

IRONWOOD
COMMUNITY NEWS

THEFTS AND HOMEOWNER SECURITY VIOLATIONS

Recently, we had several incidents of golf club thefts on Ajo and Quercus (garage side doors left unlocked), and a late night theft of a wallet from a kitchen counter (open and unlocked kitchen sliding doors) and golf clubs from the same garage. You should know that Ironwood Security works with the City of Palm Desert Police Department on matters as these and there has been recent progress. Last month the police department called to inform us that they had broken a ring of thieves responsible for 14 known thefts, although they had not yet tied this group to specific Ironwood incidents.

In addition, the City of Palm Desert police department has dedicated certain resources and begun new activities to assist Ironwood in preventing and solving these thefts, the details of which best remain unsaid for now.

Against Ironwood policy, some homeowners are allowing contractors, vendors and other service people to use their personal transponders and swipe cards. On one recent day alone, Security identified four contractors using personal transponders or swipe cards of homeowners. This practice greatly compromises security since homeowner entry cards allow 24-hour access to all Ironwood gates. Swipe cards and transponders are likely given by homeowners to service people for convenience, and perhaps to avoid the transponder fee.

However, contractors, vendors and service people are explicitly not permitted to be in Ironwood except on certain days and during approved working hours for security reasons. We are evaluating new approaches to our current policy including limiting the number of cards available to homeowners without special request and review since some have an excessive number of cards, in our opinion. Warnings on these matters were posted on Channel 77.

Please, immediately retrieve any swipe cards or transponders you have given service people and/or contact Security so the use of these cards can be limited. Recent late evening thefts indicate unauthorized people are using homeowner cards to pass through our gates against rules and policy. For security reasons, we cannot allow uncontrolled access to Ironwood by non-authorized people.

VIDEO SECURITY BEING ADDED TO IRONWOOD GATES

Multiple camera digital recording systems have been approved for installation at all Ironwood gates to improve our overall security program. While our transponder and pass card systems provide excellent recorded data on entry and exit activity, video provides significant additional deterrence to potential criminal activities, including:

- A visual record of all vehicles and drivers entering and exiting Ironwood
- Dedicated visual recording of license plates of all vehicles
- Monitoring of gate cameras from both the main guard house as well as from off-site locations
- Digital, time-stamped recordings of all cameras 24 hours per day, seven days a week, including substantial historical data.

We are fortunate to live in a community where security incidents are infrequent. However, any incident is unwelcome and these new systems will improve our overall security. Total installed cost for the video systems was approximately \$38,000, and monthly operating costs are budgeted to be \$600 for service contracts and DSL communication lines. Amortized across 1066 homes, this amounts to \$35 per home for installation and \$.56/home for monthly operating costs. The ICA board feels this is a judicious investment and hope you support this improvement.





2008 ICA FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

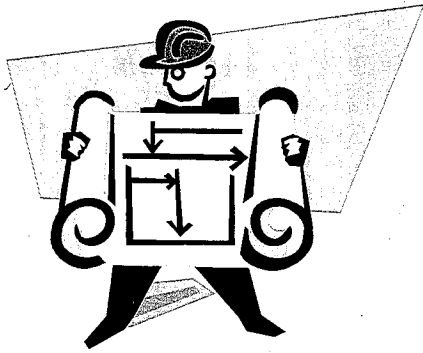
The ICA Strategic Plan was mailed to homeowners last year and updated copies will soon be available through Desert Resort Management either on PDF file by email or as a paper copy. Excerpts from the 2008 plan are reprinted elsewhere in this newsletter.

