



IRONWOOD  
COMMUNITY NEWS

January 2010

**ANNOUNCING...  
IRONWOOD CONCIERGE SERVICES**

ICA is pleased to introduce a new valuable service available to all Ironwood residents, Ironwood Concierge Services. With one easy phone call or email, residents have access to the following services which add to the convenience of living in our community:

***Service Provider Referrals of all types, including:***

- Appliance repair
- Dry cleaning
- Fencing and gates
- Housecleaning
- Locksmith
- Patio furniture
- Plumbing
- Real estate services
- Salon/hair style
- Towing
- Windows and doors
- Transportation
- Carpet & flooring
- Electrical
- Food services
- General contractor
- Interior design
- Landscaping
- Maintenance & repair
- Patio/deck services
- Pest control
- Pool & spa
- Repair, restoration
- Safety inspections, products & services
- Computer assistance

***Personal Concierge Services, including:***

- Absentee homeowner checks
- Opening/closing homes
- Shopping - groceries, gifts, daily needs
- General errands - drycleaner, banking, meal pick-up, take car for service, go to post office, courier
- In home assistance - laundry, washing, dishes, meal prep
- Transportation to airport
- Party assistance, invitation addressing, serving
- Wait for deliveries - furniture, packages, cable, FedEx
- Pet taxi for vet or groomer; pet sitting and watching
- Organization services - garage, closets, drawers
- Etc

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[www.ironwoodcommunity.com](http://www.ironwoodcommunity.com)

*Do not forget to check out our community web site at [www.ironwoodcommunity.com](http://www.ironwoodcommunity.com). Stay in touch with community news and events and communicate with our community representatives!*

## Concierge Service

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ICA has partnered with Executive-Errands to provide these services. Importantly, all of the service providers involved with this program are insured, licensed and bonded as required by Ironwood Rules & Regulations. This is extremely important as it protects the homeowner (and often the HOA) in the event of a situation resulting in a liability.

There is no cost to residents for Service Provider Referrals. Many are offered at discounts to general market rates. Personal Concierge Services are available at the preferred rate of \$55/hour.

How do you access these services? Please see the enclosed card for contact information and a list of services, including those provided to Ironwood at special pricing for the period Jan 1 - June 30, 2010. When making contact, please inform Executive Errands that you are an Ironwood resident:

- **Telephone:** 760.898.9604
- **Email:** [www.executive-errands.com](http://www.executive-errands.com)
- **By link via the ICA website:** [www.ironwoodcommunity.com](http://www.ironwoodcommunity.com)

## HOLIDAY LUMINARY DISPLAY

On December 15, homeowners in Fairway Estates and Canyon View Estates combined efforts resulting in a festive holiday luminary display for both neighborhoods. Candles were placed in paper bags containing sand and then lit, remaining lit for most of the nighttime hours. Fairway Estates had initiated this program a few years earlier and luminary displays have now become of interest to other Ironwood neighborhood areas.



*Photo taken during previous Fairway Estates Luminary Display*

## WATER, WATER, WATER

Who would have thought that watering the grass could get so complicated? Last January, the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) began having informational meetings about the upcoming Tiered Water Rates. The new rates have been quite a shock to many of its dedicated landscape irrigation customers, especially those like Ironwood whose landscape has been primarily turf and shrubbery. Nevertheless, the CVWD is adamant in its commitment to urge its customers to reduce their water usage. Not only is the western United States in a multi-year drought, but water conservation been mandated by the State of California, and locally, our aquifer has been overpumped, resulting in several areas of subsidence in the valley, which cannot be allowed to continue.



***Here are some facts and figures about irrigation and what it takes to keep a traditional landscape of lawn, shrub and flowers flourishing in our desert.***

- There are 117 acres of landscaped common areas in Ironwood, including the exterior areas along Portola and Mesa View. That's over 5 million square feet of landscape that requires irrigation and maintenance.
- To keep those areas green, Ironwood used 990 acre feet of water in 2009. Visualize a football field a foot deep in water and that's about how much water there is in an acre foot. Ironwood uses an average of 2.7 acre feet of water per day, not including any of the club property. There are 325,851 gallons of water in one acre foot, so that's 880,715 gallons a day to make this small section of the desert bloom.
- For a bit of perspective, an average person uses about 70 gallons of water per day for indoor use, including personal hygiene, laundry, dishes, cleaning, etc. In comparison, allocating the total common area irrigation by the 1,066 Ironwood units works out to an average of 827 gallons per unit per day.
- In the CVWD's tiered water rate structure, the top "wasteful" rate is 400% higher than the base rate. The next tier, "excessive," is 200% higher than the base rate.
- The water budgets for all the Ironwood HOAs and ICA total about \$600,000 for 2010. Reducing irrigation just enough to stay out the "wasteful" and "excessive" categories will save thousands of assessment dollars.

