



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Resident,

I would like to welcome everyone to the start of a new season here in beautiful Ironwood. Much has changed over the summer as this newsletter highlights. As you may recall, this past year we outlined the Medians & Streets Enhancement and Maintenance Programs in a series of meetings and in our newsletters. We made outstanding progress this summer on these programs intended to improve the Ironwood Experience. Your ICA Board has worked diligently to secure the best possible return on these and other investments. I would like to personally thank all of the dedicated volunteers who serve on the ICA and local HOA boards and committees for their contributions toward maintaining the vitality of Ironwood.

Larry Sutter

President, Ironwood Community Association

LARGE SAVINGS ON SUMMER MAINTENANCE REALIZED



Contractor bid pricing for this summer's streets and medians maintenance programs was extraordinarily favorable allowing us to accomplish significantly more for approximately the same amount of money while also reducing the time duration of the entire project. For example, we were able to install new asphalt on eight streets - instead of five as originally anticipated -- while maintaining 2009 maintenance reserve spending as planned at approximately \$1,000,000. Projects

completed:

- **New Asphalt** - 266,000 square feet of new asphalt was installed utilizing full depth reclamation (FDR), a process that should provide much longer street life than other methods while recycling much of the existing, older pavement. Newly asphalted streets are Dalea Lane, Foxtail East, Quercus South of Irontree, Greasewood, Mariposa cul de sac, Poinciana, Encelia and Sunrose.
- **Street Sealcoat** - 246,000 additional square feet of asphalt on eleven Ironwood streets/ segments received slurry sealcoat as part of regular maintenance which requires application one year after new asphalt has been laid, then every four years thereafter.
- **Paver Installation** - 57,065 square feet of pavers are being installed in locations previously asphalted: the Mariposa/Irontree intersection and on seven main boulevard side streets at a cost similar to what we paid for asphalt in 2008. Because of this extremely attractive pricing, life cycle costs of these particular pavers should be significantly less than asphalt.

(Continued on page 2)



MANAGING EXPENSES

ICA has been working with local HOAs, DRM and contractors to accomplish cost savings achievable by aggregating individual HOA and resident demand or changing work scope or processes. Some recent and current examples:



- **Palm Tree Trimming** - In the past, each Ironwood local HOA contracted independently with landscape firms to do annual palm tree trimming. Tree trimming costs averaged about \$32/tree in 2008, and ranged as high as \$60/tree for palms not accessible by picker truck. In 2009, a single contract was negotiated with one contractor for most of Ironwood at the flat rate of \$16/tree, half of the 2008 average. Since almost 3000 trees were trimmed under this contract involving almost every Ironwood HOA, this contract delivered savings of more than \$45,000 to HOAs for 2009 against what had been budgeted. Certainly, we will pursue similar contracts in the future.
- **Ironwood Maintenance Days** - Rather than satisfy all Ironwood service requests immediately as they occur, Ironwood and DRM instituted a new process whereby DRM now collects all Ironwood service requests that are not emergencies, and sends maintenance people to do this work on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. This more orderly process eliminates unnecessary trips and the number of minimum charges, and is certainly more cost effective overall. Total spending on these repairs was \$70,000+ in 2008, and we anticipate spending considerably less in 2009 using this new process.
- **Median Conversion to Desertscape** - The four medians adjacent to the Irontree/Mariposa intersection were converted to desertscape this summer. Once all Mariposa and Irontree center street medians are converted in a few years, this program will result in annual savings of approximately \$40,000: \$5,000 for water at 2009 rates; \$25,000/year in seasonal flowers; and at least \$10,000/year in preparation and planting costs. Reduced nuisance water runoff will lower streets maintenance costs.
- **HVAC and Driveway Paver Programs** - Preferred vendors have been developed for both heating/AC systems and driveway pavers, resulting in considerable savings for residents. To date, more than 130 homeowners have inquired about the driveway paver program, and 30 about converting their older HVAC systems. This summer alone, more than 80 homeowners have installed driveway pavers. See the related article elsewhere in this newsletter.
- **Security Cost Improvements** - As of July 2009, security contract costs have been reduced more than \$30,000 annually while maintaining the same high level of service and increasing Ironwood's competitiveness in attracting security personnel.

