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myriverwoods.org

Mailbox Key Won't Work?

Some residents have told us that their mailbox keys won't turn the lock and wonder how to get a new key. While it's possible the key is damaged, the most likely cause is lack of lubrication in the lock. The recommended lube for locks is graphite powder or a Teflon/silicone-based dry spray lubricant, which can be obtained at most hardware stores. A quick squirt of either of these, followed by working the key back and forth, will usually ensure smooth working of a mailbox lock. If that doesn't help, you'll need to call the Burnsville post office. The Association can't replace the mail box key.

Road Salt Shortage This Year

The onset of more-severe winter has affected the availability of road salt, as the state and cities have purchased most of the available salt. As we've received less than we usually get, we're trying to make the salt last by mixing in a higher percentage of sand. This means you'll have to be especially careful driving on Association roads; less ice will be melted, and while the sand should provide some traction, roads may be more slippery than usual. Give yourself a lot of braking distance within the Association and drive a little slower than usual.

Sewer Backing Up? Who Pays?

Good question. Here's the way it works: If the blockage in the sewer is between the city's sewer in the street and the connection with River Woods' sewer system, the city of Burnsville is obligated to fix it. If the blockage is between the connection to the city sewer and the common sewer for your building, the HOA is obligated to fix it. If the blockage is in the common sewer for your building, all owners of the building are obligated to share in the cost of opening the sewer (though the HOA office can coordinate with the contractor and handle billing for all the units in the building). If the blockage is between your unit and the common building sewer line, you are obligated to pay.

How do you know where the blockage is? The are companies that can send cameras down the sewer line to specifically locate the blockage. Place call or email the HOA office for more specific information.

Also note that some HO-6 policies offer an option to cover costs of sewer repair. Check your policy or your agent to see if this option is available to you.

Thank you to all of the wonderful residents who brought treats and gifts for the crew and office. It was an unusual holiday season for everyone and we are very grateful for the incredibly generous folks we have in this community!!!

February Dates to Remember

The **Board** meets on February 17 at 5:30 in the HOA office.

The **ACC** meets on February 24 at 5:30 in the HOA office. Please submit requests by February 5.

The **HOA office** will be closed February 16 for Presidents Day and February 13 and 24 because of vacations.

Reminder: Late Fees are \$25

The late fees for missed monthly fee payments are \$25 on the 10th of the month due, and an additional \$25 on the 20th of the month. Owners will be sent a statement on the 11th of the month showing that late fee and the total amount owing. The reason we're reminding you is that some owners think the late fee is still \$10, which it was for many years. But it's been \$25 on the 10th and 20th of the month since March 2022.

The easiest way to avoid late fees is to sign up for automatic fee withdrawal from your bank account (called ACH in banking terminology). This lets us deduct the monthly fee — and *only* your monthly fee — from your account on the first of each month. It's free, and there is a form on the Association website you can submit to the HOA office to initiate ACH payments.

Lithium Ion Battery Warning

The number of house fires started by faulty lithium ion batteries is rising each year. One reason is that owners of lithium ion-powered items, such as e-bikes, are often put off by how expensive replacement batteries are, and opt for low-priced imitations. Unfortunately, low-priced lithium ion batteries often are manufactured lacking the quality control that "name" batteries have and will sometimes burst into a very hot flame.

One precaution you can take: Place items with lithium ion batteries away from flammable walls and other items. An e-bike, for example, can be placed in the center of a garage instead of up against a wall.

Website E-Mail problems

If you've emailed the HOA office from the new website and didn't get a response, it isn't because we're not paying attention to e-mails. The new website is suffering some growing pains and for the first several months of the changeover was not forwarding mail appropriately. If you tried to send a message via the website and didn't get a response, we apologize; the issue should now be fixed.

Holiday Decorations

Holiday lighting and decorations should have been removed by now. Please remove all items possible and turn off and remove all lighting. This includes colored light bulbs, which are not allowed in fixtures on garage fronts and sides.

Unapproved Lighting Fixtures

Only certain styles of lighting fixtures are permitted by the ACC. Some owners have replaced approved lighting fixtures with unapproved versions. Such unapproved fixtures will be noted at the spring walkthrough and you will be required to remove them or face a fine. If you have any specific questions about your lighting fixtures, please email the office.

Noticed Any Coyotes?

You might, as spring is mating season for coyotes, and they are more frequently seen then. If you let any small animals, such as cats, run loose at night, you are not only violating Association rules, but you are likely providing amorous coyotes a nice evening snack. Coyotes do not normally attack humans, but if you see one, be careful not to approach them.

