On Wednesday, November 2, 2011, the City cut the ribbon in a ceremony opening the new sidewalk on the berm above Mirage Rd. The ribbon cutting took place on the pedestrian bridge crossing the Magnesia Storm Channel. The sidewalk was created for children to walk from the Rancho Mirage Elementary School to the Library. As earlier reported, the money for the construction came from a CalTrans Safe Routes to School grant.

The RMCA and a group of concerned citizens have been involved in the development of the sidewalk project from the beginning planning stages. The completion of the project included the building of the pedestrian bridge across the wash. The Five Peaks project paid for the bridge, and the City installed it. The bridge allows the children and residents to get over the channel without walking on the Hwy. 111 sidewalk. Safety has been the primary concern throughout the development of the project.

Many thank you’s go out to residents who helped save native desert trees and plants. Ann Clandening was the on-site coordinator. John & Greta Krabbe, Steve & Betty Foster, Rob Parker, Rich & Cindy Aylward, and the Flood Family all participated in helping to protect and the natural desertscape. This is a project that our community can be proud of and enjoy for many years to come. Take a walk and enjoy.
Rancho Mirage received a set of plans from German based Audi. The new franchise is to be managed by Desert European Motors. The site for the new building is within the RMCA boundaries and would sit on the corner of Hwy. 111 and Mirage Rd. Those of you who lived here for a number of years will remember the restaurant that was there.

The RMCA Architectural Review Committee (ARC) received the plans for the building a couple of months ago and have been following the City review of the plans. The ARC raised a series of concerns about the plans with the City, and recently attended the City’s Architectural Review Board meeting where the first major review was held. Our ARC consists of three Board members who review all plans of any buildings, residential or commercial, proposed within our area. The ARC is Chaired by Carol Hochsprung, and the members are Don Williamson and Sam Hani.

The building site is prominent in that it sits on the SE corner of Mirage Rd. That corner is one of the entrances to our residential Cove. Therefore, the look and size of the building would impact our residential environment. Audi’s style is glass and steel, and the building is large for the site. It certainly does not fit a desert style, but then neither does Ruby’s or Mimi’s.

The Committee submitted eight items regarding the building and how it fits our residential concerns. The ARC sent a memo to the Planning Department outlining the issues we felt needed to be addressed. The issues are: ingress and egress of additional traffic turning right at the corner of Mirage Rd., excessive building height, noise created by the AC units to be installed on the top of the building, the ultra high-tech, urban industrial look of the building, number of employees and adequate parking for those employees, screening and landscaping of the area facing the back of the lot and Mirage Rd., elimination of one of the display pads at the back of the lot, and the dimming of any nighttime site illumination.

The City has instituted a noise study regarding the AC units and has created a series of drawings that show how much of the building will be seen by residents from Sahara Rd. The building site slopes downhill from Sahara, and it appears residents will not see the building from that vantage point. We are still concerned about what will be seen by residents driving down Mirage Rd. Hence the request for more screening on the west side of the building site and the removal of one of the display pads above the driveway to the facility. Immediately across the street is the golf cart entrance to the newly installed sidewalk, and we would like to protect the area for both pedestrians and golf cart folks.

Attending the City’s Architectural Review Board meeting made it clear to us that the architects on the board are primarily interested in the architecture of the building and not interested in our residential concerns. The building is mainly glass and steel, and there were objections voiced about the design and how the desert heat would affect the it. The building is a standard design for what Audi calls a “terminal”. We would call it a showroom. There will not be any repair facilities on site. Desert European will handle that as part of their management.

It is clear the City is going to approve this building. Our main purpose is to mitigate the impact such a large building will have on our neighborhood. We continue to try to minimize the intrusion of business into the Cove. There will be another City architectural review meeting followed by a Planning Commission meeting and then the final vote of approval at a City Council meeting. The RMCA will continue to monitor the progress of the review and provide information to the City regarding our requirements.

At some point in this process, it may be important to have additional input from you as residents, specifically from those of you who live on Sahara Rd. and Mirage Rd. or those of you who use Mirage Rd. to get to your homes. We will keep you posted as to the approval progress of the Audi building. This is an excellent example of your community association at work for YOU. The City does listen to our concerns. We welcome your comments, concerns and questions.

