



# You Will Not Believe This Sweet Way to Save Money in Your Community

By Susan Saldibar

Nobody likes utility bills. Maybe because we all fall prey to the misconception that we can't do anything about them (except complain, sigh, and pay). Think about it. How often do you really look at your utility bills? How often do you question them?

The folks at [RealPage](#) (a Senior Housing Forum partner) know the high price senior living communities pay by not taking the time to manage their utility bills. They believe that you should not only be looking at them, you should be scrutinizing them. And, yes, you should be questioning them as well!

Their research shows that communities can save significantly on their utility bills with proper tracking, auditing, and management. It's what led them to develop an application that basically does it all for you.

I asked Jason Lindwall, Senior VP of Property Management Solutions for RealPage to share some of the things their RealPage UEM (Utility Expense Management) application does and how it benefits senior living communities. Because, regardless of whether you use their system or not, you should be managing your utilities costs more closely and reaping benefits in return.

- **Utility Expense Management:** How do you track and manage your communities' utilities invoices? How do you know you're not missing something? UEM will capture things like total amount due, line items, and metrics.
- **Late Fee Savings:** When did you last revisit how you are processing and paying invoices? UEM tracks and pays all invoices on time. Users of UEM report an average late fee of 0.14% of total spend (compared to an industry average of 0.54%!)
- **Sustainability and Benchmarking:** Do you know how your utility use compares to that of other communities? You should be scoring your property for water and energy usage. The UEM system will do this for you automatically.
- **Managed Alerts:** How often have you found out about a leak or other energy drainer long after you've already paid the bills? UEM scans each bill for spikes and dips. And, it can minimize "false alarms" as well. If there are still questions, RealPage can come onsite and conduct an audit to determine the source and cause of the spike/dip.

- **Rate Forecasting:** Are you researching rate data and staying on top of rate changes? UEM uses multiple methods from multiple sources to make more accurate rate predictions.
- **Budget Builder:** How do you create your utility budget? Or are you simply cutting and pasting from last year? UEM combines historical consumption, your current rates, and rate forecast data to streamline budgeting. So it's much more accurate than manual methods.
- **Variance Analyzer:** Do you spend lots of time researching what's throwing your utility budget off track? UEM pulls together the information from managed alerts, budget builder, weather data, and other sources to provide variance reports that help you pinpoint exactly what is causing your variances.
- **Energy Star Portfolio Manager Integration:** You can flow your UEM data into this popular tool to share with owners and lenders.

What I also really like about UEM is that it is stand-alone and platform agnostic. So, you can use it independent of other RealPage solutions. And, you can integrate it with other systems you have in-house.

It bears mentioning as well that RealPage provides energy procurement services that can help you identify and take advantage of the cost savings and risk management opportunities available in various deregulated markets throughout the U.S. You can also bring them onsite for an energy audit to help you identify areas where you could be optimizing your community to be more energy efficient and help lower your utility bills. And they'll even do things like go to bat for you when you are ready to dispute a bill with your utility company.

There is much more information on utilities' savings potential that you can get by [downloading this eBook](#) on how to minimize utility waste and save money with managed alerts.

"Most senior living organizations don't realize the savings and benefits they can gain by managing their utility expenses," Jason Lindwall says. "Our Utility Expense Management solution helps our customers minimize late fees, monitor data continuously, and get alerted when there are spikes in usage."



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