IRONWOOD COMPARISON

To better understand how Ironwood compares to other communities in the valley, members of the ICA Planning Committee interviewed seven "like" communities last summer: Desert Horizons, Rancho La Quinta, The Springs, Morningside, Indian Ridge, Mission Hills, and the Palm Desert Tennis Club. Palm Valley, Rancho Las Palmas, and Monterey CC were looked at in terms of Club vs. homeowner contribution to common area expense sharing. Major findings:

- **GOVERNANCE** - Ironwood clearly has the most complex HOA structure in the valley with a total of 16 relatively independent HOAs and a central HOA entity (ICA) with limited authority for planning, establishing and enforcing community standards. Ironwood's 16 HOAs average 67 homes per HOA. In comparison, interviewed communities averaged 71, 363, 512, 817 and 870 homes per HOA respectively. Ironwood's history of sequential development and wider variety of home types are contributing reasons to our current structure.
- **SECURITY** is a vital topic in most every community interviewed. Several have recently invested in expanded capability for both gates and perimeter.
- **COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT** - A number of communities have completed or are planning special programs to update and modernize their community, recognizing the need to remain competitive. Like Ironwood, many had their beginnings in the 1970s and feel they require some refreshing.
- **COMMUNITY FACILITY** - Most have a community building with offices for management and a meeting room(s) for HOA and homeowner use.
- **MANAGEMENT** -- Many have HOA management on site in a local facility. And, about half utilized their own employees for this purpose rather than outside firms.
- **COMMON AREA AND SERVICES EXPENSE SHARING** - Ironwood is unique in the relatively large amount of money our resident club contributes to community security, streets and other common area expenses. The Ironwood Country Club pays 20% of ICA's non-cable operating expenses each year as stipulated in ICA's governing documents - budgeted to be \$396,404 in 2008. In the communities we interviewed, the resident clubs contributed significantly less. In some cases, the club received income from real estate transfer fees imposed on every unit sale, regardless of whether buyers or sellers were club members.
- **HOMEOWNERS AS CLUB MEMBERS** - About 60% of Ironwood's 1066 homeowners belong to the Ironwood Country Club. In other communities, Club membership percentage is higher. Several require all homeowners to be Club members at some level, and the Club and HOAs are typically separate entities.
- **ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPING** - Most communities have community-wide guidelines. In Ironwood, each local HOA has its own.
- **COMMUNICATIONS** - There was a wide variance in capability. No one community stood out in terms of effectiveness. Several made good use of a local TV channel by running videos, more frequent updates, etc.
- **INSURANCE** - Many have reduced HOA earthquake insurance because of the recent huge increase in commercial earthquake premiums. Some HOAs do not carry earthquake insurance, leaving this matter to homeowners.

We intend to continue our interchange with these communities and will be updating this information on a regular basis through the ICA Planning Committee.



CONTRACTOR & VENDOR ACCESS POLICY

Unlike some communities, Ironwood does not limit the number of contractors or vendors that do business in our community. However, we do have a written policy that requires contractors and vendors be licensed, bonded and insured. This document is given to all outside contractors and vendors who request transponders. Here are highlights of the policy that has been in place since June, 2001:

- Any firm doing business in Ironwood more than four times in a calendar month is required to have a transponder for each vehicle that enters our community. Current cost/vehicle is \$16/month after a \$50 refundable deposit and \$13 initial account set up fee. We expect firms to keep their account current and initiate changes in their status in the event of no Ironwood activity. Overdue accounts will have their transponders cancelled if not paid after a courtesy phone call and written notice.
- Approved construction hours:
 - October 1 - April 30: Monday through Friday, 7 am - 5:30 pm. Saturdays: 8:00am - 5:00pm. No Sunday work.
 - May 1 - September 30: Monday through Friday, 6 am - 7 pm. Saturdays, 8am - 5 pm. No Sunday work.
- General contractors must furnish proof of insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000 per person for bodily injury, and also \$1,000,000 for each incident of accident and property damage.
- All drivers must be licensed and insured, and are asked to show proof of identification if stopped. Spot checks are routinely made by Ironwood Security.
- For security reasons, vendors and contractors must not use transponders or swipe cards registered to homeowners since these cards are cleared for 24 hour access.

Since this policy has been in place for more than six years, most contractors and vendors in the area are very familiar with it. If a homeowner has questions on a specific contractor or vendor or would like a copy of this policy, please contact DRM at 760.346.1161.

