

# CRUMBACHER ESTATES OWNERS ASSOCIATION

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER - APRIL, 2011

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

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**This month, the Board** made plans for spring road maintenance and the upcoming irrigation season. More work was done on the policy manual, and input from lot owners regarding the recent changes to the fee schedule was considered.

Preparations are well underway for the annual association meeting. New ballots have been created, local meeting places were evaluated, and an agenda is being developed. The Board is hoping for a strong turnout at the meeting this year, and we hope that you'll make attendance a priority. This is your chance to provide input and make your opinion known.

## SUMMER PUMP START-UP

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**April 1<sup>st</sup> marks** the start of our irrigation season, according to the Crumbacher water right certificate. Lots that have additional irrigation rights, above and beyond the domestic use, may utilize their water after that date. The large turbine pump is currently being serviced, and we anticipate that it will be ready to operate in a few days.

However, the Board decided that with cool, wet weather remaining prevalent, start-up of the large pump will be delayed until demand for water increases. Operation of this pump presents a nearly tenfold increase in electricity use over the winter system, so even a delay of a week or two represents a substantial savings on the power bill.

**Please wait as long as possible to begin outdoor watering, and exercise conservation. Wise water use by all of us will help to keep our water rates as low as possible.**

Some outdoor watering ideas to consider:

- Install automatic timers on hose bibs or on underground sprinkler systems.
- Invest in a soil moisture tester, and water only when soil conditions dictate.
- Water in shorter, but more frequent rotations, to minimize soil saturation.
- Water at night or in the morning to reduce evaporation loss.

- Don't leave a hose running unattended to water trees or shrubs.
- Reduce nozzle sizes in sprinklers to eliminate unneeded volume.
- Talk to the professionals at an irrigation supply store, and design a watering system that works most efficiently to meet the needs of your property.

## ROAD MAINTENANCE

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**The road system** appears to have held up fairly well through the winter, with some potholes developing in our common problem spots. Joe Bretz, of JBS Enterprises, will be contracted to do some minor repair this year, but the Board has decided to forego a complete grading of the road system.

Work will focus on the north entrance on Pine Drive, adjacent to the mailbox kiosk. Two truckloads of gravel will be applied here to stabilize the road surface. Some additional grading will be done at the junction of Pine Drive and Oakes Drive, and if funds allow, a few other minor areas of potholes and ruts will be smoothed.

Please drive responsibly and keep speeds down to help our roads remain in the best shape possible.

## BOARD POLICY MANUAL

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**Three more policies** were approved at the March board meeting. The focus of these new policies was to ensure consistency in the way that late fees are applied, and how water shut-offs are accomplished.

### Policy 005: Late Payments

The By-laws of the association state that the operating costs of the water system are to be borne by all members equally.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors to ensure that timely payments are made by all members.

The Board of Directors established by majority vote on March 28, 2011 that accounts with an unpaid balance after the due date shown on the billing are considered delinquent.

When any member's account becomes delinquent, the following steps shall be taken to encourage the prompt payment of the account:

1. Late fee: A monetary penalty of \$25.00/month shall be assessed on all subsequent billings.
2. Verbal notice: The Board of Directors may verbally notify the member of the current delinquency of their account; however, the Board reserves the right to proceed directly to written contact for any reason.
3. Written notice: When an account reaches 60 days past due, a letter from the Board of Directors shall be sent by certified mail, notifying the member of:
  - a. The amount by which the account is in arrears,
  - b. That payment in full is required within 10 days of receipt of the letter,
  - c. That water service will be shut off if payment is not received by the deadline,
  - d. The charges that will be assessed for water shut-off and resumption of service,
  - e. That a lien for the full amount of the delinquent account will be placed against the property.
4. Water shut-off: If payment is not received by the stated deadline, the Board shall direct the water system operator or a Board member to discontinue service to the property. The valve will be locked, and the meter removed (if so equipped).
5. Lien: Immediately following water shut-off, the Board shall file a lien against the property for the amount of the delinquent account.
6. Foreclosure: Any account two years overdue shall be resolved by foreclosure of the property, as approved by majority vote of the Board on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1989.

The Secretary-Treasurer shall have full discretion to waive late fees and interest payments, and to establish a payment plan to assist members in bringing their accounts current.

#### **Policy 006: Insufficient Funds**

Any check not honored by the financial institution due to insufficient funds poses an unnecessary burden upon the membership of the association.

It is the responsibility of each owner to ensure that checks submitted as payment are covered by sufficient funds in their own accounts.

