



IRONWOOD
COMMUNITY NEWS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On behalf of your ICA board of directors, I would like to welcome all to the start of a new season in Ironwood. As you will see in this newsletter, your Board and the various Standing Committees have been quite active this past year. The focus of this newsletter is threefold: (1) to bring you up to date regarding a variety of actions taken in response to homeowner feedback gained from the 2007 Owner Survey, now encapsulated in the ICA Strategic Plan; (2) to provide an overview of a proposed "Community Enhancement Program" which is an initiative resulting from the survey feedback, and; (3) to encourage you to participate in the Resident Forums that will be conducted in December and January to gain additional owner input regarding the contemplated Community Enhancement Program.

I would also like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank Roger Comerford for his four years of outstanding contribution as an ICA board member. Roger recently left the ICA board but remains an active member of several committees. We salute Roger for his Ironwood service. We are most fortunate that Janet Plat has agreed to assume this open ICA board position. Janet is an attorney with many years of civic and corporate board experience, including being the longest serving member of the AAA of Southern California board, and past chairperson of the Orange County Children's Hospital.

We trust that the various articles in this newsletter provide you added confidence that your ICA Board welcomes your input and is committed to fostering continuous community improvement in Ironwood.

Larry Sutter, President, ICA

SIGN UP NOW FOR RESIDENT FORUMS!



The ICA board has scheduled Resident Forums in December and January to solicit comments regarding ICA's tentative plans to upgrade Ironwood's boulevards and medians in coordination with the on-going streets maintenance program. It makes economic sense to consider median-related improvements prior to repaving those streets to eliminate costly rework.

These potential improvements are in response to the ICA Strategic Plan objective to create a long-term Ironwood Community Plan. This objective concurs with results of the McMahon Group survey of Ironwood residents where a significant majority expressed strong support for continued streets maintenance, as well as initiatives that integrate greenscape and desertscape to improve year around attractiveness and reduce water usage.

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SIGN UP NOW

(From page 1)

We seek and value your input on these potential, cost-effective improvements that would be accomplished over several years and likely NOT require an increase in the regular monthly assessment as currently projected in the ICA Strategic Plan. Specifics regarding these concepts are detailed elsewhere in this newsletter in the article entitled: "Community Enhancement Update."

Each Resident Forum requires sign-up since attendance at each session is limited to insure all views are heard. The sessions will be held on the following dates in the Valley View Room of the Ironwood Country Club:

- **December 9 and 11: 9:00 am and 1:00 pm each day**
- **January 11, 12 and 19: 9:00 am and 1:00 pm each day**

To register, please email Jodi Gaylord at DRM at JGaylord@drmineternet.com (preferred) or call DRM at 760.346.1161.

UPDATES ON STRATEGIC PLAN ACTIONS

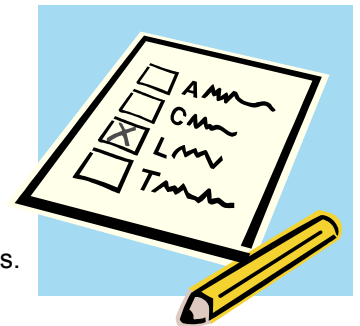
The ICA Strategic Plan is updated annually and available to residents by contacting Nancy Parkinson at Desert Resort Management. Current objectives were established in support of the ICA Mission Statement following a review of community history, the McMahon Group survey of residents ("Owner Survey"), and a competitive analysis and group effort by the Ironwood Community Council to identify community strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

This edition of the Ironwood Community newsletter provides updates on ICA actions taken to support the plan objectives and includes specific references to Owner Survey data.

