

The Ranch Homeowners Association

Ranch HOA
PO Box 11
Bigfork, MT 59911-0011

September 1, 2024

To: All Ranch HOA Members

Dear Ranch Member:

Another year has passed and we're approaching autumn already! 2024 has been a busy year for us. There's always more I wish we could do, but I think you'd agree that we keep moving forward and we're making progress here in the Ranch. I wanted to take a moment and give you an update on the issues and other items we are working on.

The invoice you will be receiving in your email or postal mail **IS YOUR ANNUAL DUES BILL** for next year's dues (\$900 or \$850 if paid by Jan 30). Once again, we have decided to hold the dues at the same level this year. To the right, you can see where your dues are used. However, all costs are going up. Insurance, snow removal services, and paving are three of our largest expense items.

| <u>Ranch HOA - Approved Budget for 2024</u> | | | |
|---|--|--|---------------------|
| Expenses- | | | |
| Road Fund | | | 25,500.00 |
| Snow plowing, salt, sand, de-icer | | | 13,000.00 |
| Insurance-Gen. Liability and Officers/Directors | | | 3,000.00 |
| Legal Support (external) | | | 500.00 |
| Accounting Support (external) | | | 2,700.00 |
| Misc items-Postage, Signs, Supplies, etc | | | 775.00 |
| Taxes | | | 75.00 |
| Total Expenses for 2024/25 | | | \$ 45,550.00 |

As a reminder, you can send a check for your dues or pay via credit card using Stripe from our website. On the website (dues page), there's a new link and QR code to a secure Stripe payment portal. There is a service charge—we only pass on what we get charged to keep the amount we receive within a few pennies of the true dues amount. You can always send or drop off a check—you do NOT have to use the online method, but it's there if it's more convenient.

As I'm sure most of you have seen, we completed paving of 700' above the highway, 1400' x 3' widening, and some minor patches. Thanks again to Saddlehorn, Flathead Lake Lodge and everyone for cooperating with all the construction/scheduling. There is always more to do, but we are knocking out what we can with an eye to safety and keeping the road from deteriorating past a point of no return. Next year, we may do more to amend some ditches to prevent further erosion, etc.

In the past, I was taking an inordinate number of calls/emails regarding traffic related complaints. I have begged everyone to think hard about how they drive and asked you all to limit your speed to 25 mph. I would like to thank everyone AGAIN for listening and trying your best. It has gotten better, but I still see a few folks going quite fast. Please think about your speed, enjoy the views (for a few seconds longer) and let's keep up the progress we have made.

We will be doing a fall roadside cleanup again. We need to trim some dead trees and bushes that will fall into the road with snow. I will be posting signs, please consider helping out—and thank you to those that came for the spring cleanup! I also want to thank Craig Lodge (Panorama Hill resident) that brought his fire truck and rinsed the roads this spring and again before we paved down below. We will be burning our piles once the fire danger is over—I hope we can continue this great work

together...there's been a request to have a picnic afterwards—let's see if we can make that happen! If you'd like to help organize it, call me!

We are annexing two lots into the HOA (560 and 570 Ranch Rd). We also have construction going on at 383 and 560 Ranch Rd. All have gone through ARC approval—Thank you everyone for following the guidelines!

Mailboxes: We installed the third and final cluster mailbox at the mailbox stand. If you would like a mailbox, there's a one-time \$125 fee payable to Ranch HOA. Just let us know if you would like one—once you get it, the mailbox belongs to your home here in the Ranch. There are only three left!

In July, we held our annual meetings and elections for the HOA. I thank you all for taking the time to help out manage this great neighborhood. All the info about both the Water District and HOA boards are online on our website. Announcements, letters like this, payment info and lots of other info is posted there.

Finally, I'm going to switch hats here and put on my Water District Operator hat. 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.

If you don't yet use ACH (automatic check payment) for your water bill, PLEASE consider signing up...it helps the district keep costs down and reduces the chances of lost mail and late billing charges.

<https://ranchhoa.org/water-district.html>

Finally, I have a complete list of everyone with mobile numbers that I may use if we need to inform you of any emergency/dangerous situations (eg. water outage, road closures, etc.). If you do get a message it will come from this phone number: 406-312-2984. It will allow you to respond, but I WILL NOT see your reply to that number—you can text me at my regular number 406-407-0301 if you need to communicate with me. You also have the option to opt out of this service (if you move away) just by texting "STOP" back to the number. Many of you have given positive reviews of this system—thanks!

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
Operator, Ranch Water District
On behalf of the HOA and Water District Boards