



April 2010

CONSERVE BUT VERIFY

Water conservation is both wise and necessary in the Coachella Valley. But mandated water conservation is also very expensive. A comparison of the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) water bills from the last four months of 2008 and 2009 illustrates the first hard lessons of tiered rate water bills. From September through December 2008, the irrigation bills for the non-custom-home Ironwood Associations and ICA totaled \$175,800. For the same period in 2009, the bills totaled \$221,550, a 20% increase or an expense of \$45,736 more than the prior year.

During those first months of tiered rate billing, nearly all Ironwood associations appealed to the CVWD to increase their measurement of land under irrigation, and 8 of the 13 associations were successful. In addition, irrigation time was cut back, whole irrigation days were skipped, and locks were installed on the timers so they couldn't be tampered with. Ordinary people learned to bandy about terms such as evapotranspiration and multiple stream rotary nozzles. Associations and individual homeowners stepped up their efforts to convert flower and shrub beds to desert landscape.

The potential for tiered water rates to both bust budgets and wreck landscapes became a call to action to some talented and hard-working people at Ironwood. Jim Volz of Ironwood V attended multiple landscape and irrigation seminars and took hundreds of pictures to learn how to maintain a vibrant landscape in a reduced water environment. Gunnar Haase precisely measured all of the common area and unit landscaped areas in Ironwood 7 to significantly increase that association's water budget. Larry Abbott has worked with landscapers, homeowners and the ICA Landscape Committee to understand and explain how tiered rates work and to research water management techniques. DRM community manager Nancy Parkinson jumped on the issue at the very start by writing up water budget appeals and working with Mike Arechiga of AK Landscaping to closely monitor irrigation trends among all the HOAs. Mitch Grossman of Ironwood 1 has been working with the CVWD closely for over two years fine tuning the association's irrigation system to keep the plant life healthy, but the irrigation at a closely controlled minimum. He, too, reports that Mike Arechiga has been instrumental in analyzing and configuring the irrigation system under the new rules.

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ACT NOW FOR PAVERS, HVAC SAVINGS

One cannot drive around Ironwood this season without noticing the large number of residential interlocking paver installations. As of this writing, more than 130 Ironwood residents have taken advantage of special contractor pricing arranged by ICA by installing interlocking pavers in their driveways and walkways, adding greatly to the attractiveness and architectural interest of our community. European Pavers Southwest is the contractor for these installations and has agreed to continue this pricing for a limited time -- nominally \$4.85-\$5.35/sq ft for driveway work.



If your heating and cooling system is in need of repair or replacement, please be aware that ICA is also 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. This contractor is also offering favorable pricing to Ironwood residents. Benefits to updating your current system include equipment cost savings, lower utility bills, and possible rebates from Southern California Edison.

Contact Jodi Gaylord at DRM (760.346.1161 or jgaylord@drmineternet.com) if you are interested in either of these programs. ICA provides 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.

Conserve But Verify

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After many months of research and long conversations with water experts, there are two developments that may help the overall irrigation outlook at Ironwood. First, based on close monitoring over many months, the water district is testing its weather stations to be sure that the numbers used to calculate Ironwood's water budget are as accurate as they should be. Secondly, some of the original engineering and topographical maps of Ironwood are being looked at to determine if more square footage is actually being irrigated than shows on the tract maps. Water district personnel have been informative and helpful throughout the transition to tiered rate water billing.

Adjusting to new landscape and irrigation methods is an ongoing learning process. There is new technology almost daily that will help Ironwood meet its water goals: new sprinkler heads that lose far less water to evaporation than the traditional ones, improved "smart" clocks that get their weather information via satellite on a daily basis, and sprinkler valves that regulate water pressure and monitor the irrigation lines for leaks. We have learned a lot since last August and are fortunate that this winter was wetter than usual. Most irrigation bills are now falling in the "Efficient" or "Inefficient" category, which is exactly where we want them to be. This summer will be the real measure to evaluate how effective this first year of water conservation effort is.



STREET AND ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMS UPDATE

ICA has been planning and coordinating the implementation of two very important reserve spending programs. The first is Streets Maintenance, initiated in 2003 to replace our aging streets. The second is Community Enhancement, designed to improve the appeal and attractiveness of our community. "Enhancement" was presented to stakeholders beginning in late 2008 and received wide and enthusiastic support, so implementation of the first phase began in 2009. While contractor bids are not yet in for 2010, preliminary indications are that summer pricing may once again be quite favorable for both of these programs. Below is a summary of each.