The Board of Directors shall assess a monetary fee in the amount of \$25.00 upon any account for which a check is returned for insufficient funds, as approved by majority vote of the Board on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Additionally, the Board of Directors shall assess upon the account any additional fees or charges levied by the bank, as approved by majority vote of the Board on March 28, 2011. No additional interest or further non-payment fee will be assessed on the amount of the insufficient funds, but normal late fees and interest will continue to accrue on the whole of the delinquent account.

#### **Policy 007: Water Shut-off & Re-connection**

Considerable time and expense is required by the Board of Directors to address accounts that are in arrears. Time spent in this manner interrupts the normal business of the association.

This cost, in addition to the lack of payment, places an unfair burden upon the association as a whole, and should be borne by the member who is in arrears.

A monetary penalty in the form of a shut-off fee should be assessed as an incentive to ensure that members do not allow their accounts to become delinquent. A monetary penalty in the form of a re-connection fee should be assessed to provide some reimbursement to the association for lost revenue during the time that water was shut off.

When it becomes necessary for the Board to disconnect water to any lot for reasons of non-payment, a shut-off fee of \$200.00 shall be assessed to the delinquent account, as established by majority vote of the Board on July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009. A Board member or the water system operator shall shut off the service valve to the property, and shall lock the valve in the off position. If the service is metered, the current meter reading shall be recorded, and the meter removed and stored in the association pump house. The meter shall have a tag affixed to it, identifying the lot to which it pertains. Meter removal and storage shall be performed according to certified operator guidance for sanitary procedures.

Water service shall not be resumed until the account is paid in full, and the check has cleared the bank. A re-connection fee of \$200.00 shall be assessed, as established by majority vote of the Board on July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009, and shall be paid with the delinquent balance before the water service is restored.

The Board or the water system operator shall restore service to the lot within 24 hours of payment in full, unless unforeseen circumstances prevent the restoration of service.

## WATER RATES

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**Crumbacher Estates** is faced with the need to raise more than \$50,000 by 2016, in order to install the state mandated water service meters on all lots. As one means of collecting this additional revenue, the Board voted in February to begin charging all lots in Crumbacher Estates the full water rate of \$35/month, whether or not they had been developed.

Fourteen lots currently have no home constructed on them, and were subject to this new fee. The rationale for this charge was that all of these lots are receiving the added value of a public water system, whether they use the water or not, and that they should be contributing to the cost of maintaining and upgrading the system. Those who are using water should also be contributing to the cost of its operation.

Since receiving the bills, more than a half dozen members have contacted the Board to voice concerns about the equity of the new fee structure, and to suggest alternatives. The Board is very appreciative of this input, and has decided to include a further review of the fee structure as an agenda item for the upcoming association meeting.

Some of the comments received are as follows:

- *Assess the undeveloped lots \$17.50 per month and the developed lots \$52.50. This is still way below the municipal systems in our area.*
- *It is unfair to be charging me \$105.00 per month for three lots, two of which use little to no water, while someone with a single four acre lot who irrigates it all pays only \$35.00 per month.*
- *Since all lots need a meter installed, all lots should pay an equal monthly fee to cover the cost of it.*
- *Wait until the meters have to be put in, and then charge me the \$1,000.00 in a single assessment.*
- *If a lot has any hose bib or sprinkler on it, it should be considered to be developed and be charged the full water rate.*

After further ideas are discussed at the annual meeting, the newly-elected Board should be tasked

with determining the best course of action, and implementing the fee schedule that best meets the needs of the association.

## ANNUAL MEETING

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**In anticipation of the annual meeting**, a copy of your proxy/ballot form has been included with this mailing. The form has your name and lot number pre-printed on it, to ensure that there is one vote per lot.

**Please bring this form with you to the meeting so that you will be able to record your votes, and those of any proxies that you hold. If you do not bring this form, or your proxy does not present it, you will not have a vote to cast.**

Items that will be on the meeting agenda include:

- Year in review and goals for 2011
- Covenant revision process
- Terms of office for board members
- Water rate structure
- Water Use Efficiency goal

If you have additional discussion points to be added, please notify a board member as soon as possible.

**Crumbacher Estates  
Annual Association Meeting  
April 22, 2011 6:30 p.m.  
Whistler's Restaurant meeting room  
Tonasket, WA**

**All members are invited to come early for dinner, beginning at 5:30.**

## CONTACTS

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**As always, we** value your input and support. Please use any of the following options to contact your board.

Doug Hale, President	826-1653
Rod Moore, Vice President	422-1353
Ken Radford, Secretary/Treasurer	826-1977
Rennie McCormick, Director	826-8034
Darren Schmidt, Director	826-2622

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