FEBRUARY 2007 OWNER SURVEY

In February 2007, we received the report of industry leader McMahon Group on the ICA sponsored survey of Ironwood homeowners. A summary was mailed to all residents and noted that the survey had a response rate of 40%. McMahon observed that, statistically, if 95% had completed the survey the findings would differ from the actual sample by no more than + 3%. Therefore, survey results were judged very reflective of the community's feelings. The survey focused on certain issues:

- ICA's role in the community and the ICA Strategic Plan.
- The relative importance of ICA's facilitation role in the community and community wide collaboration.
- Satisfaction with the Ironwood Rules and Regulations.
- Governance, communication and responsiveness.
- Developing a better understanding of why homeowners chose Ironwood.
- Learning impressions regarding the importance of the Club to the community.
- Owners' interest in seeing proposals for improving the appearance of Ironwood's gates.
- The importance of Security.
- Satisfaction with streets, lighting and signage.
- Importance of landscape initiatives.
- Ironwood's architectural image.



The ICA Board was very satisfied with the survey and especially thankful to residents who took the time and effort to respond. A copy of the survey summary can be obtained from Nancy Parkinson at DRM. The survey was also thoroughly discussed at an Ironwood Community Council meeting and incorporated into the Strategic Plan updated in January 2008.

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT UPDATE

There are several compelling reasons to formalize long term thinking and planning regarding community improvements:

- Home values would be positively impacted if we were to upgrade community boulevards, medians and entrances. Such actions would also increase Ironwood's appeal to potential residents and Club members.
- The 2007 Owner Survey showed that 86% of Ironwood residents responding were in favor of ICA facilitating community wide improvement issues such as streets, medians and gates. 78-80% felt it important that the community collaborate on common elements such as lighting, mailboxes, street, architecture and landscaping. Clear majorities were also in favor of programs that integrated greenscape and desertscape, improved year around attractiveness with less reliance on seasonal plantings, and helped reduce water usage. 56% were in favor of seeing proposals to update the appearance of entries and gates.
- With effective planning we have the opportunity to be more socially responsible with our water usage, as well as conform to current and planned City of Palm Desert water usage regulations and goals.
- A long term Enhancement Plan would allow us to address issues in an orderly and more cost effective fashion.



8' wide planter base and bowl for corners of major intersections

In support of the ICA Strategic Plan, the ICA Board established an Enhancement Committee to look into issues that might be pursued to improve the competitive image of Ironwood in the market place. Since the street program was defined and progressing well, it was deemed important to place the highest priority in studying potential improvements to the medians in the boulevards (Mariposa to Irontree, Irontree from the Club to Portola, and Portola within the gates) since such work would impact the street program.

This Committee spent most of the 2007/08 season building consensus around a goal and process to create a direction for a long-term Community Enhancement plan, establishing methods to gather and genuinely incorporate member feedback into the final plan, and developing a responsible funding program. To this aim, three coordinated activities are underway:

1. RGA, a well-respected landscape architectural firm, has been engaged to develop long-term plan concepts for consideration by ICA association members and board. The plan will address several major elements, including Boulevard and Median Plantings, new Parkway (curbside) Plantings, alternatives for Entries and Gates, and a variety of smaller projects that add character and interest such as pocket parks, imitation bridge treatments and the like. In addition, street and landscape lighting, signage and our aging irrigation system will be addressed.
2. Resident Forums have been scheduled for December and January to gather homeowner feedback on Streets and Medians improvements that would be coordinated with the ongoing streets program.
3. The ICA Finance Committee is studying funding alternatives for other potential improvements such as entry gates and surrounding areas. Any such programs would require extensive member review and approval.

Boulevards & Medians - A review of our boulevards quickly show that these streets are as wide or wider than Portola outside the gates, a thoroughfare designed for a much heavier traffic loads and higher speeds. Such widths are not necessary in Ironwood. Therefore, we have identified the following potential improvements that could be accomplished over several years and NOT require an increase in monthly dues.

- Eliminate left turn lanes and convert them into medians that would accept new, additional plantings.

