

The Ranch Homeowners Association

Ranch HOA
PO Box 11
Bigfork, MT 59911-0011

September 1, 2021

To: All Ranch HOA Members

Dear Ranch Member:

2021 has been a busy year for us. I won't lie when I say it's been a trying year as President. But the good work this board has produced keeps me moving forward. I wanted to take a moment and give you an update on the issues and other items we are working on.

This letter and the enclosed financial statement and invoice represents your annual dues notifications and "bill" for next year's dues. As discussed at our annual meeting, we are holding the dues at the same level this year (for a sixth year). However, all costs are going up. Insurance, snow removal services, and paving are three of our largest expense items. We are anticipating that a change to the dues may be needed in the near future, but as of now, we are holding things stable because we have a multi-year agreement for snow removal and we have limited spending on other items. With paving costs going up (with the price of oil), we had to pave less this year and it's getting harder every year. But I think you'd agree that the result is worth it.

We have just completed paving of 650 feet of Ranch road just above the apron to the highway. We could not afford to include the apron this year and needed to work on the section of road that was deteriorating very quickly (the apron itself would have cost half of what we just paved). We also have had Flathead Electric come back (with their contractor Evenson Tech) to repair the roads and shoulder areas that were "not up to snuff" after last year's project. They agreed to fix all the areas we listed and the work is complete. Thanks again to FEC, Evenson Tech, Saddlehorn, Averill's Ranch and everyone for cooperating with all the construction.

Second, I have taken an inordinate number of calls/emails regarding speeding, discourteous behaviour towards pedestrians and other traffic related complaints. I know this has been a hard year, but I'm distressed over the number and type of incidents of late. I have said this many times: I do not wish to run the HOA as a police state using harsh or draconian rules and penalties. I ask you all to think hard about this--we are all neighbors. We all desire a peaceful, respectful neighborhood that we can be proud of. I would ask that if you have guests or children driving in our neighborhood, please have a talk with them and impress upon them the importance of driving 25mph and slowing down even further if a pedestrian is present. It costs less than a minute of drive time to slow down on our two mile road to the highway. I think we can all afford this. I can also tell you that the Sheriff's office has committed to patrolling our road due to the number of reports they have received...so don't be surprised if you see them and if you're driving beyond the limits, they may stop you.

We're on the web at: www.ranchhoa.org

email: president@ranchhoa.org

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Third, at our annual meeting in June, the question was brought to the floor asking “Do we allow fireworks in the HOA?” The answer was: Yes, on July 4 and December 31. Many voiced concerns with hotter and drier conditions being ever more present. A motion was then heard, discussed and voted on to ban all fireworks completely within the HOA. It passed unanimously with no opposition as a first step in changing the covenants. The second (and final) step is to send out a ballot to all members. It is very important that every member return their ballot. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. A ballot with the proposed change will be sent out October 1, 2021.

Finally, I’m going to switch hats here and put on my Water District Operator hat. As you may or may not know, I also took over the responsibilities as Operator for our Water District. I perform the monthly and annual tests required by DEQ and the EPA, flush the hydrants, read the meters, etc. Most of you get your bills and pay promptly and the district is very thankful. The district is a business and is required to be run as a business by state and federal law as it performs a critical function: it provides safe and reliable drinking water to its customers/members. When bills are not paid on time, it causes our costs to go up as we have to send additional reminders, bills, letters of termination notices, etc. All these costs will trickle down to higher rates in the future as the district has to cover its costs of operation. I also am affected as I then have the very uncomfortable job of turning off the water to a home when a customer goes past due. As I know most of you personally, this is not what I want to do. Further, once turned off, your bill just keeps climbing as there is a \$200 reconnection fee.

In an effort to make water billing easier, we are now able to do ACH bank draft from your checking account; I urge everyone to take advantage of this. You should have already received the form with your recent bill, if not, you can access the form from the water district’s web page at: <https://ranchhoa.org/water-district.html> And thank you all for your cooperation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I can be reached at (406) 407-0301 or at the email listed below. I also post announcements and items of interest on the website regularly, so be sure to check it out.

Sincerely,



Mark Smolen, President Ranch HOA

on behalf of

The Ranch HOA Board