The Streets Maintenance Program began seven years ago and was initially conceived as a 14-year effort. Recently, we made a decision to use the more substantial full depth reclamation (FDR) process on all streets because of its superior result and promise of lower life cycle costs. The FDR process grinds and mixes 9" of existing asphalt and native gravel base, then compacts it before adding 3" of new asphalt topcoat. Update:

- The neighborhood streets of Owl, Phlox, Noline, and Rosewood are being scheduled for the summer of 2010. This will complete asphalt replacement work for neighborhood streets that have exceeded their life expectancy. In addition, work will begin on the paving of Ironwood's major boulevards, starting with Mariposa and Irontree, in conjunction with the Enhancement effort described below. In addition, slurry sealcoat will be applied to streets paved last year and four years earlier as a part of the regular maintenance cycle. Concrete curbing will be replaced as needed.
- Pavers will be added at golf cart crossings and key intersections as asphalt work progresses.
- If pricing remains reasonably stable over the next 24 months, we are hopeful that all major street replacement work can be completed by the 2012-13 timeframe.

The Community Enhancement Program has three overlapping phases:

1. Medians & Boulevards - this includes Mariposa, Irontree and Portola (inside the gates). Existing center and side street medians - as well as left turn lanes converted into medians - are being planted with colorful desertscape, an action that enhances the beauty of Ironwood while being socially responsible in our water usage. Aging irrigation, electrical, and lighting systems are being replaced, and updated. Directional and street signage will be installed. Interlocking pavers are planned for key intersections, boulevard side streets, and golf cart crossings.

In 2009, we started with median work at the Mariposa/Irontree intersection, in addition to introducing pavers to the intersection and side streets parallel to the boulevards. In 2010, boulevard and side street median work will continue. Improving nighttime visibility of our signage is a primary objective, so directional and street signage study work will soon be finalized with the intent of beginning phased implementation later this year. Because of highly competitive contractor pricing, we are ahead of our original schedule for this phase.

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Street and Enhancement Programs Update

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2. Parkway Plantings - The overall goal of this second phase is to provide coordinated, colorful desertscape theme plantings “outside” the curbs of Mariposa, Irontree and Portola, as well as seasonal flower plantings in key locations. Conceptual planning for this phase is nearly complete and is being sponsored by ICA to provide our community a consistent plantings plan for consideration. We are in the process of presenting these concepts to local HOAs for review and comment as they consider conversion to desertscape and upgrading of their landscaping, as well as to the Ironwood Country Club. We propose that certain projects of community wide significance be funded by ICA.

A top priority is the four corners of the Mariposa/Irontree intersection where Ironwood trees, desertscape, and distinctive seasonal planters are planned to enhance the area and provide a sense of arrival. As these plantings would be on land not overseen by ICA, collaboration with and approval of the owners of these four corners is necessary before work can begin -- hopefully in 2010.

3. Gates - Our objective is to determine the long-term strategy for funding and updating, as needed, our three entry gates. Conceptual planning has begun and is targeted for completion in 2011. Concepts will be shared and tested with stakeholders as they develop.

ICA ANNUAL MEETING AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FAIR

The Emergency Preparedness Fair held prior to the Ironwood Community Association Annual Meeting of Members on Thursday March 18th was a well-attended success. At least 100 residents filled the Clubhouse, visiting booths manned by emergency preparedness vendors ready to educate and supply owners with provisions to help them survive a major earthquake and its aftermath. Many thanks go out to Al Frischer of Survival Mode, maker of custom earthquake survival kits; Leslie Spoor of Executive Errands, Ironwood’s concierge service; the American Red Cross; Al Stratton’s Gas Shut-Off Valves; and Desert Fire Extinguisher for bringing their wares and expertise to ICA and the Club.

As a special presentation during the ICA Annual Meeting, Palm Desert Risk Manager Gary Rosenblum spoke about how residents should prepare themselves and their families to survive during and after a major quake. After explaining that the San Andreas Fault was the boundary between the Pacific and North American plates, he went on to describe the fault as “ten months pregnant” and stressed the importance of being prepared to do without outside help, including access to food, water and medical aid for several days.