### BIKING CLUB

Are you a bike rider? Would you enjoy riding joining a group of like minded people? Olive Powell is looking for others to join a biking club in our area. If you are interested, call Olive at 760.565.6640
Neighborhood Watch Report
Third Quarter, 2011

MAGNESIA FALLS COVE (2 Per Month)
Houses: Petty Theft 3
Burglary- Res 2
Grand Theft 1
Burglary/Vehicle Theft 1
(Car was recovered in CC)

WHITE SUN: (1 per month)
Houses: Petty Theft 1
Burglary 1
Burglary Attempt 1

WHITEWATER AREA: (1 Per Month)
Houses:
Theft/Auto 1
Assault 1
Personal 1

Businesses in our area were hit hard, including the hold-up at the River and grand thefts along Hwy. 111. Suspects have been arrested for the latter. We are off to a rough start in the 4th Quarter with at least 7 cars gotten into with cash and other items stolen. It appears all cars were unlocked and unarmed. (Need I say more?) A homeowner experienced a break-in when the suspect broke a kitchen window. Resident was not at home and had losses. Two attempted break-ins have occurred, with no losses, due to burglar alarms going off.

In the middle of the night, a man was found in an easement area between houses. He got into his car and sped out of the Cove when he was observed. The car was a Nissan Rogue and the police have a description of the suspect and a license plate number. The police are investigating.

At a special meeting held at City Hall, we met the special burglary unit which has been assigned to our area. The Sheriff has increased patrols in our area.

We need to be on high alert!

Lock your car.
Do not leave valuables visible in your car.
At home, lock all doors and windows.
Close and lock garage doors.
Alarm your home. And if you do not have an alarm system, consider getting one.

Let your trusted neighbors know when you will be away.
Call 911 if you observe a crime taking place. Call 760.836.3215 if you see something suspicious.

LET’S LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER!!!
Pat Arkes
Neighborhood Watch Coordinator
760-340-9439

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Report on Reducing the Feral Cat Population (TNR)

Since 3/22/11 when the initial article was written for the Rancho Mirage Community Association Spring Newsletter, there have been 25 cats successfully spayed or neutered through the TNR effort. This means a reduction of 300 new kittens in our neighborhood this year alone since each cat has the potential to reproduce 12 kittens per year. In addition, 7 Cove kittens have been rescued. Homes have been found for 5 of them. Two are currently being fostered by loving volunteers until indoor homes can be found for them. If you know of someone who would give a loving indoor home to a kitten, please let us know.

Please note, TNR is only taking place where assistance is requested, as has been the case on several occasions, or where a large number of homeless/feral cats and kittens have been spotted.

Thanks to all who have contributed towards this effort. More help is needed in the way of monetary donations for spaying/neutering and food. It costs only $43 per cat to spay/neuter and give a rabies shot. This is handled through Animal Samaritans. If you have questions about TNR, please contact Animal Samaritans. If you would like to contribute or volunteer to help, please contact:
Pat Arkes 760-340-9439 or
Debbie Suess 760-408-3764

If you own a cat and allow it to roam outside, please be sure you have it spayed/neutered and vaccinated first!

Warning: Coyotes continue to roam again in the neighborhood walking our streets and stalking our pets, etc. They have been spotted all over the neighborhood. If you want to ensure your pets’ safety from this fate, please do not let your beloved pets roam outside.
ARE YOU READY????

It’s time to think seriously about preparing for the “big one” since we live in an area that may be subject to major damage from earthquakes. To meet the needs of residents from any disaster, the Association has developed an emergency plan.

The plan consists of five zones with volunteers serving as Area Managers, Zone Leaders, and Street Team Leaders. We are in the process of recruiting and training volunteers. So if you are interested in helping, please leave a message at the Association office.

In case of a disaster, the fact there are neighbors in our neighborhood trained to assist in an emergency will be a great help in maintaining calm. We hope that you agree. Please, call the office to volunteer 760.341.1043.

We’re waiting to hear from you!!

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Look for a special mailing regarding the Community Access Trail. The RMCA Board finalized the trail rules which are part of the agreement with the CVWD. You will receive a letter explaining the program and a form to apply for a hiking pass. Please remember the No Trespassing prohibition on the CVWD property remains in place. Once you receive your hiking pass you may hike across the CVWD property to access the B & G Trail.