

FOUR PEAKS MONTHLY

August 2008

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It's Budget Time Again!

Budget preparation is underway for 2009 and projecting potential costs is going to be more difficult this year than ever before. Preparing an accurate and well thought out budget is key to creating a proactive financial approach to managing the communities' landscape. Landscape management for most communities is the largest expense potentially 50-75% of the overall annual budget. We all know that the cost of gasoline has increased substantially over the past year but this does not only affect the cost of getting to the job, several materials used on a daily basis to manage the landscape is directly affected by the cost of petroleum.

Irrigation materials such as PVC pipe, PVC fittings, irrigation valves, sprinklers, etc. are all manufactured using some form of petroleum product and therefore have risen in cost. This will have a direct affect on the cost of irrigation repairs for the community.

Fertilizers used on the turf and plants are a natural gas derivative and have more than doubled in cost from last year. A 50lb bag of granular fertilizer purchased in 2007 would cost around \$9.00 versus the same bag purchased today will cost over \$20.00.

Even materials such as decomposed granite or mulch and disposal of green waste have increased due to transportation costs.

In an effort to help reduce potential increases in regular maintenance fees for 2009 Four Peaks has initiated a four day work week for the majority of our field crews. This means a longer work day Monday-Thursday for our employees but they will not have to commute on Fridays saving gas and potential pollution. We will still have a small crew visit the communities on Fridays to complete any necessary activities but our goal is to cut the number of vehicles on the road by 60-75%.

The bottom line is that we are taking every step to try and be as efficient as possible while not sacrificing quality in an effort to help reduce any potential increases for our customers. We will be reviewing proposed 2009 budgets with each of our customers and want to ensure that we continue to provide quality service.

New This Month

The Monsoon season is here and has brought much-needed rain to the Valley. With that in mind, remember to suspend irrigating after each rain event. The added rainwater, combined with the humidity, affects the amount of irrigation that is needed on a daily basis.

Monthly Manager's Feature

By: Nick Vigna III West Valley Area Manager

All About Dethatching

Dethatching is the process used to remove the excess thatch, the matted layer of dead plant material that builds up next to the soil at the base of the lawn. If not removed, the build up of thatch can prevent new grass from flourishing. Thatch build up is caused by a variety of factors, namely: over watering, over fertilizing, or growing on clay soils. The species of grass is also determinant of how often dethatching should be performed.



It is best to dethatch during the active growing season. Doing this allows the turf time to recover, as dethatching is an injurious process. It is best to begin when the night-time air temperatures are above 60 degrees. However, it is important that heavy dethatching of Bermuda grass not be part of the fall over-seeding. If this is done too late in the summer or early fall season it is possible that dethatching may indirectly injure the turf.

Thatch build up can be removed either by hand raking, or power raking. Hand raking is very labor intensive and only practical for small areas. Power rakers are available for rent and use a series of steel blades or rigid wire tines to lift thatch from the soil. It is best if the soil is slightly moist during the process. Remove the clippings, thatch debris and continue. It is best if you always dethatch in at least two directions.

This is a cross section depicting built up thatch



What to Watch For Next Month

In September, fertilization will benefit most plants struggling toward the end of the summer months. Fertilization will help support growth before the plants slow down for the winter. The new growth put on before dormancy will store more energy during the winter. This energy will be aid to the plant next spring when rapid growth begins.

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