

CDD EMPLOYEES SAVE \$\$\$

By **Bill Parsons** Vice Chairman, Seven Oaks CDD

The CDD maintenance staff is a major line item in our budget, but when compared to the expense of not having them, they are probably worth their weight in gold. In the CDD budget for next year (October 1, 2014 - September 30, 2015), we have \$282,166 for salaries, taxes, workers compensation, and health insurance for the five CDD maintenance employees plus the estimated cost of a sixth employee should we decide to hire one. In this article, I want to show you why the Board believes that this is money well spent.

One of the things about Seven Oaks that appeals to people and keeps our property values above average is the “curb” appeal that Seven Oaks has with its well kept grounds. To insure that the beauty of Seven Oaks is not degraded, two of the CDD employees take about an hour each morning from 7 to 8 a.m. to go down the main boulevards (Ancient Oaks, Summergate, Mystic Oak, and Eagleston) to pick up any trash littered by pedestrians or thrown out of cars.

About two weeks ago, I rode with Bob Semple, CDD Maintenance



John picks up a water bottle on Ancient Oaks Blvd. Each morning, he finds about a bucket of trash on the Ancient Oaks, Mystic Oak and Eagleston Blvds north of the power lines.

Superintendent, to pick up the trash south of the power lines and John Gentellella, CDD employee, to pick up trash north of the power lines (see picture below). They picked up paper cups, soda cans and bottles, candy wrappers, fast food bags (some containing food), children’s socks, car lug nut, broken glass, etc. Bob even found a scooter that someone had abandoned. They will hold these types of items at the clubhouse for about a week before disposing of them.

When I went with Bob, he removed a small snake on Ancient Oaks Blvd that had been run over. Bob and John have had to remove a wide variety of dead animals from the streets or other CDD property. Sadly, they have had to remove a sandhill crane killed by a vehicle. They even removed a dead alligator from the pond near Bellfield.

The morning rides on the golf carts also provided them an opportunity to canvas Seven Oaks for any maintenance issues. For example, on the morning I rode with Bob, the storm during the night had blown off a large limb by the pond between The Laurels and Brookforest. He dragged it to the edge of the street so the landscape contractor (i.e. Vivicon) could haul it off on their truck. John spotted two light sensor covers at the top of the light poles that had popped open leaving the sensors exposed. After his inspection of Seven Oaks, he went back with a ladder and closed them. After Bob and John empty the trash and other items collected in the clubhouse dumpster, they immediately begin working on a wide variety of maintenance issues.



John Gentellella and Bob Semple install a bench in the Sable Point park.

During the past few months, here are a few of the things they have worked:

- Installed a park bench in Sable Point (picture above).
- Repaired the barbed wire fence (i.e. added posts and barbed wire) at the end of the cul-de-sac in The Laurels to prevent ATVs from entering Seven Oaks and racing down the streets.
- Replaced landscape lighting with LED lights at the entrances to the neighborhoods.
- Repaired bridges on the nature trail (picture below).

- Recondition trellises by pressure washing, replacing rotting boards, and painting.
- Removed trees that have fallen down.
- Painted splash park at the clubhouse (picture on next page).
- Identified leaning light poles and reported them to electric company to be straighten.
- Ground down sidewalks raised by oak trees. Grinder and generator cost \$1,500. A contractor would have charged \$225,500 for the 300 sidewalks (picture on next page).



Bob and John repairing the bridge on the nature trail between Edenfield and Grassglen



Since some of the repairs at Seven Oaks (repairing curbs and sidewalks, removing large diseased or dying trees, painting road surface markings, patching roads, pruning trees, obtaining new road signs, etc.) are done by contractors, it is Bob's responsibility to collect estimates, present them to the CDD Board and then monitor the contractor to insure the work is completed properly. This is a time consuming part of his job, but one that is very important.

While Bob and John are working on projects such as the ones listed above, the other three CDD maintenance employees are working on their specific areas of responsibility.

Mike Ritchie

In November 2008, when the CDD Board changed from developer to resident controlled, one of the first things we did was to try to reduce over \$200,000 per year we were paying a contractor to maintain the irrigation system. We decided to try inhouse maintenance by hiring two CDD employees and purchasing the supplies they would need to maintain the irrigation system. Mike was one of the employees. When the other one resigned, Mike felt that he could do the job by himself.

Mike finds about 75 percent of the problems with the irrigation system by conducting Preventive Maintenance Inspections (PMI). Weekly, he uses his remote to access one of the seven controllers that manage up to 60 zones. With this remote control, he can check each zone without leaving his golf cart.

The remaining 25 percent of the problems he fixes are identified by three other sources:

- 1) residents
- 2) landscape contractor
- 3) CDD maintenance staff

For example, on our ride, Bob called Mike to fix a malfunctioning zone line.

Larry Way

Larry came to Seven Oaks with 22 years experience in machine and fabrication from a Department of Defense contractor, 7 years with Ace Hardware, and 9 years as an operations manager for Lowes. Each morning, he uses a blower to clean the area in front and back of the clubhouse. Later, he performs routine maintenance on the clubhouse that includes everything from changing air conditioning filters to emptying trash cans. Each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, Larry rakes the tennis courts to keep them in a playable condition.

Jimmy Brown

Jimmy's primary duty is to pressure wash the entrance to the neighborhoods and the park equipment. On Friday, he services each of the 23 parks by emptying trash cans, ensuring basketball goal nets are not tangled, picking up trash, etc.

Don't hesitate to let the CDD Staff know how much you appreciate their efforts to make Seven Oaks a great place to live and save you money in maintenance cost.



Jimmy Brown pressure washes the sidewalk in front of Stonecreek.



Mike Ritchie uses one of the seven controllers to turn on an irrigation zone so he can test it.



Bob painting the splash park at the clubhouse



Bob grinds down a sidewalk raised by an oak tree in Pinecrest



Larry Way repairs one of the tables on the pool deck.