

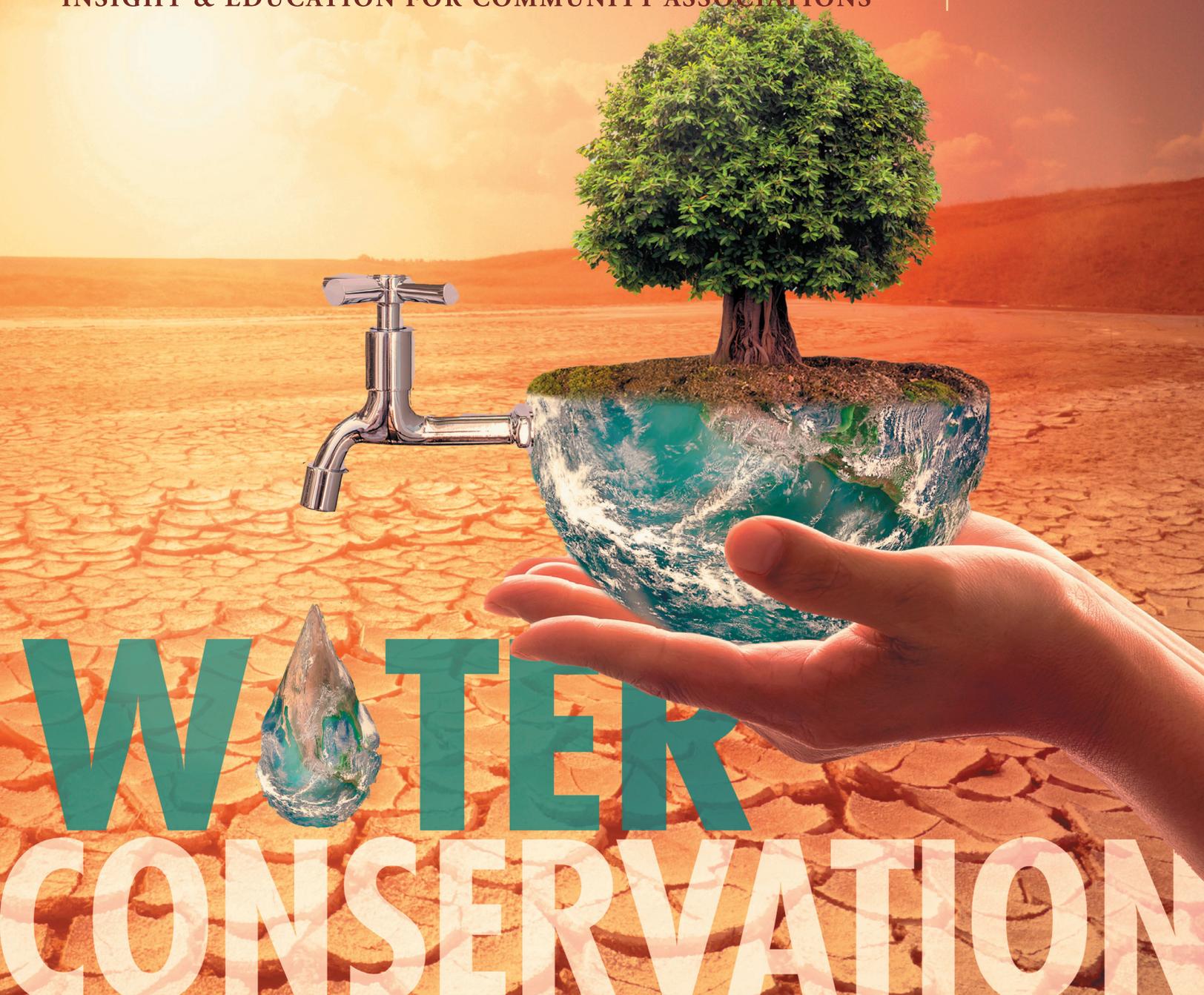
COMMUNITY RESOURCE

INSIGHT & EDUCATION FOR COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

JULY
2020

This Issue

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MESSAGE**



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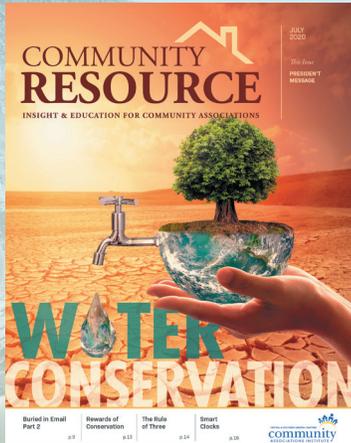