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COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT UPDATE

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- Extend medians where practical to provide more attractive and continuous landscape plantings.
- Adopt a more uniform, colorful desert landscape theme that includes seasonal flowers while reducing water usage and improving year around appearance. Currently, some medians are all stones while others are all desert plantings or all seasonal flowers only.
- Incorporate attractive lighting that improves visibility at turn areas and updates landscape lighting.
- Install new irrigation systems that support new plantings and minimize nuisance water runoff onto streets, a major contributor to street deterioration. The current irrigation system is 30+ years old and in need of replacement. An important goal is to be more socially responsible in our use of water and meet new and emerging water restriction regulations.
- Incorporate the use of paver bricks at certain street intersections, golf cart crossings, and parking niches. This will enhance appearance while adding to vehicle and pedestrian safety.
- Utilize street and directional signage that is improved in appearance and readable at night.

The ICA board proposes to consider the Median Project in January 2009, following an extensive Resident Forum process to gather inputs from members. If the program is approved, it is important that any median and intersection work be completed prior to the planned repaving of those streets. This program could be accomplished by extending the streets program a few years. Therefore, we do not envision increasing the regular ICA monthly assessment beyond the approximate rate of inflation to fund these projects. If approved, the first improvements would begin summer 2009.

There are other, longer-term improvements that are being studied which, due to the fact that they are larger expenditures and/or are located on property not managed by ICA, will require a vote of the ICA membership as well as approvals of affected HOAs and the Club. Such ideas to be studied include:

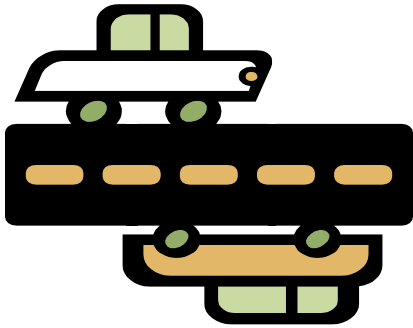
- Entrance gates and surroundings.
- Added parkway plantings adjacent to the curbs of Irontree, Mariposa, and Portola within the gates on certain HOA and Club owned property subject to their support and approval. These plantings would complement the median plantings and project a more consistent landscape theme.
- Small “pocket parks” in certain locations.
- Bridge treatments and use of stonework at entrance to some HOAs and selected areas.

This program and its early concepts are being coordinated by ICA in support of long term, continuous improvements to our community.

CHANNEL 98

Do not forget to check cable Channel 98 for both community and Ironwood Country Club news. We are striving to make better use of this communications tool. Please stop by and see what is new!

STREETS MAINTENANCE UPDATE



ICA continues to implement the ongoing program of updating and repairing our streets that began in 2003 and is currently estimated to be completed in 2012. However, with recent oil price increases, it will likely take longer. We have spent about \$2.5 million to date and the program is about 50% complete. Oil prices have become a significant cost variable as this program continues.

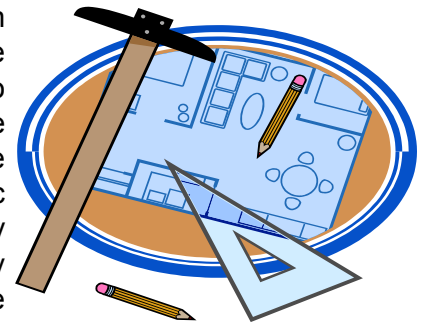
The priority to determine which streets are repaired first has been established by the Street Committee based on a “worst first” approach recognizing, however, that nearly all of our streets are in poor to very poor condition. Ironwood’s main boulevards (Irontree, Mariposa and Portola

inside the gates) will be the final streets to be repaired since they encountered a significant amount of heavy truck traffic associated with the building of the new clubhouse facilities as well as with the current development of Canyon View Estates. These boulevards have median dividers that include inconsistent landscaping, and aging irrigation and lighting systems. If the medians are to be updated as noted elsewhere in this newsletter, it is timely to look at what work needs to be done to them in advance of the paving project.

