

The Rancho Tehama Association TRAILBLAZER

OCTOBER
2008

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS NEWSLETTER

The only official publication of your association for ALL members; all other local newsletters are only the *personal opinions* of their publisher/editors. CALL THE OFFICE TO GET COPIES OF OFFICIALLY SIGNED AND ADOPTED MEETING MINUTES.
Staff 530-585-2444; Board 530-585-2631 Tel/Fax

Rancho Tehama Awarded USPS October 1 Mail Contract Increase!!

After a six-month effort by the Board of Directors, the Postal Service has issued a contract modification to increase the annual contract from \$13,000 to \$26,000 effective October 1, 2008. This is the first increase in thirteen years. It was based on calculations using the current RTA employee hourly wage range and service. Our contract postal unit employees are trained to Postal Service standards, but they are association employees. Congratulations to them for a job well done.

ITEMS OF NOTE

- 1) Tuesday, November 18 at 9:00 is the next open board meeting. Included on the agenda is the counting of the ballots in the current election and refreshments provided by Hignell. Volunteers are needed to help with the count.
- 2) Only red stickers are now accepted at the Transfer Station. To keep our roadways neat, cover and secure all loads before transporting trash.
- 3) RTA is gradually disposing of the five lots acquired in non-judicial foreclosure. For more information, call Hignell at 530-894-0404.

THE RTA RECALL—SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Several written allegations against your Directors have come to our attention. The Board has more important matters to attend to, but feels it owes it to all our members to speak out and clarify the issues. We continue to be committed to building a strong and contented community.

1. To the statement "**The Board has been very secretive about this election**", we must reply that **the fact is, there is NO secret. Since the Board has adopted new election policies and procedures, as well as new Elections Committee guidelines, the balloting process is being done in a different manner—and under the specifications of the new documents.** Neither the Board nor a committee of your peers should be managing the ballot procedure. This board has met the obligation to see that elections are conducted fairly and impartially, by delegating the job to a professional independent inspector. By doing so, it insures that the probability of election irregularities (such as having a candidate's lot partner serving on a committee that has access to the ballots at any point) will never occur.
2. We reply to **"..this board decided to take away from us ...the most universally used enforcement policy to correct CC&R violations, our Fine System."** A Superior Court Judgment ruled the Rancho Tehama Fine System illegal because our Governing Documents do not provide for any form of member discipline other than taking them to court. **Thus the board was obligated to reverse all prior Resolutions establishing a Fine System—and it did so.** The prior Board was spending Association funds to appeal the Judgment and this board stopped the action.
3. As to the charge **"..they took away the Development Fee...a universal Fee in most communities across the United States."** Again, we are not "most communities." Our Governing Documents do not provide for any form of income other than member assessments and a "reasonable filing fee" for the Architectural/Environmental Control Committee to review plans. \$750 per plan for the purpose of general damage to the roads is not legal in Rancho Tehama. **The board was obligated to reverse all prior Resolutions establishing the \$750 Development Fee.**
4. **"...Board....spouses (or "lot partners") were ...on...committees or appointed as the chairperson of a committee."**—this said by a person who served on the same powerful RTA committee **along with his/her lot partner!** This board has never appointed a chairperson; it is not permitted by the governing documents. Committees choose their own chair.
5. In reference to an **"open door"** policy, **this board has never endorsed a policy or procedure that allows any member to roam freely among RTA confidential records.** The directors have made themselves available to the members but will not give preferential treatment to those who feel they have the right to know everything, including confidential information.
6. In saying the board **"made up so many stories they couldn't keep them straight"** about settling out of court with a member who was unfairly sued by a prior board of directors, the writer must be referring to all the lies and rumors that were floating around. **One story was told in the annual audit report** sent out first class mail to ALL the members—and that was the truth. The truth does not change.
7. **"The subject of dissolving the association was instigated by this board" is an unfounded statement.** The subject of dissolving has been around for years. The board had no part in circulating, promoting or signing the petition, but was obligated to present it to the members, once it was validated.
8. The writer takes the position that **the board "challenged" the August balloting process.** The board did not *"challenge"*. **The board "stopped" the ballot**—and had every right and responsibility to do so.
9. **"The Board hired a Management Company...when our treasury was looking very bleak...."** Over a year ago, this board inherited a really bleak total bank account worth only around \$2,400. **Only when we had nursed the treasury up to a healthier balance of more than \$200,000 did we hire a much-needed management company.**
10. The final charge is **"We simply can't afford to keep this Board in office. Your property values and investments are at stake."** To that we state positively: **We simply can't afford voting this Board out of office. Your property values and investments are at stake.**

County Emergency Services Require 3" Reflective Address Numbers on Each Lot. Please Upgrade Your Lot Now.
Spanish translations available on request.