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CENTRAL & SOUTHERN AZ

July 2020



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Ian Welsh, CMCA, AMS, PCAM
 Manager
 Trilogy at Power Ranch
 4369 E. Village Pkwy.
 Gilbert, AZ 85298
 Tel: 480-279-2051
 Email: ian@tprcoa.com

CHAPTER DIRECTORS

Sarah Danowski – Business Partner
 Kasdan Lippsmith Weber Turner
 3200N. Central Ave., Ste 2100
 Phoenix, AZ 85012
 Tel: 1-866-578-3328 Ext. 319
 Email: sdanowski@kasdandclaw.com

CHAPTER PRESIDENT ELECT

Rebecca Herro – Business Partner
 DLC Resources
 1550 E. Missouri, Ste. 100
 Phoenix, AZ 85014
 Tel: 602-721-8544
 Email: rebeccah@dlcresources.com

Terry Murphy – Homeowner Leader
 Sun City Grand
 19726 N Remington Drive
 Surprise, AZ 85374
 Tel: 623-388-6721
 Email: murphy4grand@gmail.com

CHAPTER SECRETARY

Suzanne Murray, CMCA, AMS, PCAM
 At Large – Manager
 Red Mountain Roofing
 4735 E Virginia Street Bldg #2
 Mesa, AZ 85215
 Tel: 480-268-7379
 Email: Suzanne@RedMountainRoofing.com

Lisa Lundskow, CMCA, AMS, PCAM, LSM
 Manager
 CCMC
 8360 E. Via de Ventura, Ste. 100
 Scottsdale, AZ 85258
 Tel: 480-921-7500
 Email: llundskow@ccmnet.com

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Mindy Martinez, CIRMS,
 At Large – Business Partner
 NFP Property & Casualty Services, LLC
 8201 N Hayden Rd
 Scottsdale, AZ. 85258
 Phone 602-567-0219
 Email mindy.martinez@nfp.com

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Mark L. Wade
mwade@suncityorovalley.com
 Phone: (520) 917-8080
 Sun City of Oro Valley

CHAPTER DIRECTORS

Brian Goncales
bgoncales@republicservices.com
 Phone: (520) 519-4855
 Republic Services

CHAPTER SECRETARY

Michael Shupe, Esq.
mike@gshoalaw.com
 Phone: (520) 285-4462
 Goldschmidt and Shupe, PLLC

Antionette Alvarez
info@titanrestore.com
 Phone: (520) 888-4826
 Titan Restoration of Tucson, Inc.

CHAPTER TREASURER

Rhonda Rayhel
rhonda@missionmanagement.biz
 Phone: (520) 979-4359
 Mission Management Services

Leslie Sophie Schaefer
lschaefer@paulashmgmt.com
 Phone: (520) 795-2100
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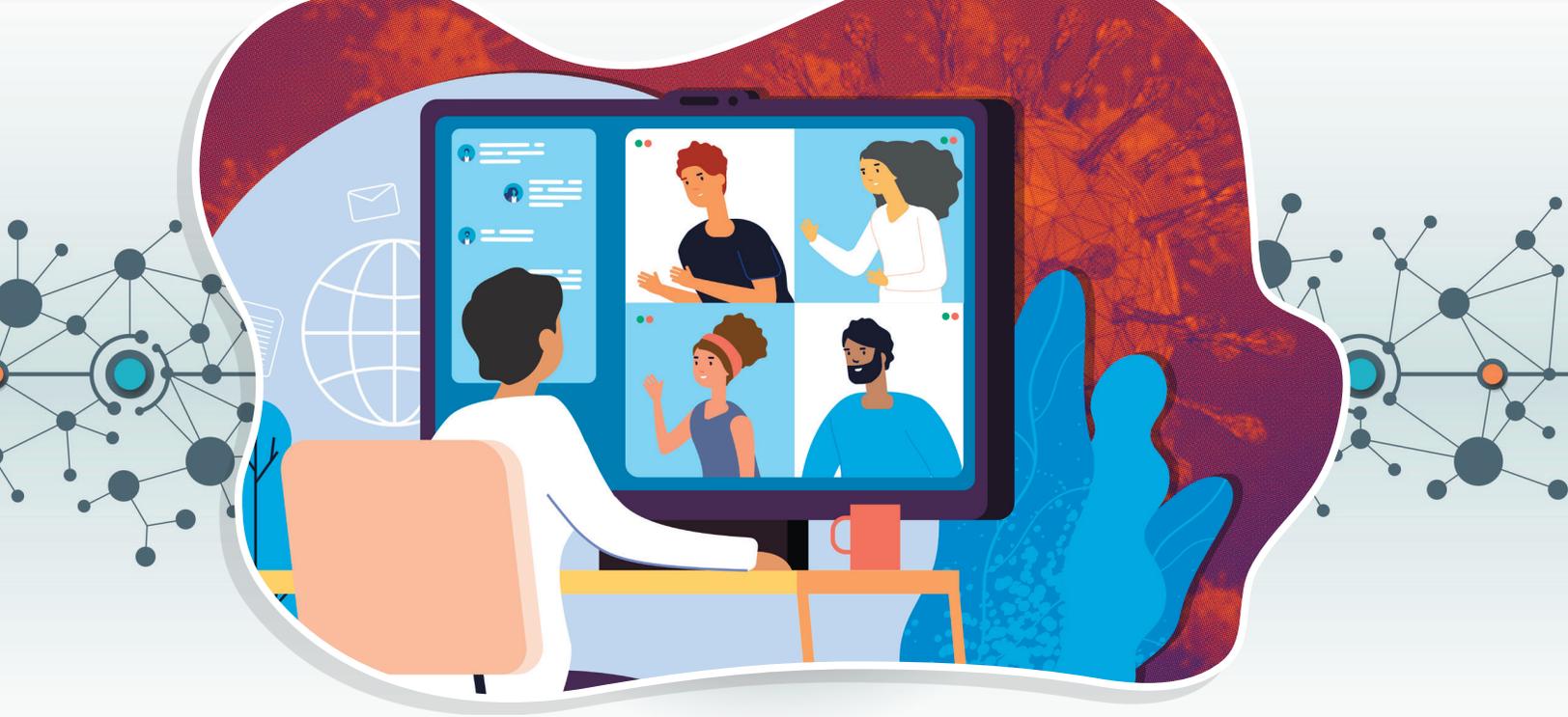
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President's Message

