

Sierra los Pinos

Property Owners' Association
950 Forest Road 10
Jemez Springs, NM 87025
www.slppoa.org

Need to contact us? Send us an e-mail at board@slppoa.org or the individual e-mail below.

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Address Change?

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The intent of this newsletter is to highlight major issues. New developments are posted regularly on the website at www.slppoa.org. If you would like to be on our immediate notification email list, send an email message to board@slppoa.org.

****NO DUES INCREASE FOR 2016****

BUDGET

The Board of Directors voted at the October Board of Directors' meeting to keep your yearly assessment at \$690.00 for 2016. What's changed for the 2016 budget? The amount allocated for road maintenance was increased. We recognize that our roads had a rough year with the heavy rainfall this year, and with years and years of grading, this has taken a toll on the roads as well. We've added a little more to water maintenance for System 1, since we still have unknown leaks in our main water lines for that system that need to be located and repaired. We plan to move \$5K from the existing operating account into the reserve account, so there won't be a budget line item for 2016. Another major change next year is the possibility of hiring a management company to take over the books for the Association. We're doing fine with our current experienced volunteer, but after three years of harassment and then having a lawsuit filed against the Board of Directors, this isn't any way to treat our volunteers. So, the search has begun to find a management company. The Board has interviewed a representative from one company, but has taken no further action. Once we were notified that no management company will take us on with the pending lawsuit, our search took the back burner. We plan to pick up the search again in the February or March time-frame. The down-side to hiring a management company is not only the inconvenience, but it's a large bite out of our budget. The current "rough" estimate is \$800/month. The 2016 Budget is attached.

2016 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT DUE JANUARY 1, 2016

Payment for the annual assessment is due by January 1, 2016. As per the Bylaws, Section 8, any assessment not paid within thirty days after the due date shall bear interest from the due date at 1.5% per month. Assessment shall be considered "past due" three months from the original due date. The Board realizes that this is somewhat confusing, so if you have any questions, please contact the treasurer or another Board member for further explanation.

For those members who are having financial difficulties, there is a payment plan option. The Payment Agreement and Policy for Payment Agreement is found on our website, slppoa.org, under <http://slppoa.org/www/policies>. All requests must be approved by the Board of Directors. Requests should be mailed to our physical mailing address or e-mailed to treasurer@slppoa.org.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

From the desk of the President, I always found that rather smug. So it's going to be, "hi neighbor", not that we all know each other that well. I am guilty of that very same fault during the Annual Meeting. I believed that I was talking to a different person, and was too embarrassed to admit it. Please forgive me.

That being said, I'd like to move on to SLPPOA Board business and I couldn't be less embarrassed (that means I'm really proud)! These people, that you have elected, are stellar representatives for you and have accomplished so much since I joined the board

2 plus years ago. I'll let them tell you about improvements and accomplishments since the last newsletter.

My message to you is about volunteerism and preparedness. This fall, I've already met or heard about people who are not totally prepared for country living at high altitude. We have neighbors who are elderly, physically challenged or new-to-the-game. Ask if they need help. That means stopping, going out of our way and spending a few moments of our precious time to inquire about other's needs. We all suffer from exhaustion and fatigue due to our lives and work, or lack of. We have neighbors living on less than welfare levels. Yes, I am NOT kidding. Some neighbors are as old as your parents (they'd have to be really old for my parents). Some are literally shut-ins. Some are so new to the area as to not have the necessary vehicle or tires. Help with tips, experience and sometimes a ride or tow. Stop by with your snowplow.

A few ideas:

- Front wheel drive with ice-rated tires. Sure worked while the kids were home.
- 4wheel drive. Doesn't have to be fancy or aggressive.
- Sand barrels. There are still a few around AND they don't fill themselves! Need one in your neck of the woods? Ask the board. Want sand in them – there's red stuff at the Fire Barn. We don't hire that done, it's volunteers that makes it work. Find one without a lid? Stop and look for it before the snow gets too deep. Sand in it, that's going to freeze into a block of ice? Cover the opening. Want some for yourself? See the previous comment about barrels-by-the-road.

I've seen an increase in neighbor participation. Keep up the trend.

- Want to spend a day learning about the water meter and distribution? Let the board know, we'll pass it on to the appropriate Chair. It might be really interesting for you next time the water goes out. We now have tools to indicate leaks and will be contacting those neighbors with identified "leak flags".
- Expecting that 4" of snow that fell last night to be plowed and sanded when you leave in the morning? Not going to happen. You don't pay enough dues to have our own road maintenance department. Please refer to the first three topics to deal with the situation. We share snow removal with Thompson Ridge and the worst roads get taken care of first. I think that you've found that when it gets done, it is well done!
- Rough and torn up roads? Yep, we've had a rainy summer and couldn't find a contractor to help us. Thanks to one of our board members, we now have plans and a contractor and have started to improve on the roads, barely in time for the snows. See the previous comment about dues if you're impatient for results.

