

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2023

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE 1

TREASURER'S REPORT 1

WELCOME COMMITTEE 2

BEAUTIFICATION 2

FIRE SAFETY 3

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW 3

ARCHITECTURE POLL 4

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Writers – RTGA Board
 Editor – Nancy Bartell
 Layout – John Meyer

PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Fuel Mitigation:

Peter Stern and his fire safety team continue to work with multiple county and state agencies to educate residents about how to make their home more fire resistant. These efforts have led to Rancho Tierra Grande (RTG) being Firewise USA® certified. This certification can lower your home fire insurance premiums, especially under the California FAIR Plan. Peter and the twenty-six fire captains gathered the forms, and Tyson Holmes and Dave Wisherd helped Peter produce the Firewise documents which led to us being recertified for 2023. The Fire Safety team is also working with a Carmel Valley group that received a large grant for fuel mitigation that will include RTGA. More news on this exciting potential is covered in Peter's summary. Dave and Tyson will take on more tasks as Peter retires.

Additional residents are needed to fill multiple vacancies on our Captain roster. If interested, please contact Dave Wisherd.

Chipping Program:

The Fall chipping program was very successful thanks to Mike Sherwood guiding the chipping company as they safely and efficiently did their job. We plan to have two chipping programs in 2023, one in June and another in November. These will be available to all RTGA dues paying residents. Late Fall is best for pruning trees and shrubs due to the onset of rains and the lack of bird nests. Please remember to have your pile ready prior to the start of the chipping date.

Dead Pine Trees:

After months of delays, the county removed the dead pine tree opposite the cyclone fence. Please note this is in the CSA17 zone, thus governed by a separate county agency. County Public Works also removed eight more trees in the county right of way along Tierra Grande Drive, and trimmed numerous trees at the top and bottom of the "S" curve. These were hanging over Tierra Grande Drive and creating a fire tunnel hazard.

(Continued on page 2)

TREASURER'S REPORT

Included with this Newsletter you will find a dues envelope, but it will be empty. The Board hopes you will fill it with your check for \$150, tax-deductible dues for 2023.

Participation last year was an encouraging 75%. We have used your dollars to:

Install new irrigation infrastructure (thus saving on water consumption); create and maintain a new website (rtghoa.org); finance the Firewise effort; and provide chipping services to assist in reducing fire fuel. Our ongoing monthly expenses include gardener, utilities, and accounting services. We hope to count on your support again. Remember, you can also pay with our Zelle connection at rtagcv@gmail.com.

– Mary Cushing, Treasurer

WELCOME COMMITTEE

Five new Rancho Tierra Grande residents were sent a welcome packet in 2022. The packets included a copy of the CC&Rs, a greeting from our president, a list of officers and chairpersons, a copy of the most recent newsletter, and the RTG phone directory. If I have missed anyone, please let me know and I will get a packet to you.

Our Little Free Library at the corner of Tierra Grande Drive and Venado Drive is almost self-supporting. Thanks to all of you who contribute books and patronize it. Keep reading and "Take a book and leave a book."

— Nancy Bartell, Welcoming Committee

PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE (CONT'D)

Culvert Cleaning:

The large culvert running underneath Via Cazador along Tierra Grande Drive has been partially cleaned by the county using CSA17 funds after plants grew taller than six feet. The county is seeking bids to complete this project by removing layers of dirt and debris accumulated over the years.

Road Repair:

Mike Raydo and others have implored Public Works for years to fix our streets. The stars now appear aligned, and they have guaranteed Mike that all our roads (including side streets) will be chewed up and repaved (not just a cheap seal job) in early to mid 2023. This would be a huge boost to all drivers and walkers as well as our property values after the Spectrum digging chaos.

Drip Irrigation System:

We installed a new drip irrigation and timer in late 2022 on the north side of Tierra Grande Drive up along the cyclone fence starting at Mercurio Road. The old system had many flaws and was wasting water. This new system turns off during rain episodes and, by being more efficient reduce our CalAm charges. The plants will still get adequate water and should better handle our dry periods (May-October).

Safety & Neighborhood Watch:

Please remember to lock your home and cars while away, especially at night. A resident's car was stolen and totaled while parked out front one night. Multiple residents reported suspicious salespersons coming to their homes. Soliciting is NOT permitted in RTGA! Simply open a window and tell them you're not interested and give Jeff Hawkins a call (652-0015). If you have doubts about any activity, call 911 and state the nature of your concern with as accurate a description as possible, even a cell phone picture if done safely.

Mail has been stolen on multiple occasions from RTG resi-

BEAUTIFICATION

We made a number of upgrades this past year with much help from Jeff Hawkins, one of our co-Presidents. First of all, we found that much of the current irrigation system was either damaged or ineffective and needed replacing. Jeff arranged for bids from four different irrigation specialists, and he did on-site reviews with each of them. With Jeff's oversight, a new and more effective system is now in place along the cyclone fence.