These are the times...

By Mark L. Wade, CMCA, AMS, LSM, PCAM
General Manager at Sun City Oro Valley

We live in interesting times. Not only do we have a Pandemic going on, with all that accompanies it, but we have severe wildfires and civil unrest.

At the time I am writing this article, we continue to set new records for the number of new COVID-19 cases and deaths reported in a day for the state. Executive Orders giving mandated directions continue to flow from the Governor's office. The CDC and other experts continue to give advice as to how to protect ourselves.

Community Associations, their managers and management companies continue to develop ways of doing business that benefit the industry. Who ever thought a few short months ago that we'd be doing our Board and Committee meetings over the phone or internet or that many employees would be working from home and liking it? Wouldn't it be something if phone/internet meetings became the new normal?

With more people working from home and children at home we find ourselves challenged. What events and activities can be done and how do we do them while keeping within the guidelines and

keeping our residents safe? What are the risks associated with opening? Are the Board Members at risk by opening amenities of the association? If sued because of a claim COVID-19 related, are you covered? What about risks to employees? Which amenities should we open? Do we allow clubs to continue operating and using facilities if they can't follow the guidelines? What do we do when some residents want to open despite the spike in numbers and others want to keep everything locked down?

We all probably have a plethora of questions. There are many, many sources to get answers from but at the end of the day, we have not lived thru this type of crises before. We need to check our governing documents and determine what our Board is allowed to do. We must seek out knowledgeable professionals. We need to consult our legal counsel and our insurance agent and stay within our safe harbor by following their advice and realistically evaluate risk. In a situation such as this and always, our Boards must do what is best for the community they lead. Avoid or defer risk as much as possible. Sometimes that goes against some of the grain, but it is always the right thing to do.

As I've been on meetings with managers from around the country, one thing is for sure and certain, you're not alone. We all have many of the same questions and uncertainty. We all are in uncharted waters but even while in uncharted water we can look to our north star and get direction to keep us in a safe harbor.

My hat is off to all of you, my friends, who have the intestinal fortitude to lead in these times of vast challenges. I applaud you who turn these challenges into opportunities, you who take your wisdom and knowledge to give hope to those you lead. Thanks to you who in the darkest storm find that elusive beam of light and help others to not only see it but to focus on it so they can make it through. You are HEROES!!!



