bill and Kim Cook**

If you own rental property, you had better hold on to your hat (and wallet). The days of hands-off Landlording are over!

I am not writing this column to make you lose sleep, but you will. I am not shouting that the sky is falling, but the wind's direction has definitely changed. Today's column has one purpose: To stress the importance for Landlords to inspect each investment property they own. This means inspecting each house (both inside and out), each floor, each room (especially the kitchen and basement), each month, without fail.

These days, there are way too many Real Estate Investing gurus who are out touting the advantages and benefits of doing Lease Options and owning rental property. They use phrases like "Auto Pilot Landlording" and "Hands-Off Landlording". When I hear these gurus say this, I use phrases like "Hog Wash" and "Circus Clown".

Landlording has always been a hands-on business. If you take care of your investment properties, they will take care of you.

Last month I learned some earth shaking information from Eric Tankersley, a great City Councilman for Adairsville, and Captain Garmon, the outstanding leader of the Narcotics Enforcement Team for the Bartow County Sheriff's Office.

The GBI (Georgia Bureau of Investigations) and the Bartow County Sheriff's Office have started a new policy. (*NOTE: Your county sheriff's office may also be doing this, you'll need to check.*) If they find a meth lab in a house- ***even if it is a rental***, the following is now being done:

1. A bright red sticker will be attached to the front door of the house telling all the world that "Illegal drugs and/or hazardous chemicals were seized at this location."
2. A letter will be attached to the property's Warranty Deed stating "A clandestine drug laboratory was seized and hazardous chemicals and substances were found at said property." (In other words, your property's value just decreased, probably drastically. Hope you are not doing a Lease Option and trying to sell it.)
3. This same letter will be sent to the EPA, the County Health Department, the County Building Inspector, and the property's owner. (Did you hear this? A letter will be sent to the EPA! The EPA, as in, "Hi, I'm from the Federal Government. I'm here to help and make sure you decontaminate your property correctly." Gulp! Talk about your \$30,000 rehab!

Right about now you are saying to yourself, "This could never happen to me or to one of my rental properties." Oh yea? Here are just a few of the headlines from Bartow's Daily Tribune in just this past month alone: ***Authorities seize record 174 pounds of meth; Police find meth lab in***

***mobile home; Agents raid meth lab on Glade Road; Possible meth-related fire probe; 2 arrested in meth lab bust.***

Turns out that meth is everywhere. It is cheap and easy to make. Oh, and here is a little jewel, when meth is being made, it easily and often blows up, destroying the house in the process!

Recently, Captain Garmon was kind enough to spend some time educating me about methamphetamine – meth for short. Like most folks, I didn't know what meth was, how it is made, or why people are stupid enough to use it. Boy, did I ever get my eyes opened!

Meth can be made with supplies bought from your local grocery. The supplies are cheap. When taken, the drug totally consumes people, both mentally and physically. Meth users will give up their jobs, food, and family – including their kids – for this drug.

If you think meth is only being used by folks on the other side of the tracts, you are very wrong! If you think meth users won't manufacture this drug in your rental house, again, you are very wrong.

Bottom line is this: You, as a Landlord, need to educate yourself about meth. You need to know what supplies are used in its manufacture so you will know what to look for as you inspect your properties. You want to be able to take care of a meth problem before it takes care of you and/or blows up your rental property! (Does your insurance policy cover damage caused by a meth lab explosion?)