Paint Cycle Coming: Get Ready

This year's paint cycle will include units 274-333, with painting prep (mainly power washing) starting in late May or early June, as weather permits. While it's always gratifying to get a new coat of paint on your house (or, if you have vinyl siding, your house's trim, doors, and deck railing), bear in mind that if you have damage to your siding, trim, door, or railing that prevents painting, you won't get painted. Any unit that does not make the needed repairs that were cited in the 2025 spring walkthrough may find themselves not getting painted and may receive fines.

We will have the usual spring walkthrough this year, with notices mailed out immediately to those who need repair and are in the paint cycle. If you get such a notice, be prepared to make needed repairs quickly so you can make sure your house is painted during the current paint cycle.

Owners will soon be receiving an email with additional information and instructions. Please keep an eye out for this communication.

Make Sure Your HO-6 Policy Covers Enough

This winter is a good time to check your HO-6 policy to be sure it covers the loss-assessment deductible of the Master Insurance Plan. We got a call in the office the other day inquiring if the deductible was still \$25,000. It isn't and hasn't been for a few years. The deductible on the Master Plan is \$50,000 in most cases, and if your HO-6 insurance still covers only a \$25,000

deductible in the Master Plan, you'll be in for a financial shock if you have a fire. Be sure to make sure your HO-6 policy meshes with the Master Plan so there are no coverage gaps.

You can find a detailed description of the Master Plan coverage on the Association's website.

How Do You Pick a Contractor?

When you remodel or reconstruct part of your house, such as a deck (and don't forget to contact the ACC before you do any construction on the outside of your house), you probably need to pick a contractor. And if you don't already know a good contractor you have confidence in, this can be a (possibly expensive) problem. To help, we have posted on our website (under the "Specifications/ Forms" tab) a guide to picking a good contractor, written by the HOA Leadership Network, an organization we belong to that provides timely information for homeowners associations and its residents. We suggest you check it out and follow its recommendations before hiring any contractor you're not already familiar with.

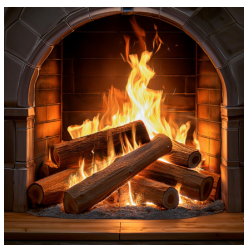
Note that we do not make recommendations of contractors, due to liability concerns.

Update Your Contact Information

We need to update phone numbers, emails and emergency contacts on a regular basis so we can contact you both on regular Association matters and in cases of emergency. If you haven't already done so, please complete the Homeowner Contact Form from the website, under the "Specifications/ Forms" tab, and return it to the River Woods office. If we have an up-to-date form on file, completing a new form is not necessary. Also, we can keep spare keys for you in the office's secured lock box for emergencies or your garage keypad code. We can also keep a copy of your mailbox key for you, if you wish.

Fireplace/Chimney Reminder

Have you had your fireplace/chimney checked recently? Creosote deposited over a long period becomes highly flammable and it is often the cause of chimney fires. A professional chimney sweeper will carefully and thoroughly scrub the flue, including the liner and walls, to remove creosote, soot, residue and other debris from the flue. In addition, you may have to repair or replace



defective dampers, as dampers that do not close properly will allow the outside air to mix with heated air and increase your energy costs. A professional chimney sweep is recommended, as they are knowledgeable about building codes, trained to recognize deterioration or venting problems and can advise you regarding the chimney's condition. The National Fire Protection Association recommends that chimneys, fireplaces, and vents be inspected at least once per year.

Guard Against Kitchen Fires

Even though we spend a great deal of time in our kitchen, it is not the safest room in the home. Cooking fires are the #1 cause of home fires and home fire injuries.

Nationally, cooking fires cause hundreds of deaths and thousands of injuries each year. These fires are usually preventable.

Here are some things to remember while cooking:

- Keep cooking areas clean of grease and oil buildup
- Keep cooking areas clear of combustibles such as potholders, towels, rags, food packaging, etc.
- Keep children and pets out of cooking area while cooking.
- Never leave cooking unattended.
- Keep a 10 lb. ABC fire extinguisher mounted near the exit.



If things go wrong

- For a pan fire, while wearing an oven mitt slide a lid over the pan and turn off the stove.
- For an oven fire, keep the door closed and turn off the oven, then unplug.
- For a microwave fire, keep the door closed and unplug the oven.
- If the fire becomes uncontrollable, make sure everyone is out of the home and call 911 from outside the house.

Investing in a portable automatic fire suppression system is also a good idea. These small canisters fit over cooking surfaces and automatically suppress fires on the stove top. These can be purchased for as little as 30 dollars a pair and can be found under various names on the internet.

If you have any questions regarding cooking fires, please call the Burnsville Fire Department at 952-895-4570.