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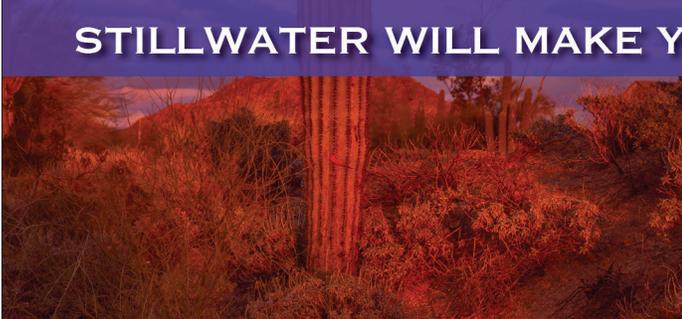




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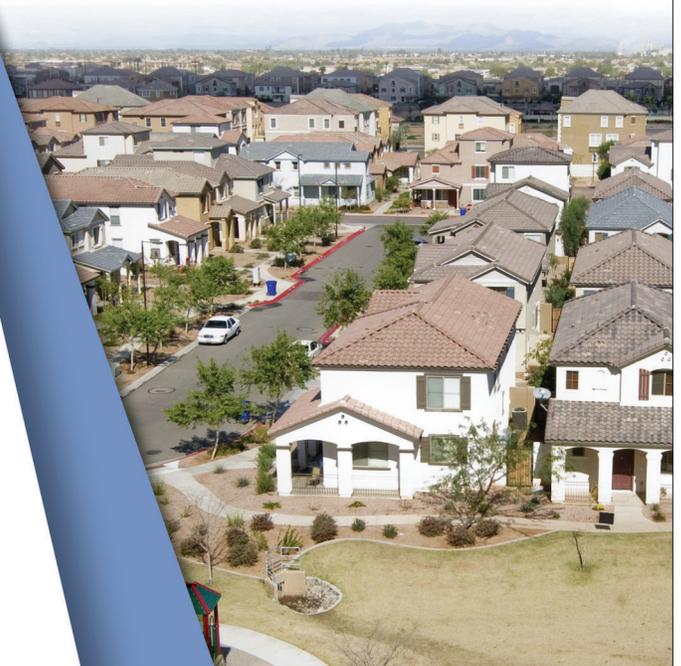
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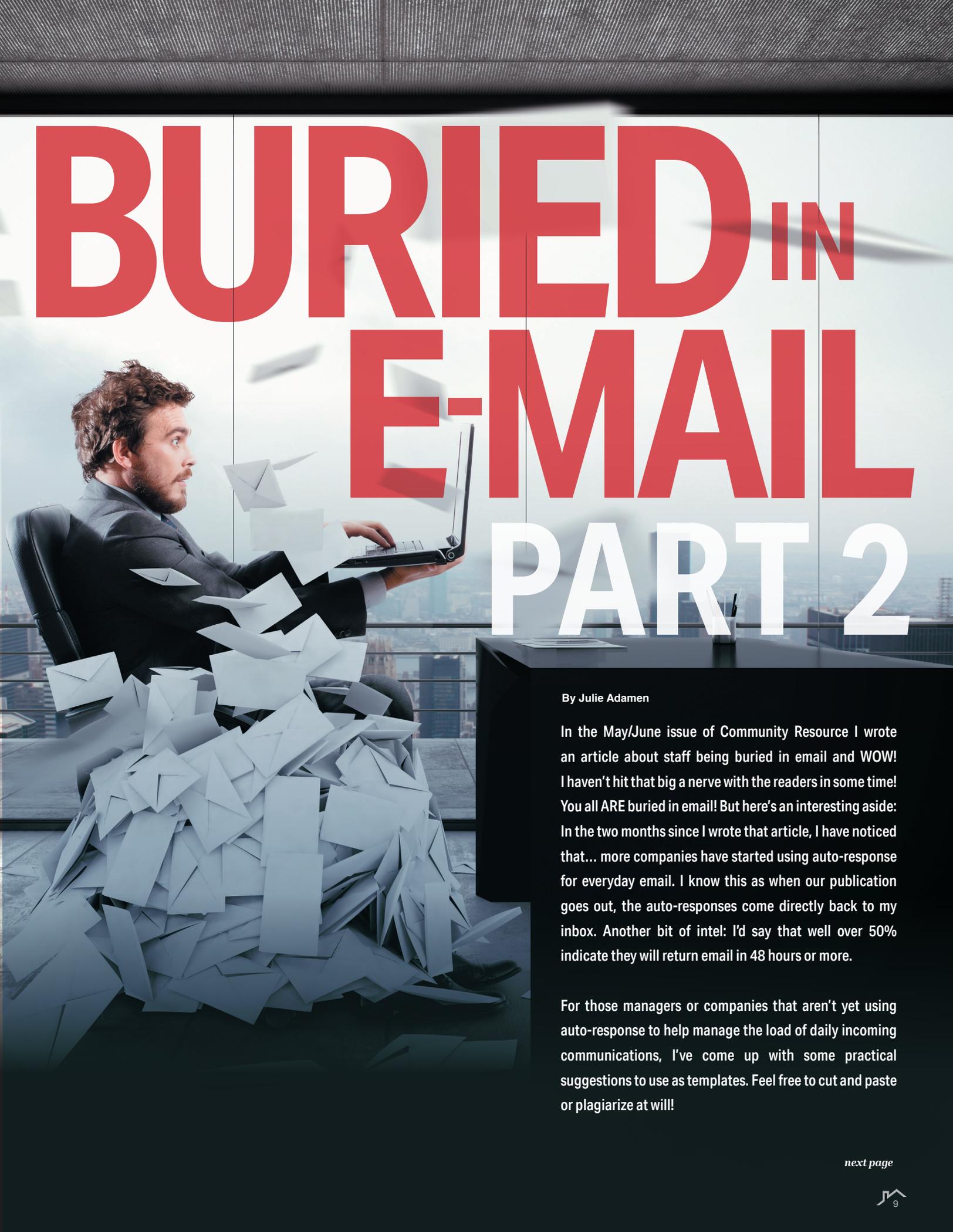
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BURIED IN E-MAIL PART 2