These savings help to counter recent, large increases in utility rates due to tiered pricing, government mandated expenditures, and other inflationary influences. We take expense management very seriously and are pleased that the above actions are helping to temper expense growth. Other areas for cost savings are under study. More work needs to be done to conserve energy and water since utility prices and the new, tiered rate billing approach continue to put upward pressure on costs.

Large Savings on Summer Maintenance Realized

(From page 1)

- **Concrete Replacement** - Crumbling and cracked concrete was replaced as needed. We choose not to replace areas with minor damage and wear.
- **Medians & Turn Lanes at Irontree & Mariposa** - Three left turn lanes were converted to medians, and each of the four medians was converted to desertscape so as to reduce water usage, nuisance water runoff, and lower annual costs. Old and failing electrical and irrigation lines were replaced. Original ground and street lighting was replaced with upgraded, more efficient fixtures.



CVWD **NEW TIERED RATING SYSTEM**

In early 2009, CVWD announced that it would be going to a new, tiered rate billing system in order to incent users to reduce water usage throughout the Coachella Valley. Seminars were held and mailers were sent explaining the new system, giving HOAs and homeowners information that was intended to encourage more efficient watering practices and a changeover to desert landscaping.

In June 2009, the first “shadow” HOA bills came out from CVWD. These bills informed HOAs of how much more they would actually be paying had the tiered rating system been in effect the previous month. It became readily apparent that most all Ironwood was judged to be excessive users of water. It was also noticed that some of CVWD’s estimations of the square footages being irrigated by the HOAs contained significant errors. Working with and on behalf of local HOA boards, DRM gathered relevant information and submitted appeals to CVWD. This was done with the expectation that CVWD would correct its assumptions on the base level water usage allotted to each HOA for tier one.

The Boards of Directors of each Ironwood HOA are currently reviewing options for corrective actions which may include:

- ***Changing irrigation controllers to Smart controllers***
- ***Revamping irrigation systems***
- ***Changing to drip irrigation where feasible***
- ***Making use of new, no mist sprinkler heads***
- ***Changing turf and/or planters to desertscape***

These are not “quick fix” or inexpensive projects, and each Board will determine what they feel is cost effective for their association. Not acting would result in much higher CVWD water bills to HOAs.





AROUND IRONWOOD

- **HOA XII Pond** - HOA XII recently completed a project to update and improve its 766,000 gallon pond and water feature located at the end of Irontree at Ajo. The nearly 30-year old pond was drained, the bottom cleaned thoroughly, and 150 tons of new gravel was installed in the filtering system. This should eliminate the need to add chlorine to the pond in the future. The old fountain was deteriorating, so it was removed and replaced by three sprays. The steps in the cascading water feature were refinished. Stop by and see the results of this three month major improvement authorized by the HOA XII board.
- **Please recall that basic Time-Warner cable service is part of your ICA HOA dues at \$29/month.** If you add cable features such as VOIP telephone or hi-definition, be certain to tell T-W that you already have basic cable through Ironwood so that the base cable charge is not duplicated on your T-W bill.
- **HOA VII** has desertscape several additional cul de sac circles and street corners. In the past few years, HOA VII has reduced total HOA water consumption by approximately 20% utilizing several strategies including planting fewer seasonal flowers, adding more desertscapeing, moving sprinkler heads back from curbs, changing to drip irrigation in planter/hedge areas, etc.
- **Never walk dogs at anytime on the golf course, or in any poorly lit area at night.** Coyotes have harassed some dog walkers this past season. Please be cautious.
- **HOA X (Tennis Villas)** laid new asphalt outside several of its garage areas, and installed pavers in some driveways and concrete parking area cutouts.
- **Visit the Ironwood community website at www.ironwoodcommunity.com** to access ICA information, governing documents, view board minutes, copies of previous newsletters, etc. HOAs VII and XII also had previously posted links on this site where residents can access architectural documents, board meeting minutes, etc. Many other HOAs have added links this summer. Log on to see if your HOA has already made postings.
- **Virginia Graeme Baker Act** - Ironwood HOAs have fulfilled the requirements of this legislation designed to protect young children from certain pool or spa accidents. A total of 39 pools and 34 spas were modified in Ironwood the past year at an approximate total cost of \$314,262 for these mandated modifications.
- **HOA VIII** has authorized the moving of all curbside sprinklers heads back from curbs a distance of 18". This will greatly reduce the amount of nuisance run-off water staining our streets. Also, because it has been responsible for accruing driveway replacement funds, the HOA VIII board has provided financial incentives to its residents to convert install interlocking pavers and assume driveway repair responsibilities.
- **HOA VI and HOA I** have converted additional corners and areas to colorful desertscape, saving water and improving community appeal.