Some of the ways being used to reduce water use in existing landscape areas without compromising plant health are to water fewer days of the week when weather permits, to move sprinkler heads away from curbs in turf areas and, over time, change to more efficient types of sprinkler heads that don't lose as much water to evaporation and runoff.

Learning about and implementing updated water management and landscape concepts and techniques is a major undertaking for all 16 HOAs and ICA. It is exciting to see that where these new concepts have been put into place the landscape and its surrounds look fresh and lively, giving Ironwood a new zest.

## ICA LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The ICA Landscape Committee consists of representatives from nearly all homeowner associations. A goal for 2010 is to have an individual from each HOA provide valuable input as well as gain the knowledge of what other associations are doing. The committee is kept updated regarding ICA's Enhancement initiatives and priorities, and provides input and suggestions.



The main goal of the committee in 2010 is to reduce water usage throughout the entire Ironwood community. CVWD recently implemented tiered pricing which substantially penalizes inefficient and wasteful water usage by both homeowners and HOAs. It is encouraging to discuss the numerous projects that are already underway in the associations that curtail water usage. Many are implementing lush desert landscape in key areas that not only reduces water usage, but also eliminates excessive runoff onto newly repaved streets. The ICA Enhancement program has introduced colorful desert landscaping into street medians which greatly reduces water usage and eliminates nuisance water spray onto our streets. This new look provides our Ironwood community with a more year-round attractive appearance.

There are a number of actions being promoted that will better manage the amount of daily watering based on seasonality. As one can appreciate, the amount of watering required varies significantly from winter to summer and therefore requires diligent monitoring of the irrigation controllers. Longer term, "smart" controllers may be introduced that better relate watering to evaporation. The committee has also been introduced to new irrigation heads that reduce usage through better application of water by eliminating misting by emitting water droplets too large to mist.

The ICA Landscape Committee compliments the activities of the HOA V landscape team that has developed a long term, 100 page plan that includes photos of all 70 units and upgrades their current appearance while greatly reducing overall water consumption. It is rewarding to see owners volunteering so much of their personal time and talents for the betterment of our community.

In summary, the ICA Landscape Committee provides a forum for the 17 Ironwood associations to work together to attain an improved and more consistent landscape appearance, promote environmental friendliness, and establish more cost effective landscaping practices.

## PAVER PROGRAM CONTINUES

HOA X (tennis villas), many residents, and ICA installed interlocking pavers during 2009, greatly adding to the architectural interest and attractiveness of our community. We are pleased to announce that the contractor for these installations, European Pavers Southwest, has agreed to hold their 2010 pricing at close to what they charged in 2009. Nominally \$4.85 - \$5.35/sq ft for driveway work, this is an extremely attractive price and compares favorably to 2008 pricing of \$8/sq ft and more. If you are interested in taking advantage of this paver offer, contact Jan Baker at DRM: 760.346.1161 or email [jbaker@drmineternet.com](mailto:jbaker@drmineternet.com). Please note that ICA's role in this program is to simply aggregate demand and solicit preferred pricing from a qualified contractor. Price and work evaluation is the responsibility of homeowners. ICA does not otherwise recommend, endorse the contractor or warrant the work to be done.



## AROUND IRONWOOD

- The IRONWOOD COMMUNITY COUNCIL (HOA presidents, Club and DRM reps, ICA board) met on November 17. Don Ackley was our guest speaker from CVWD who talked extensively about the water situation in our Valley - its causes, related politics, proposed solutions and tiered water rates. Don spoke and took questions from 34 attendees for two hours. His comments were deemed very helpful by attendees.
- Treasurer Alison Delf announced the reformation of the ICA Finance Committee and its stated intent to make visible and address systemic and common expense challenges for Ironwood HOAs. Collaboration on projects such as palm tree trimming has taken place recently, but more opportunities for working together across HOAs to lower costs exist and must be addressed.
- Larry Sutter provided an update on the summer Streets and Enhancement programs, and introduced the idea of establishing Ironwood Concierge Services for Ironwood residents and Club members living outside the gates. Executive-Erands founder and president Leslie Spoor explained how the service would function. There was very positive reception by attendees for the idea of Ironwood Concierge Services, further explained elsewhere in this newsletter.

