

**Register
Today!**

Our very popular 2016 FirstService Residential Conference & Exposition will be here before you know it!

SAVE THE DATE

Friday, November 18, 2016
www.fsresidential.com/AZExpo2016

Six Steps to Putting More Play in Your Neighborhood

All too often, when we talk about enhancing our communities, we focus mostly on what's right for the adults.

The reality is many of our community residents are children. And let's face it: if it's good for kids, then the grownups will probably feel pretty good about it too.

That brings up the idea of playgrounds. Creating a centralized location for neighborhood kids to safely get together and play provides a great source of exercise and togetherness for the entire community. It helps kids engage in healthy, safe activities, and it enables parents to get to know one another as well.

Here are a few steps to connecting your residents through a safe playground facility, courtesy of American Pool Enterprises, the largest swimming pool management company in the United States.

1. Decide what you need.

You will want to begin with a thorough assessment of your playground area requirements. Engage a playground expert as they can factor in considerations such as your budget, capacity and the average age of the community's children when making a recommendation for you. Your playground advisor will analyze the space you have to work with, how the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines can be met, and more. It's also a good idea to involve your association's insurance agent in the process to understand whether there will be an impact to your insurance costs with the addition of

a playground. There's a lot to keep in mind, but if you talk to your community association management company, they'll be able to connect you with a reputable company who will enable you to navigate through this process.

2. Design.

This is the part that really feels like play. Working with your playground expert, you'll be part of a creative process that considers age range, use zones and most importantly, safety. Maintenance will also be a consideration. This is where the professional expertise will really come in handy. Your playground should meet American Society for Testing Materials standards, ADA standards, and International Play Equipment Manufacturing Association Criteria. Throughout the design process, communicate openly with your playground consultant and be realistic about your expectations.

3. Get the community involved.

As you know, anything that happens in your community must have community consensus. When you solicit input from children, parents, and owners, you'll get people behind the project – making it more likely that the facility will be used. Installation day can also be a fantastic community event. Make sure that any plans for a playground also meet the approval requirements under governing law and/or your association's documents.



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MESSAGE FROM JOHN KEMPER

President, Arizona

I first introduced myself to all of you as president of FirstService Residential in Arizona back in August of 2015. After more than 20 years in the staffing industry where I enjoyed many successes, I decided to take an opportunity that would mean entering a completely new field. I want to share with you the key reasons I decided to make this move.

I knew that if I was ever going to make a change in my career, after having been so settled in the staffing industry, it would have to be because I saw an immense opportunity, one that I simply couldn't pass up. When I was approached about becoming the president for the Arizona branch of FirstService Residential, there were two main reasons the idea caught my attention. For one, the company; I began doing research on the HOA industry and quickly determined that FirstService Residential is cutting edge in the area of community management. The focus on providing education to the FirstService associates as well as for the clients is unmatched and the depth of resources FirstService Residential can provide to its clients is compelling. A good example of those resources would be the relationships FirstService Residential holds with large providers across North America, which allows our organization to offer exceptional service and solutions to enhance the lifestyles of every property and resident we serve.

The second reason this opportunity caught my eye had to do with the organization's leadership. One thing I have learned throughout my career is that who you surround yourself with professionally can be just as important as the type of work you choose to do. As I got to know the people I would be working with day-in and day-out, it was easy to see the exceptional quality each member of the leadership team brought to the table. I knew that with this kind of support and mentorship available to me, the transition to HOA management would be smooth.

As I have settled into my role, I have discovered that my initial impression of the leadership team was absolutely correct. The clear vision of those who lead our region, is something that filters down to all levels of associates from our vice presidents to our on-site staff, and that in turn, filters to the board members we partner with. This allows us to approach each situation we encounter with complete confidence and the knowledge that with the depth of resources we have at our disposal, there is nothing we can't help the communities we serve overcome.

Although change can be challenging at times, I am very happy that I decided to embark on this new adventure. I am looking forward to seeing each of our board members, associates and industry leading professionals at our annual FirstService Residential Conference & Exposition in November, as it will be here before we know it.