By Julie Adamen

In the May/June issue of *Community Resource* I wrote an article about staff being buried in email and WOW! I haven't hit that big a nerve with the readers in some time! You all ARE buried in email! But here's an interesting aside: In the two months since I wrote that article, I have noticed that... more companies have started using auto-response for everyday email. I know this as when our publication goes out, the auto-responses come directly back to my inbox. Another bit of intel: I'd say that well over 50% indicate they will return email in 48 hours or more.

For those managers or companies that aren't yet using auto-response to help manage the load of daily incoming communications, I've come up with some practical suggestions to use as templates. Feel free to cut and paste or plagiarize at will!

next page



Everyday Comprehensive Response

It's not 2006. It's not even 2013. Today, we are usually a click or two away from learning how to solve our own problems – whether it's how to fix the washing machine or take care of the rose bushes. Our residents are no different. Why not give them access to the problem-solving website or persons right away with a global auto-response?

Here are 4 examples:

1. Hello, this is Julie Adamen and thank you for your correspondence. Due to the high volume of email received I may be unable to personally attend to yours. Please see the below information and contacts that may better suit your inquiry:

If this is an emergency call our corporate office at 000.555.1212

- For FAQs go here: << insert website here >>
- To find your community's website, go here: << insert website here >>
- For common area complaints: : << staff email here >>
- For questions concerning your assessment account: : << staff email here >>
- For Architectural forms and inquiries: : << staff email here >>
- Happy Acres residents: For gate cards/transponders/pool keys go here: <<staff email here>>
- For our customer service staff call 000.555.1212 ext. 2, or email them at : <<staff email here>>

If none of the above fits your concern, I will be reviewing all email within 72 business hours and will respond to those that require it in the order they are received.

2. Out of office vacation:

Hi this is Julie and I'll be out of the office May 14 through May 21 on vacation and will not be checking email. See the information below so that you may be assisted with your concern or issue in my absence: Corporate office phone: 000.555.1212

Palm Dunes HOA: << staff email here >>

Bell Gardens COA: << staff email here >>

Meadowlark CA: << staff email here >>

Well Springs RV Association: << staff email here >>

Wilmington HOA: << staff email here >>

New Belfair COA: << staff email here >>

For escrow/estoppel issues all communities: << staff email here >>

For billing issues, all communities: << staff email here >>

If this email requires my personal response, I will do so when I return; however, emails will be addressed in the order they were received. Thank you for your patience.

3. Out of office:

Thank you for your email. I'll be out of the office the remainder of the day attending committee meetings. Emails will be reviewed and referred to the appropriate entity or responded to by me personally if necessary within 48 business hours of receipt. If you need immediate service, call our customer service dept. at <000.555.1212>.

4. In office but busy:

Hello, this is Julie. I'm in the office today and will be reviewing all email by 4pm and returning those which require my personal attention. If this is an urgent matter, please contact our customer service dept. /my assistant at: 000.555.1212. ext. 1 or << staff email here >>.

By using daily auto-response, you're 1) touching the client and 2) setting their expectations somewhere in a manageable range. Depending on what your response is, you're also giving them the ability to answer their own questions.

How do we know if this is effective? By installing tracking links on the emails and websites you provide in auto-response! Technology has not stood still.

Loose ends and other stuff: Company policy on auto-response

If we're going to begin using auto-response as a matter of course, you'll need some sort of company policy about it. I've put together some suggested policies on auto-response for those way too busy executives here:

Incoming email responses.

Auto-response is considered a sufficient for routine inquiries that do not require a personal response from the manager; however, the manager is responsible for ensuring the email inquiry is directed to the proper department/vendor/assistant or other appropriate entity.

Managing auto-response.

