

Structures AWARDS 2011

UNSUNG HERO: WINNER

Mitigating disasters, all in a day's work

'People think that property managers collect rent and cash checks, but there's a million things that go wrong.'
— Joe Lewis, Orchard Commercial owner and president

BY ERIC VAN SUSTEREN

Property manager Katy Jessup received word late on a Wednesday night in March that one of the buildings she managed was flooding.

KATY JESSUP

TITLE: Property manager
COMPANY: Orchard Commercial
HEROICS: Responsible for a 1.3-million-square-foot property portfolio that holds 25 buildings, 106 tenants

The building, occupied by Comet Technologies USA, had a burst water main and several inches of water on the office floor. Jessup worked through the weekend to coordinate moving the company to vacant space next door. On Monday morning, only two working days after the flood, Comet's employees came to work in their new space and enjoyed a catered breakfast personally delivered by Jessup.

For Jessup, a property manager at San Jose-based Orchard Commercial, this is part of the job.

"You hope that you only have to deal with something like that once or twice a year," she said. "To handle it effectively like that was probably one of the best things I've been able to do here."

Jessup is responsible for a 1,329,085-square-foot portfolio of properties that holds 25 buildings and 106 tenants. That portfolio includes the 178,898-square-foot headquarters of Keynote Systems Corp. and the 100,420-square-foot office building with 30 tenants for Invesco Realty Advisors.

The combined value of the properties in her portfolio is more than \$250 million.

"People think that property managers collect rent and cash checks, but there's a million things that go wrong," said Joe Lewis, president and owner of Orchard Commercial. "It's

like a small town that you're the mayor of — you've gotta make sure it all works."

As a property manager, Jessup is involved in accounting, renovation planning, coordinating with brokers to prepare vacant spaces for lease, and mitigating the occasional disaster.

"She's very detail-oriented, and there are a lot of important moving parts, and Katy is experienced and good enough to get those parts done correctly," Lewis said. "In the places that Katy manages, the owners will often say to me, 'This is one of the best property managers I've ever had.'"

But during her more than 20 years as a property manager, Jessup has been busy outside of work, as well.

She attained a degree in applied economics from the University of San Francisco, achieved her real property administrator and facility management administrator credentials through the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA), and served on numerous boards and committees while raising three children.

Jessup was on BOMA's board of directors for 15 years and was president of the Silicon Valley chapter of the organization from 2001 to 2003.

She is head coach of a Santa Clara youth soccer team, a girl scout leader, and was formerly an assistant coach for the Santa Clara Police Activities League softball league.

"Being involved in my kids' lives and schools, knowing their friends and knowing what's going on in their lives is important to me," said Jessup, who is sometimes out of the house four nights a week coaching, attending meetings or working late.

With her youngest daughter in sixth grade, Jessup said retirement won't be coming anytime soon, but she said she'd like to see things



VICKI THOMPSON

GOOD MANAGEMENT: Cleaning up floods and catering breakfast are part of the job, said Katy Jessup, who is responsible for 106 tenants as a property manager at Orchard Commercial.

slow down a little in the next few years so that she can have some time for her family.

"I'm still trying to find the right balance between work and home, as well as take care of myself and stay healthy," she said.