

ORCA TALES

"We can tell you more about them than their mother"

US to Launch Sex Offender Registry

Washington (Reuters) - The Justice Department will launch a national sex offender registry website that will allow people to check state databases with a single search, U. S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales said on Friday.

"With this technology, every citizen and law enforcement officer will be able to search the latest information for the identity and location of known sex offenders," he said in prepared remarks announcing the new registry.

Gonzales and other Justice Department officials said that within 60 days they expect to have the site available for public use and searches, with at least 20 states participating in the registry.

They said they want by autumn to have online information from the 48 states that have public sex offender registries. It will be up to each state to decide whether to link into the new system.

"We will be working with the two remaining states to be sure that everyone gets on board with this important public notification system," Gonzales said. The department released a copy of his prepared remarks at the National Press Club.

Under the Justice Department's registry, an individual can enter a name, zip code, county or other query to search for registered sex offenders. Department officials said a limited number of public and for-profit websites now attempt to offer the data from the various states.

They said the new registry would promote public safety by using already existing sex offender data, would minimize the time and cost required to create a new repository and would allow state and local agencies to keep control over the data.

The officials said policy concerns over privacy issues and misuse of the data would be avoided because the states keep control of the data, rather than creating a federal database.

They said the registry cannot be used by employers to screen applicants for jobs. That would violate FBI policy and would be inconsistent with the noncriminal justice background checks in the Interstate Crime Control and Privacy Compact.

Win! Win! Win!

All you have to do is send over screenings! When you receive a report back—**look for the whale tail!** It will be somewhere on the report.

Find the whale tail immediately and you will be a **WINNER!** We will have one winner each week!



A Vision for Our Future in the Multi-Family Housing Association!

We have tremendous opportunity now, and in the future, to influence our industry for good.

As President of WMFHA I have a vision for our future in the Multi Family Industry. I have frequently reflected on what we can become as an organization in the next five years. There are some wonderful examples of apartment associations throughout the country who we can learn from. We are studying several. We want your perspective. Send your comments to admin@wmfha.org.

Here are some suggestions you can implement to help make our organization more successful: *Participate fully by joining all of your rental properties. In order for us to serve you completely we need your full support. *Prominently display the WMFHA/NAA logo (soon to be available on our website) on your rental properties and in your marketing material. As we gain prestige and visibility we will be more valuable to you and be able to put more resources to work for you. *Display fairness, professionalism, and outstanding ethics in dealing with residents, vendors, employers, and employees in your organizations. As we show that WMFHA members have high standards and fair business practices, that WMFHA logo you display will give you a competitive advantage. *Get involved politically! If you look at associations that are effective you will find that their members actively work on the issues that matter to them. The education associations, civil rights organizations, and senior citizens organizations are examples of effective organizations. We can only optimize our influence and effectiveness with your help and support.

We have tremendous opportunity now, and in the future, to influence our industry for good. Please join us.

**By Bill Austin, EPIC Management*

***WMFHA (Washington Multifamily Housing Association) is for property managers to learn and share information in the industry.*

Feel free to contact us at: phone 206-817-4784, 6627 S 191st Place #F102, Kent, WA 98032 or email us at: admin@wmfha.org

ORCA WISDOM



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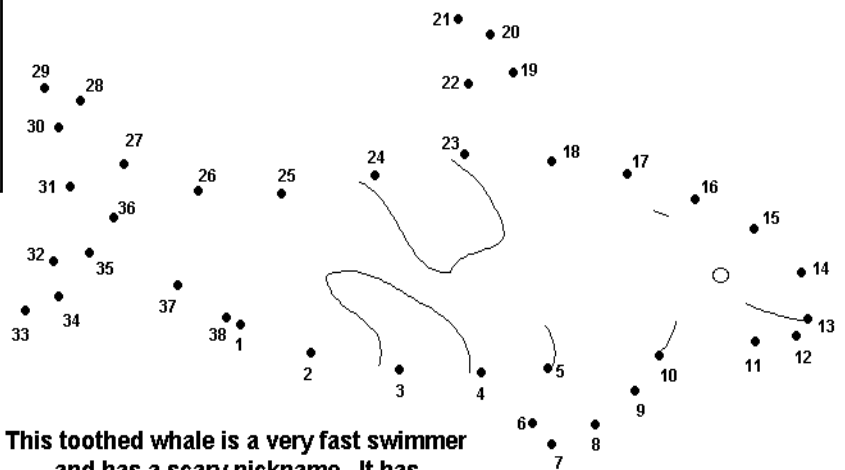
Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!!!