The Rancho Tehama Airport—Setting the Record Straight

We at RTR love our homes and the Ranch amenities. In fact most of us bought our homes because of an amenity such as a park, green zone, a pistol range, a creek or an airport. The airport is no different than any other amenity with the exception that it is governed by Cal Department of Transportation (DOT) Aeronautical Division requirements. Suggestions that we close or somehow take away any amenity will only damage home values and the greater worth of the ranch and open us to exposure from legal action. So will suggestions by those that would like to see their favorite amenity become the 'show-place' of RTR.

It has been reported by several members that there is an unofficial airport group that is overstepping its bounds, with respect to an amenity that is operated by the Rancho Tehama association. While it is agreeable to improve our ranch it cannot be done at the behest of a self-appointed and misguided committee. **Imposing restrictions on lot owners in the airport influence area to allow for such a plan** by any association member, committee, Director, or Board of Directors **is not permitted** under our existing Governing Documents. Committees are only for getting a direct look at focused problems by knowledgeable resources and provide feedback to the board with recommendations and unbiased representation of the association stating cost/benefit and impact.

To dispel a number of misconceptions that have arisen involving The Rancho Tehama Airport, the Board of Directors wishes to set the record straight.

1. **The Rancho Tehama Airport is owned and operated by the Association as a whole for the benefit of all members and their friends.** A Special Use Permit was activated by Cal DOT Aeronautical Division in August of 2006. The ordinary maintenance cost is about \$6400 per year. Originally, because the roads were poor, it was intended for use by the developers to bring in prospective buyers even before the subdivision was accepted by the County. Now it is mainly only used by a few owners who own planes and are licensed pilots, and thus have a greater investment in their properties. Therein lies the source of an ongoing controversy between these owners and the balance of owners who feel that they are expected to pay the tab for the luxury of a very few people who benefit from it.
2. There is no "Rancho Tehama Airpark" and no airport master plan. This mislabeling of the airport and the area around it comes out of a development plan reportedly dreamed up some years ago and written by one of our resident members who was a land planner prior to retirement. This plan has never been adopted by the Association.
3. Purportedly (we have never seen it), we understand it contains items such as the lighted marquee, converting the roads north of the airport into aircraft taxi-ways, and building of "t-hangars" *with association funds* to rent out to the public. We understand that some of our current director candidates support these plans if they get elected to office.
4. For obvious safety reasons, the airport area has restricted access. Owners of lots around the airport have been notified of all the requirements, including that a **fence is required** on the runway side of each lot on the airport to prevent animals and people from wandering out into the airport safety zone. We have posted signs prohibiting access to the paths alongside the landing strip by unauthorized vehicles, pets, or people.
5. The height of trees and buildings in the airport are under control of CalTrans DOT. A review of the permit conditions revealed that Rancho Tehama Association must apply to CalTrans prior to any physical or operational changes at the airport which affect the safety conditions. This means that plans for construction of hangars, other buildings, and taxi-way aprons must be submitted to the Architectural Committee and approved by Cal Trans prior to issuance of a job site card. Guidelines for the Architectural Committee are under development by the Board of Directors.
6. There are official web sites and pilot charts that list our airport information for pilots who are members and friends.
7. According to Cal Trans, the Association has the power and ability to close the airport to air traffic for special events upon written application by members. On October 24, the airport was closed for 3 hours to permit the school children to take a safe walking field trip to the pumpkin patch at the church.

As to the question of whether the Association must continue to maintain or abandon any current amenity, the board feels that it must maintain. The board has the same obligation to maintain the airport and any other amenity until the members exercise their collective right to determine a change, if any. The annual budget process, now under way, is one avenue to accomplish change. We welcome all constructive comments and requests. Send email to the board at rta@rtr.net or the managers at chuck@hignell.com.

ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

President Easton reviewed the past year, stating also the board's fiduciary duties of loyalty, ordinary care, and good faith to act in a reasonable manner in the best interests of the corporation. To that end, the board has made every effort to pay attention to association business and seek expert advice, including hiring Hignell, an association management company that is committed to creating a caring community and to do things openly and correctly.

It does not benefit us as members, or as neighbors to have a community

that constantly blames, accuses, and points fingers. Noting that ALL Directors who have served, past or present, have devoted huge chunks of their free time to the association because they wanted to benefit our community. And they tried to do the best job any of them knew how to do—only to get persecuted and ridiculed.

"You don't always have to be best buddies or agree with the Directors individually, but to keep tearing the community apart because you don't is complete insanity. We have to work with one goal—the good of the whole community—and that's our job," Easton stated.

BUS SERVICE PROJECT

The first ever Tehama County Human Services Transportation Plan is on the way. Once adopted on December 16, it will open the door to new Federal Funds for the County rural bus service. We are encouraged to see that a lot of work and attention has been paid to Rancho Tehama and the after-school activities needs of our youth.

PRESCHOOL PLAY GROUP—A head start for our youth

FIRST 5 Tehama County presents a free 20-week play group just for RT tots Friday afternoons at the Rec Hall. 384-7833

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