Detailed projections of the amount of work remaining have been generated. This information allows us to more accurately project street improvement costs as prices change from year to year. In addition, we have worked with industry experts to document and estimate the effect of different types of repair. This information is the base data for the reserve study from which the Finance Committee reports annually to the membership, provides information for the amount of funding needed to replace improvements as they come due, and supports the financial projections in the ICA Strategic Plan.

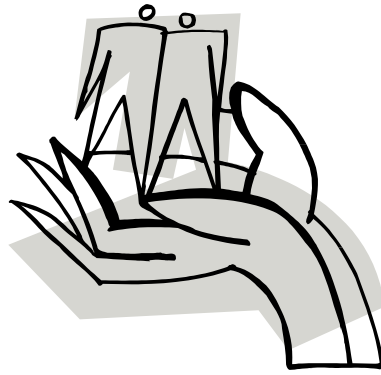
ARCHITECTURE UPDATE

About 70% of all Owner Survey respondents felt architecture was an important issue for collaboration. As such, an ICA Architectural Committee was formed this past year to work in cooperation with local HOAs so as to assess architectural standards and practices in the community and provide preferences and suggestions for upgrades and general improvements. The committee’s initial focus is on condos and condo homes. Ironwood’s aesthetic strength exists in its current architecture. The community has a multiplicity of designs and styles that provide uniqueness to the community. By enhancing this architecture with a variety of color and materials, overall home values and attractiveness will be advanced.



The Architectural Committee is also looking into other issues. An architectural forum was held this year with the purpose of beginning a dialogue with HOAs regarding areas where ICA may be able to provide coordination for associations with condos or Skyview homes. Topics such as paint colors, styles and types of garage doors, brick pavers and general expansions and upgrades of individual homes within the community were discussed. The forum provided ICA with a direction wherein ICA sponsored a booklet outlining a variety of home colors and how more than one color may be used in an association. The color palates would vary from association to association and be complementary. We expect to develop a list of contractors and be able to take advantage of volume discounts that may be negotiated for these items. The committee will continue to collaborate with all associations in maintaining this color booklet on an ongoing basis. Of course, adopting these colors is voluntary by local HOAs and so would require their endorsement and approval.

The process is ongoing, but the goal is achievable through the interaction of the architectural committees of individual HOAs and ICA.



SECURITY UPDATE

88% of Owner Survey respondents favored the roving security patrol and 60% were in favor of better enforcement of Rules & Regulations and the use of speed monitors.

Many (90%) owners chose Ironwood in part because it is a gated community. In this regard, 2008 has been a busy year. Growth in the valley has caused crime rates to rise and we have had more incidents inside our gates than in prior years. This has caused us to re-evaluate our systems. We looked at perimeter monitoring systems to detect over-the-wall intrusions. This may be a worthwhile project for the future, but since most incidents are “inside jobs,” we found other areas that need improvement now.

Our previous gate pass system used swipe cards and transponders and had many shortcomings. Some were caused by poor communication over the proper usage of these devices. This has been corrected with a new program that eliminates swipe cards and authorizes transponders only for the number of vehicles (including golf carts) in a household. We no longer have excess transponders and swipe cards floating around with 24/7 access. All service people entering over five (5) times per month are required to purchase a transponder which will have limited hours programmed into it. Others can be admitted using day passes.

The second project was to install surveillance cameras at all three gates. They provide history and a record of license plates and vehicles and drivers entering and exiting Ironwood. Installation was completed in June.

A third project was to install a new gate to prevent access to our property through The Reserve service road. This has already been accomplished.

We now compile a monthly report that provides data on certain metrics so that we can better manage our security operation. We have a fine team that is carrying out their assignments. Officers deserve our courtesy and respect as they do their job.

A very high percentage of property losses have been due to thieves entering homes or garages through unlocked or open doors. As homeowners, we need to prevent these crimes of opportunity by keeping doors and windows firmly locked.