The Ironwood Community Association’s 36th Annual Meeting of Members proceeded smoothly. There were 689 ballots received, well exceeding the quorum requirement of 428. Two incumbent Board members, Chuck Henderson and Janet Plat, were re-elected to the Board in an uncontested election.

DID YOU KNOW?

Ironwood is a member of Palm Desert’s Gated Community Emergency Preparedness Committee. In addition to keeping your community up to date with Palm Desert’s emergency plans, we also are part of Palm Desert’s emergency radio contact group. In case of a major disaster, our security department will have radio contact with Palm Desert’s emergency command center regarding what roads are open, which hospitals are open, and how to get emergency help.





IRONWOOD CONCIERGE SERVICES **WHAT ARE THEY? WHY SHOULD I USE THEM?**

Your Ironwood concierge service is a new amenity just added this year by ICA to enhance your living experience at Ironwood. Offered by Executive Errands, an independent and locally owned company, these services help simplify your life by providing personalized assistance and access to a broad network of licensed and insured service providers.



Executive Errands was founded on the principle of providing high quality, customer focused services to enhance your time in the desert. The concierge services they provide run the gamut from general errands to absentee home checks. They can assist you with time consuming chores such as laundry, filing, grocery shopping, and waiting for deliveries. If it's on your 'to do' list, Executive Errands can get it done so you have more time to enjoy

the local cultural events, golf courses, and boutique shops.

Executive Errands is a full service company with a network of over 40 local service providers (all licensed and insured) who share Executive Errands' commitment to customer service. Whether it is luxury (gift baskets, limousine service, in-home massage, catering, party planning, home theater, VHS conversions), practical (computer support, earthquake safety, pet sitting, holiday decorating) or maintenance (pest control, window cleaning, housekeeping, carpet/upholstery cleaning, screen repair, garage door repair, painting, lighting, remodeling, new carpets/ drapes/blinds, landscaping, pool/spa service, etc) Executive Errands can take care of whatever you might need. Visit them at www.executive-errands.com.



Referrals to Executive Errands' network are FREE and the hourly rate for Concierge Services is discounted for all Ironwood residents and Club members. When you don't know who to call for something - let Executive Errands simplify your life! Call Customer Service at 760.898.9604.



www.ironwoodcommunity.com

Do not forget to check out our community web site at www.ironwoodcommunity.com. Stay in touch with community news and events and communicate with our community representatives!



AROUND IRONWOOD

It's looking like a brand new Ironwood. Four associations have contracted for exterior painting this year. Ironwood 3 has already completed its painting project and looks gorgeous in its bold new color scheme. Associations 5 and 7 are scheduled for painting in May, with Ironwood 2 following close behind in June. That's a total of 298 homes looking fresh in a new coat of paint.

Several Ironwood associations continue to press on with landscape renovation projects. Association 2 will continue its conversion of corners to desertscape in order to update its look, save water and prevent irrigation overspray onto the streets. Ironwood 5 will continue its vision of converting much of the tired original landscaping to lush desertscape over the next several years. Associations 8 and 12 are also re-landscaping several corners with lush desertscape.

The conversion of driveways from concrete to interlocking pavers continues to be a popular home improvement project with homeowners throughout Ironwood. You can see these attractive driveways throughout Ironwood, and especially in front of the homes adjacent to the Mariposa and Irontree side streets that were converted to pavers last year.



**IRONWOOD
COMMUNITY NEWS**
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OPT FOR EMAIL

You can help save both your local HOA and ICA lots of money in postage and printing, and ultimately your association assessments, by signing up for electronic delivery of general and State-mandated communications from your Association. Here is a sample of ICA mailings and the costs of printing, envelopes and postage:

<u>ICA</u>	<u>Per Person</u>	<u>ICA Total</u>
Newsletter:	\$2.61	\$2,782.26
Budget:	\$3.46	\$3,688.36
Annual Meeting	\$2.35	\$2,505.10
Annual Audit:	\$1.16	\$1,236.56

There are other advantages to opting for electronic delivery of documents. They are much easier to store and can be kept on a thumb drive. Think of the storage space you'll be able to free up in your file drawers, and at the same time you'll be doing something nice for the environment.

You can download the sign-up form from the ICA website: www.ironwoodcommunity.com, or contact Jodi Gaylord at Desert Resort Management, 760-346-1161 or jgaylord@drminternet.com to have it sent to you.