Recently, we purchased and planted seven additional Hardenbergia plants to fill the gaps on the fencing. With nature's help and our own enhancements, we are hoping to have the entrance looking better and better. We are most appreciative of Jen Valdez who is adding seasonal decor to the sign area.

For those of you who walk in Tierra Grande, any opportunity you see to eliminate litter will serve to further enhance the privilege of living here. Also, we welcome your input as to further improvements.

— Nancy Bartell and Mary Cushing, Co-chairs

dents and other surrounding neighborhoods. The thieves appear to be randomly targeting as many mailboxes as they can during the dark, and dumping the junk mail both here and elsewhere. In view of the many critical mail items many of us receive, please consider these options:

- Sign up for the USPS email notice of "informed delivery." You'll receive an email early each morning showing scanned copies of each mail item (including packages) thus alerting you when important documents will be delivered, <https://www.usps.com/manage/informed-delivery.htm>
- Get a USPS approved lockable mailbox
- Change from mail delivery of essential documents to email or Internet download
- Set up critical documents to be sent to a local PO Box
- Empty your mailbox soon after it arrives, though our delivery time can range from mid afternoon to mid evening when a substitute driver is on duty
- Have a neighbor pick up packages if you're away for a few hours.

Online Dues Payments:

Please note each resident can pay their tax deductible dues online via Zelle by simply sending it from your bank via Zelle to our Gmail address: rtgacv@gmail.com

— Jeff Hawkins & Dave Wisherd, Co-Presidents

RANCHO TIERRA GRANDE FIRE SAFETY COMMITTEE (RTGFSC)**2022**

The RTGFSC fire safety year extends from December 1 to November 30. Committee accomplishments for 2022 include:

- Drafted fire mitigation documents. These include Voluntary Hourly Worksheets, Risk Assessment Forms, Insurance Questionnaire, Chipping Request forms, LE100 (fire hazard inspection), Firewise Certificate of Recognition for 2022, Fuel Management Guidelines, and an introductory narrative.
- Printed and collated these documents into packets which were then given to RTG Fire Captains for distribution to RTG residents. Nearly 85% of residents received packets. Included in the LE100 was a directive regarding the new, insurance-driven “Zone 0” requirement for 2023.
- Completed negotiations with a contractor to carry out chipping operations in June and November. We installed a banner at the Tierra Grande entrance advertising chipping dates. A total of 86 cubic yards of material was collected and removed.
- Monterey County RCD notified RTGFSC that RTG received a \$375,000 grant to locate and establish a fire break around the entire neighborhood. The RTGFSC developed a map detailing the firebreak boundary which is approximately 30-50 feet wide and nearly 21,000 feet long.
- RTGFSC members attended Zoom meetings with Insurance Commissioner Lara to learn about drafting an insurance mitigation and rating plan, which includes wildfire risk models, to aid homeowners in Wildfire Urban Interface areas such as ours. The RTGFSC believes this proposed plan may, in fact, result in draconian mitigation edicts prompted by insurance companies. This is still a work in process.
- Several Zoom meetings were held with retired Battalion Chief Andoni Kastros to establish protocols and Captain training in order to be able to respond to an RTG evacuation order. A meeting with first responders, residents and Captains was held in June.
- RTGFSC compiled all mitigation data provided by residents in October. This was included in the 2023 Firewise renewal application. That renewal was approved by Firewise in December 2022.

2023

Plans for 2023 include:

- Document resident’s fire mitigation work, and their costs in doing that work.
- Collect and compile that data for the 2024 Firewise renewal.
- Distribute fire information packets to RTG homeowners.
- Conduct a choreographed evacuation exercise. This will be directed by Chief Kastros and is scheduled for late Spring, date to be determined.
- Establish chipping dates for June and November and advertise these dates on the RTG entrance banner.
- Set a date for a “Zone 0” mitigation exercise, led by MCRFD. All RTG residents will be invited to attend. This exercise will demonstrate what work and plant removal must be carried out to satisfy the “Zone 0” requirement that will be asserted by insurance companies. The video of this exercise will be added to the Fire Safety section of the rtghoa.org website for all to review.

— Peter Stern and Dave Wisherd

VP REPORT

Your RTGA Board members have been diligent improving our community. Our Firewise efforts have made our community safer from fires. The new drip system will keep the bottom of the hill looking good. We had two successful chipping programs. We have created an exclusive website for RTGA residents only. Check it out at <https://rtghoa.org/>.

I am very fortunate to work with such dedicated board members. I want to especially thank Peter Stern for his dedication and perseverance on creating our Firewise program. And a thank you to Mike Colyer who, on his own initiative, keeps our storm drains clean.

Let us make 2023 a ever greater year for our community. Thank you.

— Robbie Robinson, Vice President