RULES & REGULATIONS UPDATE

In the Owner Survey, two thirds of respondents were satisfied with community Rules & Regulations; only 10% were dissatisfied. ICA publishes Rules and Regulations for the community and most HOAs create their own set from these ICA documents. This sometimes can become confusing to owners. As a result, ICA is spearheading an initiative whereby, ideally, each HOA would adopt the ICA Rules & Regulations as their base document and then add only specific, local requirements, thus simplifying the package of governing documents.

The Rules & Regulations were updated this past year to better clarify parking requirements. In addition, newly issued guidelines for use of transponders for residents, non-residents, club staff, vendors and visitors have been added to the Rules & Regulations document to better clarify and communicate important security measures to all concerned. This approach also helps insure that any future changes to this policy would first have to be reviewed by members



COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

In an effort to improve community communications, ICA has initiated a number of actions, including the following:

- Began publishing the newly formatted newsletter you are now reading. We hope to keep it attractive and informative, something that you will take the time to read to better understand what's going on in your community. We intend to publish it each October, January and April.
- Improved the formatting and content of community Channel 98 that now includes timely feedback on security issues.
- Worked with DRM to better clarify customer service metrics and expectations, and insure that management staffing resources are optimized.
- Expanded the ICA committee structure whose members now include many HOA presidents as well as other residents.
- Increased the frequency and manner of ICA/HOA communications including the use of email and one-on-one regular meetings with HOA presidents.
- Facilitated more regular meetings of the Ironwood Community Council. The Council consists of the 16 HOA presidents, a Club Board Representative, a representative from DRM, and the ICA Board. These meetings are a forum for an exchange of ideas and an important attempt to achieve collaboration on community wide issues. We have had guest speakers from the City of Palm Desert City Council and Planning Commission and invoked their help on issues important to Ironwood. At Council meetings, HOAs are given time to express their issues and priorities.
- Began development of a prototype community website to serve all residents and HOA boards.

DESERT RESORT MANAGEMENT MOVING TO NEW LOCATION

DRM will be moving its corporate office early October 2008. The new address is 42635 Melanie Place, Suite B, Palm Desert, CA 92211. The mailing address for correspondence is: P.O. Box 14387, Palm Desert, CA 92255-14387. Telephone numbers remain the same: (760) 346-1161; (760) 346-9918 FAX.

“WHY IRONWOOD?”

In the Owner Survey, 90% of respondents indicated that their decision to locate in Ironwood was influenced by its excellent, elevated Palm Desert location and overall appearance of our gated community. Ironwood was perceived as a good value by 84%, and 72% indicated that the presence of the Club was very important to their decision to locate here. The vast majority -- 88% -- agree that the success of the Club has a positive impact on property values. It is important to note that 68% of the respondents were Club members, so it is clear that most non-members also share this opinion. Linking the community and the Club’s image was deemed important to 80% of the respondents.

Based on this feedback, ICA has encouraged further collaboration with the Club, having a Club Board representative as a member of the Community Council and also sitting in on ICA’s Board as a non-voting participant. ICA will be working closely with the Club regarding the Community Enhancement initiative which impacts landscaping, architecture and image.



Other interesting statistics from survey respondents:

- 27% live here year around, 48% were seasonal and 25% here for weekends and visits
- 46% have lived here over 12 years and 31% less than 7 years
- 14% indicated that their home is available for rental which would imply that over 150 units are at times used for rental

There is no question that Ironwood has evolved over its 35 years, beginning as a weekend community targeted at residents from the LA basin. Today, we are a community with 27% of residents being full time, and even more are here for extended seasonal periods. Ironwood’s housing also reflects this evolution with larger homes being built in recent years and many condo owners upgrading and enlarging their units to better satisfy longer stays in the community. There were a number of questions in the survey that related to Ironwood’s market image, and most respondents were very supportive of community wide collaboration in improving our image.



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Community Association

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