PAVER, HVAC PROGRAMS CONTINUE

Two home improvement programs were initiated to connect interested homeowners with contractors willing to offer preferred pricing to Ironwood residents who wish to install Driveway Pavers or replace their Heating and Air Conditioning units. ICA offers this information as a service to homeowners, and is not specifically recommending or endorsing any product. It remains up to individual homeowners to finally evaluate the products and quotations, and to secure any needed HOA approvals or City permits that may be required.

If you are interested in either of these programs, please contact Jodi Gaylord at DRM by email at JGaylord@drmineternet.com or 760.346.1161. More information is available on page 2 of the January 2009 ICA newsletter available on line at www.ironwoodcommunity.com. Follow the newsletter link. Current status:

Driveway Pavers - Two contractors have participated in this program that began early 2008. As a result, more than 110 residents to date have newly installed interlocking pavers in their driveways and walkways. Four paver styles and colors have been made available, selected for their compatibility with HOA color palettes. The newest paver style is the same as installed this summer at the Mariposa/Irontree intersection and in seven "side streets" that run parallel to these main thoroughfares.

Heating and Air Conditioning Replacement - Many Ironwood homes have older heating and air conditioning systems that are inefficient and costly to run. ICA is currently working with a contractor who represents Heil HVAC products, a sister brand of Carrier and a subsidiary of United Technologies. The Heil website is www.heil-hvac.com/home.html.



One featured product is the Heil 14 SEER high efficiency system with a 2-speed fan motor, Copeland scroll compressor, and 410A refrigerant (non-ozone-depleting chemical). The furnace blower is multispeed and has an 80% AFUE rating. The AC compressor warranty is 10 years; the furnace warranty is 5 years on all parts, and 20 years on the heat exchanger.

Benefits include equipment cost savings, lower utility bills, and possible rebates from Southern California Edison. As well, the Palm Desert Energy Independence Program has allowed residents to secure low cost loans for certain energy saving programs, and allows these loans to be paid back over years as an add-on to your residential property tax bill. Additional funding is being considered for these programs.

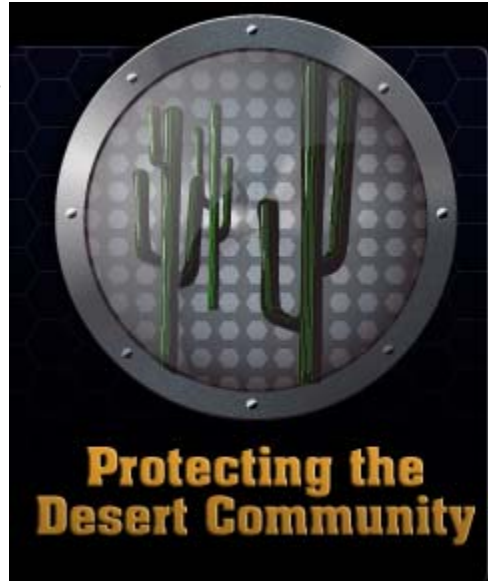


SECURITY OPERATIONS UPDATE

Please welcome our new security provider, Bower Security, which took over on July 1. Bower provides us improved services at a more attractive contract rate, while providing increased health benefits to security officers. Happily, we were able to retain all of the existing officers through the transition, and Fred McLean remains our director of security operations. When you return to Ironwood, you will see new officer's uniforms and a new small SUV with the Ironwood logo on the side.

Hats off to Fred and the security officers for their excellent work. Last year we implemented a new transponder system and installed cameras at all the gates. Both these improvements - plus the continued excellent work of Fred and our security officers -- have resulted in a more secure community.

Reminder - As you return to Ironwood, please help us strive for a zero-crime rate by locking your doors - particularly garage side doors - and keeping your main garage door closed as these lapses seem to be the link to most thefts. Also, please do not leave keys or valuables visible in your car, even if it is parked in your garage. Many of the petty thefts that occur in resort areas result from these kinds of "smash and grab" opportunities.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Published by the Ironwood
Community Association

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REMEMBER: DESERT RESORT MANAGEMENT AT NEW LOCATION

DRM has moved its corporate office. The new address is 42635 Melanie Place, Suite 103, 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.

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!