## IRONWOOD “COMMON AREAS”

Our Ironwood community has “common areas” that fall under the management of either the Ironwood Community Association (ICA) or one’s local HOA. Ironwood was developed sequentially over time, resulting in a governance structure that is quite unique from most gated communities in the Coachella Valley. We have no less than seventeen HOAs:

- The Ironwood Community Association - 1069 Ironwood lot owners - as well as the Ironwood County Club - are members of ICA, responsible for managing community common services (such as Security) and maintaining community-wide common areas such as the streets, street medians, gates, most exterior walls, and the medians on Portola and Mesa View. Most of the common area assets managed by ICA are owned by the Ironwood County Club and its members. Authority and responsibility for managing these common areas are outlined in ICA’s governing documents.
- Sixteen local Ironwood Owners Associations-Residents also belong to their local HOA (ranging in size from 14 to 150 homes) which manages local landscaping, architectural guidelines, etc, and local HOA common areas, such as pools and grounds.

In addition to providing community central services and maintaining community-wide streets, gates and medians, ICA has the role of identifying common issues and working with local HOAs to find solutions.

## SECURITY REPORT - By Security Director Fred McLean

From my office at the main gate, I often see and hear returning residents proclaim "We're home" and express how glad that they are to be back. It is good to see such happy faces. Their joy of returning this year was added to by the beautiful renovations to the median landscaping at the intersection of Irontree and Mariposa, and the installation of pavers there and in the side streets along those thoroughfares. Along with all the good feelings about seeing the return of our friends and neighbors, comes a welcome increase in traffic and calls for services. We especially see this at both the Main Gate and the Upper Portola Gate with longer lines of traffic and a significant increase in calls for guests and other requests. Our tempo picks up accordingly and everything is back to normal in no time at all.

**A reminder:** the gate arms go down after each car so please do not try to beat the gate arm or you may end up damaging both the gate arm and your car.

The arrival of seasonal residents is a great aid to Security. It is often disappointing when a potential security issue arises and there are few neighbors to witness. Now our neighborhoods are filled with additional eyes and ears.

You might have heard that we had a couple of home burglaries and thefts one evening this past summer - the very first in many months - aided by unlocked doors in each case. This does not constitute a "crime wave," but it does remind us to be careful with our belongings. Be sure you know and can trust the people you have working for you. Don't leave anything of value lying around in plain sight. Be sure you take your keys from the car when parking and that all doors (including your garage door) and windows are locked when you are not present. As has been said before, a Crime Triangle has three sides, Desire, Opportunity and Ability. Take away any one of these and it is likely no crime will occur. Don't make things easy for the opportunistic criminal.

**Your Ironwood Security Officers wish you a wonderful 2010 season at Ironwood!**



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### Management Information

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### Board of Directors

President: Larry Sutter  
Vice President: Larry Abbott  
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Treasurer: Alison Delf  
Director: Chuck Henderson  
Director: Janet Plat  
Director: Mitch Grossman

## ICA FINANCE AND BUDGET UPDATE

In response to the current economic environment, your ICA Board and Finance Committee made a commitment to freeze the ICA general assessment (before Cable TV costs) at 2009 levels for 2010. This was especially difficult to achieve in light of three significant factors affecting the 2010 budget: a forecasted \$55,000 drop in transponder revenue resulting from a decrease in ongoing construction; a \$64,000 decrease in assessment contribution from the Ironwood Country Club; and an expected increase of \$35,000 from CVWD as a result of the introduction of tiered water rates.

We were able to achieve our goal by lowering costs in two ways. One was through the co-operation of our major vendors (Desert Resort Management, AK Landscaping, and Desert View Tree Service) who all agreed to no cost increases for 2010. As well, we realized savings in our contracted cost of Security. Secondly, for the 2009 summer maintenance work, we realized savings in excess of \$500,000 by taking advantage of bid pricing which fell to as much as half the budgeted amounts for certain items. This substantial saving allowed us to cut the reserve contribution for 2010 while accelerating the progress of the planned Streets and Enhancement programs. We are currently working with vendors to hopefully lock in now substantial savings for next summer.