Each staff member is to ensure their auto response is professional and current with up-to-date with information and contains no grammatical or spelling errors. If you need help in composing auto-responses, please speak with your immediate supervisor (unless your company has standard auto-response for everyone).

Emails that require personal responses.

Emails that require your personal response, i.e. ones that cannot or should not be forwarded to others for resolution, should be answered within 2 business days.

A thought: Should your company have form auto-responses?

Potentially. Probably. Regardless, always spot check staff auto-responses for accuracy in information as well as spelling and grammatical errors. **it happens.-/.



Weaning clients off expecting instantaneous response to emails

Start with company-wide messages

that advise of the coming changes. In addition to their name, phone number and company logo, everyone's email tag should note the coming email response changes. "Beginning August 1st, our company policy regarding email responses will change from 24 to 72 hours. This is strictly due to the volume of communication received..."

Bring them the facts.

Phone calls are down and email is up; yet the clients still expect immediate action. 60 emails per day @ 5 minutes each = 5 hours per day answering email. New managers will take exponentially longer as they process the inquiries and learn the answers. Responding to every email personally is virtually impossible.

You are advising them of a reality.

It's our job to bring clients the right information, even though it's not what they may want to hear. This one just happens to affect your – and their - most precious asset: People.

Stay in touch with all clients.

Clients only want to ensure they are their residents are heard, and their issues taken care of – that they aren't just a faceless number. Assuage that fear as a part of an overall communication strategy at the executive level. Are you staying in touch with your clients? Do you have a regular executive message that goes out to them? Is your name, email and direct phone line (and picture) on that message and on your website? Do you pick up the phone and talk to your largest clients regularly? Or have you joined the witness protection program?



Will the clients go for it?

The truth is, eventually, they'll have to. There is no way humanly possible for every email to be answered personally and still perform the regular job of being a community manager. If that's not the case in your office now (your staff is long-term, experienced and has their accounts wired), it will be. The clients aren't oblivious to this problem, many are younger and in the workforce. They know it's an issue.

Once again, folks, I'm spitballin' here; however based on the feedback I received from the last article on emails, we must face this challenge head on. We must give employees the tools and ability to manage their incoming communications and make their work-life better. It's a hard enough job as it is and we're competing with everyone from Starbucks to Walmart to Bank of America (starting wage today \$17/hr., \$20/hr. in 2021) for staff. We ignore this issue at our own peril.

- Julie

Julie Adamen is the principal of Adamen Inc. She is a recognized and designated expert in community management and association and management company operations. She is a prolific author, educator, motivational speaker and trainer for community managers and Boards of Directors. She is the author and publisher of online classes for managers, Community Association Management 101 (approved for continuing education credits from CAMICB and the FLDBPR), Community Association Management 101 for Board Members. She has been primary writer and publisher of The HOA Manager NewsLine and CAM 101 Resources, industry e-newsletters, with monthly circulation of over 13,000 respectively. Adamen Inc © 2019 All rights reserved.



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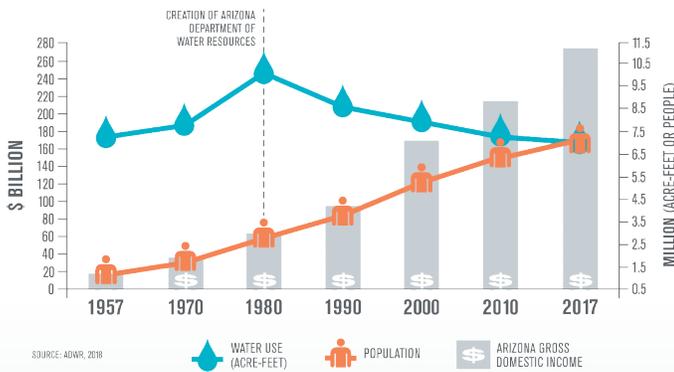
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Reaping the Rewards of Conservation

By Clyde Halstead Esq.

Arizonans know that water conservation is important for the benefit of everyone that lives in the desert. What everyone may not know is that conservation can also benefit individual communities. Over the past 40 years, water use has drastically fallen across the state while population, recreation, and commercial activity has exploded. Recent reports from the Arizona Department of Water Resources show that while the population has more than doubled, water usage has dramatically fallen. Those trends show no sign of slowing. Likely many of your communities have seen similar reductions over the years in total water use.



The Assured Water Supply program was first started back in 1980. It requires new subdivisions of more than 5 parcels to acquire a guaranteed supply of water that must last at least 100 years. The amount of water required for the program is normally around .3 acre feet for every home. Recent calculations show that with modern fixtures and xeriscaped landscaping, single family homes actually use closer to .15 acre feet. What happens to that extra water? For decades, it was simply ignored. Now some communities are looking to offer more amenities for their residents, improve their quality of life, and even engage in additional development.

