



**GNO Property
Management, LLC**

News... You Can Use

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President's Message

Dear GNO Customers:

GNO Property Management, LLC is happy to offer new services to better care for our clients in 2015.

First, we've produced this community newsletter to be printed and distributed quarterly. Over the past eight years, we have noticed a sharp decline in the number of newsletters despite growing interest from residents wanting information from their board and management company. GNO will meet that need by providing our customers with this newsletter to include educational articles, many of which are written by community association leaders within CAI (Community Associations Institute). These articles will clarify topics like the benefits of living in a deed-restricted community, how to obtain approval for a modification, your rights as a property owner, and how to work with your neighbors to improve the quality of life in your neighborhood.

In future editions, community specific information can be included in our newsletter. Your association's developments, current events and specific dates can be highlighted in each issue.

GNO's preferred vendors have been invited to advertise in these publications. Look for some of them to be featured in our future spotlight section that will provide more information about their services. These advertisers have been working for communities managed by GNO for several years. We are confident that if you choose to use them, they will exceed your expectations on performance and price.

Second, new residents in your community will be greeted with a welcome package compliments of GNO. This gift will include the official community documents, important information about the local trash service and utilities, and favors from local businesses.

We appreciate your giving us the opportunity to service your community and hope you enjoy reading these pages.

Sincerely,

Robert Phillips, President

GNO Property Management

Here's What Home Owner Association Residents Have to Say

Americans who live in community associations are overwhelmingly pleased with their communities, expressing strong satisfaction with the board members who govern their associations and the community managers who provide professional support.

More than seven in 10 community association residents expressed satisfaction with their community experience, according to a survey conducted by Zogby International, a leading public opinion research firm. Almost 40 percent of community association residents say they are "very pleased," with only 10 percent expressing some level of dissatisfaction. Almost 20 percent express neither point of view.

An estimated 54 million Americans live in some 274,000 homeowner associations, condominium communities, cooperatives and other planned developments.

Here's what community association residents say:

- ♦ 88 percent believe their governing boards strive to serve the best interests of the community.
- ♦ 90 percent say they are on friendly terms with their association board members, with just 4 percent indicating a negative relationship.
- ♦ 86 percent say they get along well with their immediate neighbors, with just 5 percent reporting a negative relationship. Of those who reported issues with neighbors, the most common problems were pets, general lifestyle, noise, and parking.
- ♦ 78 percent believe community association rules "protect and enhance" property values, while only one in 100 say rules harm property values. About 20 percent see no difference.
- ♦ 88 percent of residents who have interacted with professional community managers say the experience has been positive.



The research was sponsored by the Foundation for Community Association Research, a non-profit organization created in 1975 by Community Associations Institute (CAI).

Based on telephone interviews conducted in August 2005, the survey has a margin of error of +/- 3.5 percentage points. A summary of the results is posted at www.caionline.org/about/survey.cfm.

Source: Community Associations Institute

Reserve Study versus Engineering Report; What's the Difference?

Common interest communities such as a condominiums, homeowners associations, timeshares, or cooperative properties require scientific and financial tools to help them thrive. They routinely turn to engineering professionals or reserve analysts to offer reports and advice. One of the more common tools used by common interest communities is the Reserve Study. Many also use Engineering Reports to help guide them down the path of a proper maintenance and replacement schedule for common elements that will age and fail over time. These two types of reports have some similar features but they are different and need to be used as they were intended. Do you know the difference?

A Reserve Study is a general evaluation of all of the elements and materials that comprise a common interest community. It takes into account the quantity of materials, the likely useable life of materials, and the likely cost of replacement adjusted for predicted inflation. While there are many engineering elements to the Reserve Study, the study is truly a budgeting guide to help association leaders determine the proper amount of monthly common fees that need to be allocated for the Reserve Fund. For instance, if the Reserve Study were to predict that a roof will need to be replaced in twenty years time and the replacement cost is likely to be \$200,000.00, the association would be well advised to save \$10,000.00 per year in Reserve Fund contributions so that the money will be there when the roof needs replacing. The Reserve Study eliminates some of the guess work than can go into budget preparation.



An Engineering Report, on the other hand, is far more concerned with the mechanical workings of the common elements. Operating and Replacement Costs are generally included in this type of report as well as the current state of deterioration of the common element. For instance, an Engineering Report might include a review of the seven year-old roof and determine that it is wearing as planned and that the association can expect another thirteen years of useful life before replacement is necessary. An Engineering Report might also include an observation or recommendation such as the flat roof design is not as effective as a pitched roof would be at shedding water or that the tar and shingle roof is not as effective as a rubberized roof might be. The Engineering Report might also suggest covering the existing roof instead of fully replacing it as the double roof will add more durability.

Clearly, a Reserve Study and an Engineering Report are two very different documents. By combining the budget preparing friendliness of the Reserve Study with the actual status reporting and recommendation of the Engineering Report, a well-meaning association can save both time and money while properly maintaining and saving for the replacement of their common elements.