2015 GENERAL MEETING AND BOARD ELECTIONS RESULTS

If you haven't heard or read it on our website, Peter Veverka and Jack Nyhan were re-elected to serve another three-year term on the Board of Directors! We are very pleased that they agreed to continue to serve our community. Also

elected to serve the third three-year term is Scott Bushnell. Welcome Scott! We've very pleased to have you on board. We have a great team again this year and are looking forward to another year of great accomplishments.

LAWSUIT

Over the last year, SLPPOA Board of Directors has been involved in a lawsuit filed by a few homeowners. While the Board is named in this lawsuit, it is YOU, the homeowners, who end up paying the costs. This lawsuit not only has taken the time of the Board, it has also cost YOU money defending it. This money could be better spent improving Sierra Los Pinos than in an attorney's pocket. The lawsuit is scheduled to go to trial on February 3rd, so more legal costs are coming.

Remember, the Sierra Los Pinos Property Owners' Association is not the nine Board of Directors and it's small number of volunteers and contractors. It is WE the homeowners! The Association is here for the common good of all, not just any one, two, or three individuals. Please keep in mind that your Board is comprised of volunteers who work for free and put in many long hours making sure you have water while meeting all the many state requirements, making sure you can get to your homes, especially in the winter, and trying to maintain Sierra Los Pinos a great place to live!

As promised last year, before the lawsuit, we've had an Audit performed in 2015. No findings! You can find the Audits on the Website. We had 2012, 2013 and 2014 performed to protect our board from continued harassment. The last audit was performed in 2009. You might want to ask members of the lawsuit, why they didn't perform one while they were on the board.

The lawsuit still draws out even after the Audit being completed. We will seek recovery of the expenses that this lawsuit has incurred.

Thanks to those who have given many, many hours of their time to make this a lovely place to live.

AUDIT

Last fall the Board of Directors said they would have an audit performed in 2015 and this year we made that happen. The final decision was to have a three-year audit performed for the period of 2012 – 2014. Although the three-year audit was not required, we decided that because of the lawsuit, we would proceed with the full three years. The auditors' recommendation from the 2009 audit to have a reserve study performed is still a recommendation and one that we started pursuing two months ago. Other recommendations are that the invoices for the annual assessment be dated January 1st instead of the current date, which will eliminate a little extra work for the treasurer, and he recommended that we make it clear that the bank balances reported in the monthly meetings reflect the balances as of that date. (These are recommendations and

not findings!) The auditor did comment that we are doing quite well financially considering our low annual assessments. Our net increase in cash compared to his 2009 audit reflects the health of our Association, which he was quite pleased to see. So a big THANK YOU goes out to all of you for paying your dues! Results of the three-year audit are posted on the web.

We will continue to have the Association books reviewed by Sunland Management on a quarterly basis, which is only required annually. Sunland Management prefers this be performed quarterly so there are no surprises when it comes times to prepare our tax return. And this helps us make sure we are on track with posting entries accurately. Sunland pulls the full data file to perform their review, so they can always see how posting is performed and transactions are handled.

WEBSITE

Mike Schacht continues to manage our website and improvements are ongoing. He has done an excellent job on posting the water usage data. Approximately 20 people (~13%) have signed up on our website to obtain their personal water usage information. If you haven't done so as yet, please go to our website (slppoa.org) and request your own personal log-in so you can have direct access to your water usage information. It's quite impressive to be able to see what the wells are pumping, how much is being used by homeowners, and how much water is unaccounted for (leaks in the main lines). Leaks are an issue that our water team is actively pursuing. If you have information or ideas you would like to see on the website, please let us know. We're happy to take suggestions.

PARKS

In the spring, it is planned to add a covered pavilion to the large park for families to have a picnic or a get together without worrying about the elements. The size and style of the pavilion is still under consideration, so anyone with ideas or suggestions please contact Max Otero.

ARE YOU LEAVING YOU HOME FOR SEVERAL DAYS OR MONTHS? PLEASE WINTERIZE!!

Every year there are water leaks found in homes that have not been winterized. Please don't let that happen to your home. If no heat will be on during the winter, all supply water lines should be drained and/or blown out by the homeowner or a professional in order to avoid pipe damage. Leaving your furnace on a low setting while you're away may not prevent freezing.

- Turn off your main water shutoff valve.
- Turn off and drain hot water heaters, water softeners, hot water baseboards, in floor heating systems.
- Open all fixtures including those in the showers and any outside bibs (disconnect hoses).
- Completely eliminate or dilute the water in drain traps by pouring an "RV" type antifreeze solution in them as directed by the instructions
- Pour antifreeze into all toilet bowls and tanks.
- For dishwashers, refrigerators (with a water dispenser or an ice maker) and clothes washers, follow the manufacturer's directions. Remove and empty any "whole-house" or "in-line" type filter canister. Remove any water filter inside refrigerator. If you find the task daunting, get a plumber to do it for you.

Best wishes for a joyous and safe holiday season and a happy new year!