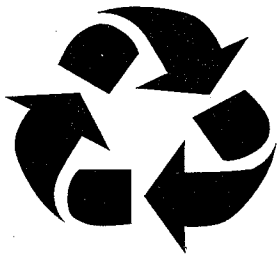


EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Under the leadership of Bill Creagan, Roger Comerford and Don Carlin, the Ironwood Country Club initiated development of an Ironwood Emergency Action Plan to deal with the effects of a major earthquake or other disaster in our area. Leadership for the program has now been assumed by ICA since ICA represents all homeowners in Ironwood. We are pleased this team and other committee people will continue their efforts on behalf of this worthy effort.

Experts are increasing their calls for diligence and preparation in the event of a major earthquake. Our program goal is to be self-sufficient for a seven-day period resulting from potential damage to roads, utilities and communications. Therefore, we are building a program identifying requirements through committees who have been identifying and documenting essentials for homeowners, HOAs, security, a command center, block captains, search and rescue, medical teams and heavy equipment needs.

This is a formidable task and additional volunteers are needed. If you are interested in helping, please contact Bill Creagan by email at bill@creaganandassociates.com or contact Jan Baker at DRM.



REFUSE UPDATE

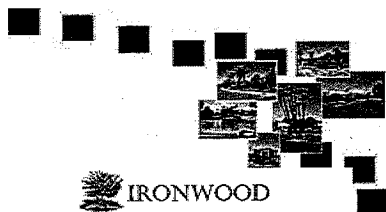
Changes to refuse and recycling occurred recently for four additional Ironwood HOAs: Canyon View Estates, HOA 9, HOA 14 and The Estates. HOA 11 already has the new service. Homeowners were given new containers for both refuse and recycling. This is a part of the city's efforts to automate refuse and recycling. At this time, condos and Skyview homes are not affected. The design of many Ironwood condos and homes makes it difficult to accommodate automated refuse and recycling containers.

IRONWOOD COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Members of this Council are the 16 local HOA presidents, an Ironwood Country Club liaison, and the ICA board. It meets three times annually to address common community issues. Highlights of the November 23 meeting include:



- **Communications** - Recent changes were noted, including the regular use of email updates to Council members for ICA updates and community news, a newly formatted homeowner newsletter, one-on-one HOA president meetings, and the improved use of committees including the establishment of an ICA Architectural Committee.
- **Websites** - ICA intends to construct a prototype of an Ironwood Community Website where HOAs and homeowners could eventually access HOA services and documents. General discussion followed.
- **2008 ICA Strategic Plan** - Members were asked to comment on the 2008-2012 Objectives and other aspects of the document.
- **HOA reports** - Five HOA presidents addressed the Council to communicate general information about their HOA, note local issues and suggestions for community improvements.
- **Reports on several summer study efforts**, including community comparison visits and an organization planning task.
- **Discussion regarding the Club's 20% share of ICA's regular assessment.**



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IRONWOOD COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

We hope you are enjoying the new look and expanded Ironwood Community Newsletter. Our intent is to address topics of interest to all Ironwood homeowners and publish every October, January and April, timed to coincide with the start of season, major mailings of the ICA budget and ICA annual meeting results. If you have thoughts on topics you would like to see addressed in this publication or care to comment on any issue, please email Jan Baker at jbaker@drminternet.com, or call DRM at 760.346.1161.

NEW CABLE TV CONTRACT SIGNED

Homeowner cable costs were \$29/month in 2007. ICA recently negotiated and signed a new, 5.5 year contract with Time-Warner that extends the \$29 rate an additional 2.5 years after which monthly costs will rise \$1 per year. In addition, Ironwood acquired at no charge the use of \$12,000 of equipment that will allow upgraded graphics, audio, and programming for our in-house Channel 77. Individually purchased rates for the same services from Time Warner are \$30-40 more per month, depending on package. We are pleased with this new agreement and the savings it provides to homeowners.