No Secrets

Association members are welcome to read official association documents. There's nothing secret about the business of the association. In fact, you should already have copies of key documents like the bylaws or rules. Other common documents that are open for members to review include:

- ◆ Board meeting minutes
- ◆ Insurance policies
- ◆ Financial statements and annual audits
- ◆ Declaration and bylaws
- ◆ Rules and regulations
- ◆ Current contracts
- ◆ Leases and agreements
- ◆ Ballots and proxies

Here's how to gain access:

- ◆ Send the board a request in writing specifying exactly what records you wish to review, the date of those records and the purpose of your request.
- ◆ The board will respond to your request within 30 days. During that time the board or manager will locate the correct documents and get them ready for you.
- ◆ The records you requested will be available for your review during regular business hours at the manager's office for 30 days after we process your request.
- ◆ The association will make copies of records for a reasonable fee.

Please do not request documents that infringe on the privacy of an individual like medical or personnel records. These are not public records, and the association will not make them available. Some requests might also be denied if they involve ongoing legal or contractual obligations that might expose the association board or manager to liability.



Maintain Your Yard Safely

Properly maintaining your yard helps your home and our community look good. Just make sure that safety is a priority when undertaking your landscaping efforts:

- ◆ Clear sticks and debris before you mow. Random debris kicked up by a lawn mower can seriously injure you and those around you. Also, mowing debris shortens the life of your mower and dulls the blade.
- ◆ Replace the cord on your weed trimmer. Your trimming will be safer if you have strong trimmer cords. Always wear eye protection when using a trimmer.
- ◆ Maintain your lawnmower in top working condition. If you find yourself mowing the same areas again and again, it's time to inspect your lawnmower. Keep a maintenance checklist of important components like air filters, blades and oil.
- ◆ Keep plants and shrubs about five feet from foundation walls, and keep trees at least six to 20 feet away, depending on their size. Plant roots that are too close to the foundation not only cause damage to the structure, but may also attract bugs and mold into your home since they tend to hold moisture.



Ten Reasons to Volunteer for Your Home Owner Association

1. Protect your self-interests. Protect your property values and maintain the quality of life in your community.
2. Correct a problem. Has your car been towed, or do you think maybe maintenance has been neglected?
3. Be sociable. Meet your neighbors, make friends, and exchange opinions.
4. Give back. Repay a little of what's been done for you.
5. Advance your career. Build your personal resume by including your community volunteer service.
6. Have some fun. Association work isn't drudgery. It's fun accomplishing good things with your neighbors.
7. Get educated. Learn how it's done—we'll train you.
8. Express yourself. Help with creative projects like community beautification.
9. Earn recognition. If you would like a little attention or validation, your contributions will be recognized and celebrated.
10. Try some altruism. Improve society by helping others.





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We would like the opportunity to introduce our company Vista Solar to the Home Owners Association board and the home owners in your neighborhood. We offer a Solar powered Air Conditioner that averages reducing monthly energy bills for home owners as much as 40 to 60 %. We provide a unique opportunity.

We capitalize on the benefit of reducing our customer's electric bills by using one single thermodynamic solar panel; as opposed to the typical 25+ panels that a standard PV system requires that usually only provides 20 to 30% in savings.

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David Tucker
tucker@vistasolarla.com
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Frequently Asked Questions

What do my HOA dues cover?

Depending on your Association, Homeowners' Dues may include coverage for any or all of the following: trash collection, amenities and the preservation of those amenities, common area landscaping including irrigation, association insurance, gate maintenance, operating expenses, management fees. If you would like specific information on these expenses, please contact GNO or your Board of Directors.

How can I pay my dues?

GNO accepts many forms of payment. You may pay your dues by check, credit card via our website www.gnoproperty.com (3rd party fees apply), on-line bill pay through your bank, or money order. GNO offers automatic withdrawal for some of our associations. Contact allison@gnoproperty.com to see if you are eligible for ACH.

Where can I find a copy of my Association's Covenants and Restrictions?

Covenants and Restrictions should be provided to a new owner at the closing. However, if that does not happen, GNO has made it easier for you to obtain them. New residents will be provided a hard copy of their Association's Covenants and Restrictions in a welcome box from GNO. Electronic copies can also be found on our website www.gnoproperty.com. You are welcome to contact our office to help you find the documents you need, 504-528-7028.

Can I modify my property as I please?

Your Association's documents will outline what modifications are allowed in your community. Before beginning work, please submit an ACC form to our office for your Association's Architectural Control Committee to review and approve. This form will be given to new residents in the welcome box, can be found on our website www.gnoproperty.com or can be sent to you from our office.

NEW ORLEANS,

PAID

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GNO Property Management LLC
826 Union Street Suite 200
New Orleans, LA 70112