The Northwest Rental Owners Association and Washington Apartment Association members thank you for your contribution to the WAA Educational Conference held at the Cottonwood Tree, Mt. Vernon, on April 15th and 16th, 2005. You are always a key part of the Northwest Rental Owners Association.

Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

**Sharon Mecca, Chairman*

Mystery Whale Connect-the-Dots Name _____



This toothed whale is a very fast swimmer and has a scary nickname. It has distinctive black and white coloration. It grows to be about 33 feet (10 m) long and is the largest member of the dolphin family. This very social cetacean lives and hunts in close-knit pods.

What is this whale called? _____

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LAW TARGETS SQUALID APARTMENTS

Two years after an Olympia apartment complex was closed because the landlord wouldn't fix toxic mold, overflowing sewage and other problems, a bill inspired by the situation was signed into law. Owners of apartments that have been closed for safety violations now will have to pay to relocate tenants, an idea conceived in 2003 while the city of Olympia battled a landlord over the Forest Glen apartments. "Hopefully this will provide incentive to landlords to maintain their buildings," said Pat Tassoni of the Thurston County Tenants Union. Tassoni was there when Forest Glen residents were forced to leave their homes after being evicted in 2003, and he was present Tuesday when the bill was signed by Gov. Christine Gregoire. But no one from Forest Glen was present. The 116 apartments near Cooper Point Rd were purchased by a new owner and refurbished. "Economically marginal families lost housing they could afford. That's the consequence of this beat-up-the-landlord approach," said Tim Seth, a South Sound landlord and president of the Olympic Rental Association. The bill will make it harder for low-income people to find a place to live because it will result in more developers buying affordable apartments, remodeling them and raising the rent, he said. "Understandably, it was a knee-jerk reaction to this whole Forest Glen situation, but it didn't include an opportunity for everybody to sit down at the table and come up with a rational solution," Seth said. A better solution would allow landlords to avoid heavy payments and keep their buildings open while repairs are made, he said. But situations such as Forest Glen make the bill hard to argue against, he added. "It's a pretty dramatic step," said Rep. Sam Hunt, D-Olympia, who backed the measure. "You have to be living in squalor like they were in that case. Black bathtubs and black ceilings and that sort of thing. Think about how bad a place has to be before the city comes in and shuts it down." The city spent about \$25,000 to relocate the tenants, and community donations brought in an additional \$16,000, said Matthew Green, an Olympia councilman who testified before the Legislature in support of the bill. "With this law, if any other city in the state faces another situation like Forest Glen, those cities will be able to help tenants, and it won't cost taxpayers a ton of money," Green said. "The slumlord will have to pay." Under the law, city inspectors will determine whether the damage forcing the closure of a rental complex is because of landlord neglect or tenant use. If the landlord is at fault, the amount due is equal to \$2,000 per unit or three months rent per unit, whichever is greater. Landlords must also repay any tenant deposits or prepaid rent. Cities can decide to pay to relocate tenants and collect a lump sum from the landlord. "I think we'll see some cases of that over the next year," said Tassoni of the tenants union. Cases like Forest Glen are rare, but a similar situation occurred recently in Burien, and more are likely as apartment buildings across the state age and fall into disrepair, Tassoni said. "Certainly a number of buildings in Olympia fit that category, and could face this in the future," he said. The bill was originally proposed by former Rep. Sandra Romero of Olympia. It died abruptly in 2003. In 2004, the idea passed the Democrat-controlled House but never got a hearing in the Republican Senate. This year, with Democrats controlling both sides, Senate Bill 5577 passed unanimously in the Senate and 84-12 in the House. It was sponsored by Sen. Darlene Fairley, D-Lake Forest Park.