The City of Prescott for example, had a problem. For 20 years it had managed its water with a few basic assumptions created when it first received its assured water supply. Those included that water could only be used for specific lots and that water, once reserved, could never be revisited. The City believed it was down to its last

few hundred acre feet, and would soon be out of water altogether without developing new sources that would cost more than a hundred million dollars. Before it spent that money, it decided to do a legal review of its water rights, usage, and responsibilities to see what was possible. The City found that simply by updating how it managed its water supply, and taking into account the drastic savings that conservation measures have had over the years, it had more than 10,000 acre feet of water instead of the few hundred it believed it had. That review has changed the outlook of the City entirely from one desperate for water, to a place where they are now keeping water in their creeks year round, increasing the depth of lakes for more recreation, and adding splash pads and trees for the public.

Other communities throughout the State have undertaken similar projects as it has become clear just how big an impact small conservation measures can have when they are compounded by time and the efforts of everyone in a community working together. Tucson is able to have flowing rivers for the first time in decades. Payson can stretch its water to supply more homes than it ever thought possible.

We live in the desert, and saving water benefits us all. However, with some careful planning and legal guidance you can begin reaping the rewards of conservation for your individual communities and make them even more wonderful places to call home.

Clyde Halstead is a Partner at Carpenter, Hazlewood, Delgado, and Bolen in the Prescott Office. Clyde leads the firm's water law practice group and devotes his work to ensuring communities have safe, reliable sources of water using the most modern legal and data based management methods.



Consider the Rule of Three to Restore Balance to Your Aquatic Ecosystem

By Erin Stewart, Aquatic Biologist & Regional Manager and Katelyn Behounek, Aquatic Biologist

When developing a management plan for a lake or pond, it is important to keep its purpose and priorities in mind. Is it strictly aesthetic? Is it used for fishing or recreation? Maybe it facilitates irrigation or stormwater collection? An effective freshwater management program can be compared to the importance of each leg on a “three-legged stool.” Just like the legs supporting the stool, many water resources are interdependent, meaning that the actions taken in the watershed could cause imbalances that have negative consequences downstream.

Think of each “leg” of this metaphorical three-legged stool as representative of the (1) physical, (2) chemical, and (3) biological components of a freshwater resource. If one part of this trinity breaks down, the others will follow. To ensure each of these aspects is protected, it’s important to understand the ways in which they contribute to the health of a waterbody and how to identify imbalances when they arise.

The first leg of the stool—the physical characteristics of a lake or pond—includes features such as size, depth, volume, bottom substrate, water source and exchange through the system. These are major components that can affect how a lake or pond responds to environmental conditions. For instance, shallow ponds with excessive build up of bottom muck and sediment, or those with limited water movement, will be more likely to experience algae and weed growth than a large, deep lake or one with lots of movement.

The chemical characteristics, the second leg of the stool, refer to natural water quality components that can be measured, such as temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, nutrients, water clarity, dissolved metals, salts and many other parameters. Poor water quality in lakes and ponds often occurs when these parameters become imbalanced in one direction or another. This is often caused by polluted runoff entering the waterbody that contains fertilizer, pet or wildlife waste, landscaping debris (grass clipping and leaves) and other organic materials. This process of nutrient “pollution” is one of the most common causes of chemical imbalance in a freshwater ecosystem.

The third biological component of the stool comprises all living things, including algae, plants, bugs, fish and microorganisms. Nutrient pollution is an example of how one component can directly affect

another; nutrients encourage algae and aquatic plant growth. While moderate levels of growth are natural and provide habitat and food for fish and wildlife, algae and aquatic weed growth can proliferate under imbalanced conditions. Without proper management, algae and vegetation can block sunlight, limit access for fishing and boating, and compromise aesthetics. As these increased populations of plants and algae decay as part of their natural lifecycle, they will release more nutrients into the waterbody to fuel additional growth, creating a vicious cycle. In the process, the risk of fish kills, offensive odors, accumulation of bottom muck and nuisance insect populations can all increase—further offsetting the balance of the waterbody’s physical, chemical and biological characteristics.

Having knowledge about the benefits of proactive management, and sustainable tools and technologies at our fingertips, adds a fourth, stabilizing “leg” to the “three-legged stool.” With a proactive management in place—even if one of the other components is slightly out of balance—the stool may wobble but will not fall over. In other words, problems that might normally be detrimental for a lake or pond can be identified and resolved early on, before they can impact other aspects of the ecosystem.