The remainder of 2016 will no doubt pass by quickly, and as it does I look forward to the exciting successes that await!

Sincerely,

John Kemper, President

FirstService Residential Arizona

Six Steps to Putting More Play in Your Neighborhood

Continued from page 1

4. Plan for a smooth delivery.

It's not putting the cart before the horse to plan for delivery far in advance. Again, you'll want to make an event of it. What's more, you'll need to accommodate the size of a semi-truck and trailer coming into your neighborhood, dropping off huge pallets of materials. Prep work like leveling the ground and installing the safety surface will need to have been completed by this time as well.

5. Install it.

Yay! This part can be really fun. Whether you choose a professional installer or opt to assemble some structures yourself with a team of volunteers, you'll want some sort of expert guidance. If you choose the volunteer route, keep at least one reputable expert from a playground company on hand to supervise and help with questions.

6. Play - safely.

With a good safety surface installed on the ground, a shade structure to protect against the sun's rays and a community culture that encourages proper supervision, your playground area should be a source of safe fun for your neighborhood children. For more safety tips, you can visit playgroundsafety.org.

While playing is fun, installing the right playground facility in your community can also be a little bit of work. Partnering with the right playground experts can really help. For more insight on play structures in your community, contact FirstService Residential, North America's community management leader.



FirstFeast Recipes

Classic recipes from our table to yours

Easy Summertime Sloppy Joe's

Recipe courtesy of a FirstService Residential Homeowner

MAKES: 4 - 5 Sandwiches

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 lb. Ground Beef
- 1/2 to 3/4 cup Ketchup
- 1 tbsp. Mustard
- 2 tbsp. Sweet Pickle Relish
- 2 tbsp. Brown Sugar
- Dash of Worcestershire Sauce
- Salt & Pepper to taste
- Dash of Garlic Powder
- 2 slices of American Cheese

DIRECTIONS:

Brown the ground beef and drain most of the liquid. Add each of the ingredients in order while mixing as you add. Taste to see if more of the seasonings are needed. Simmer at least 20 minutes or longer if preferred on low heat.





Promoting Volunteerism

A common board question:

"How can we encourage homeowners within our community to participate in board and committee work?"

Many associations experience a large degree of apathy from the membership when it comes to leadership roles or volunteerism. On one hand, some folks want to reduce their amount of personal responsibility (carefree living). On the other hand, there are many willing and talented homeowners that could and would participate if given the right set of circumstances. Here are a couple of suggestions:

1. Implement regular communication.

A frequent complaint of owners is not being kept informed. To draw out volunteers, it is critical that they know there is an ongoing need. Also, some owners develop a suspicious nature about board motives when kept in the dark and resist being involved.

Let them know what you're up to early and often! Repeated pleas for help will keep the need fresh in their minds. A newsletter and flyer distribution box [the kind used by real estate agents] is an inexpensive and convenient way to get the word out.

2. Give credit where credit is due.

People love recognition. Make sure that directors, committee members and homeowners are given formal recognition for their efforts in meetings, minutes, newsletters, and any opportunity where there is an audience. Point out particular owners that show superior landscaping abilities. They are obvious candidates for the Landscape Committee. Consider awarding certificates of achievement at the annual homeowners meeting. Remember, some tasks are ongoing and many faithful volunteers often get overlooked. A wise board president makes a point of recognizing volunteer's efforts.

3. Provide opportunities to get acquainted with each other.

People tend to want to help those that they know personally. However, many are shy and don't easily make friends. The association can promote social events to facilitate the process. Consider a spring clean-up, pool or simply a potluck party. It will help create a real sense of "community."

4. Assign real jobs.

There is nothing more futile and frustrating than a job with no description or substance. There is real work to do within each association. Volunteers and committee members should have clear "marching orders" detailing exactly what the objectives are, the time frame and the budget available to complete the task at hand.