A proactive approach is most effective when it accounts for all elements of an ecosystem. Vegetative buffer management, shoreline stabilization, aeration, regular stormwater inspections, and even sediment removal are all proactive ways to support the physical leg of the stool. Other advanced management strategies utilize nutrient-locking products or beneficial bacteria to cycle and remove excess nutrients from the water column, reducing the potential for chemical imbalances. Finally, new technologies like nanobubble treatments can be used alongside these solutions to increase beneficial dissolved oxygen concentrations and enhance overall water quality.

Whether mosquitoes and bad odors are keeping you away from the water or nuisance algae is causing an eyesore around your property, there are always ways to counteract the issues you are experiencing. Ultimately, it is most beneficial to bring in a professional to educate you about the best proactive approaches for your waterbody and help design a custom management plan before problems get out of hand.



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 (602) 253-4660
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Smart Clocks: Are they right for your Community?

By Rebecca Herro, Chief Development Officer, DLC Resources, Inc.

When new technology comes along, we assume it has to inherently be better. Otherwise, why would it be replacing whatever older, analog or manual version that came before it, right?

When it comes to landscape irrigation systems, Smart Clocks are the “latest and greatest” advancement. Unlike traditional irrigation controllers that operate on manually programmed schedules and timers, Smart Clocks monitor weather, soil conditions, evaporation rates and more to automatically adjust watering times.

There’s no doubt that Smart Clocks can certainly help with irrigation programming, and their technology is objectively useful. But they’re not a one-size-fits all solution, and they may not be right for every landscape. As with any new technology, it’s important to do your research before jumping in head-first.

Initial and Ongoing Costs

Smart clocks can be expensive, depending on what type you get and what kind of features they have. Right off the bat, this may be a hard pill for residents and board members to swallow.

But once that initial investment is paid off, your Community is not out of the woods yet. Since Smart Clocks need to communicate with the irrigation system itself, with each other and with their control dashboards, each clock has its own smart card — each of which comes with its own monthly fee.

Typically this is around \$200-\$240 a year, which may not seem too expensive. But if your Community has, say, 10-15 Smart Clocks, that can add up to a fairly hefty annual charge on top of your normal water bills.

Return on Investment

One of the main perks advertised about Smart Clocks is that they will help you save money by reducing the amount of wasted irrigation water. But keep in mind that those claims are usually based on turf irrigation. Because turf needs as much as 12 times more water than decomposed granite areas with shrubs, the amount of wasted water (and subsequently water saved by Smart Clocks) in turf areas is significantly higher than it would be in DG areas.

So, if your Community is predominantly DG with little grass, the savings will likely be incremental and the return on investment for the clocks could take decades.



Expertise Not Built In

Smart clocks aren’t “set it and forget it,” and they’re not going to do all the irrigation programming for your Community. They still need to be monitored, checked and adjusted. Even more complicated — as with any technology, Smart Clocks don’t always work correctly. That means they need a person who can identify that something is wrong and then know what to do to fix it.

In essence, Smart Clocks aren’t a substitute for a knowledgeable and experienced Irrigation Technician who has a good understanding of your particular landscape’s irrigation needs and can feed that information into your irrigation system — whether it’s smart or not.

If your Community is looking into Smart Clocks, make sure that your landscape contractor already has a good understanding of your irrigation system and is managing it well. This means your water bills are reasonable and steady without major spikes. Or, if there are spikes, there are reasonable explanations for them. Beware of contractors who are selling Smart Controllers as a “fix-all” for high water bills.

In addition, adding Smart Clocks adds a whole new layer to irrigation management in your Community. Think of it as going from a pen and paper to typing on a computer — there’s a new interface to learn and a different way of thinking about irrigation programming, and it’s going to take a sophisticated Irrigation Technician who can learn the new program. When shopping for Smart Controllers, make sure the company selling them also offers a training program for how to run them.

Smart Clocks are just that — a smart tool. They can certainly take some of the mundane grunt work out of irrigation programming. But before your Community takes the plunge into the Smart Clock world, make sure they’ve done their homework and fully understand what they’re getting, how they Smart Clocks work in their landscape and whether or not their promised savings will ever materialize.

As Chief Development Officer, **Rebecca Herro** leads DLC Resources’ development teams while also serving on the CAI Central Arizona Chapter Board of Directors. She has been a member of the DLC family for the past 10 years, and her team supports the needs of DLC’s 32 Community Partners and implements the company’s growth strategy for future clients and development of our employees and leaders. Founded in 1989, DLC Resources focuses on the landscape, water and arbor management of communities in the Phoenix metro area and is celebrating their 31st year in business.



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Jerome Joseph

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