5. Be a motivator.

The board president should take the lead in promoting volunteers. A successful leader motivates through encouragement and not by pushing their authority.

Getting the ball rolling to increase participation is one of the most rewarding efforts a board can achieve. In a motivated group of homeowners, a synergy develops with a result that far exceeds the sum of the parts - a worthy goal indeed.



Water Conservation

"Here is your country. Cherish these natural wonders, cherish the natural resources, cherish the history and romance as a sacred heritage, for your children and your children's children. Do not let selfish men or greedy interests skin your country of its beauty, its riches or its romance." - Theodore Roosevelt



Not only have we become a cost-conscious society, we also have the need to be conservative when it comes to our natural resources. Conserving water has been a top priority for us all. In the early 1990's, it was reported that 30 states indicated "water-stress" related conditions. Since then, the number has risen to over 45 states. We need to look at different ways to conserve water, possibly changing our habits, which will also help in saving your community money.

We may think that the cost in conserving water can be a huge expense when in actuality, it truly does not have to. The little things we do now will not only help improve our present situation, but it will also affect our future too. Of course, you can purchase and utilize the high-end water-saving appliances such as washers, water heaters, dishwashers, or even toilets. Through replacing shower heads and faucets with low-flow heads and aerators can help lower expenses as well.

Here are some ways to conserve water around your home and community:

Check your water meter.

Be conscious of your faucets and pipes and inspect them often. Read the meter over a two-hour period when no water is being used. If there is a change in the meter, there's a good chance you have a leak.

Insulate water pipes.

Foam pipe insulation can be found at any home improvement store. This will conserve water by not having to wait as long for hot water when you turn on a faucet or shower head.

Decrease the use of kitchen garbage disposals.

Every time you turn on that disposal, you are using water. Instead of disposing items down the drain, throw them in the trash.

Turn off the water.

We have a tendency to let the water run when

completing some of our daily routine. Try shutting off the water when brushing your teeth or shaving. Only turn on the water when it's needed.

Use mulch.

Place it around trees and plants in your yard. This will help to prolong moisture and delay the evaporation process, which means they will require less water.

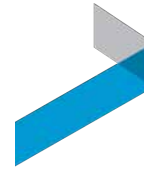
Replace grass with granite or drought-resistant grass.

This may be quite expensive initially. In the long run, it will not only save you money, but will help conserve water.

Use a broom and rain sensor.

Instead of using the water hose, use a broom to sweep your driveways, patios and walkways. You can also use a rain sensor to automatically shut off your irrigation system when it rains. These are great ways to conserve water and come in very handy during the monsoon season.

You can reduce the water usage significantly by using these water-saving tips and features. You can save tens of thousands of gallons annually or more once you become more water-conscious, and in turn, will save you and your community money. We need to think about how we can be more water-conscious in our daily lives.



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CASE STUDY | Community Road Work

Edgebrook Village | Tucson, AZ

SCENARIO

A self-managed community with 170 single-family homes in Tucson, AZ was in need of several large project repairs including extensive street repairs. The community had never increased the necessary assessments so funding was extremely limited and the community was in need of professional management.

FIRSTSERVICE RESIDENTIAL SOLUTION

Edgebrook Village's Board of Directors hired FirstService Residential as their association management company in 2011. After completing a community evaluation and under the board's direction, FirstService Residential identified the street repair improvements as priority. To begin, the community manager sought out three industry-leading contractors to bid the repair work and presented them to the board for review. The board determined that a special assessment was needed and collected over \$150,000 to fund the necessary repairs. The vendor selected offered a "green asphalt" option, which was more cost effective than the other bids. This option provided the community with a product that eliminated the removal and re-grading process, noise reduction, increased durability and increased resistance to reflective cracking. The board was also able to replace all speed bumps within the community.

OUTCOME

FirstService Residential brought in a knowledgeable and localized team to the Edgebrooke Village community which in turn was able to implement an evaluation of the community - notating specific areas for improvement. Through this evaluation process, the FirstService Residential team member conducted an estimating process using three reputable vendors and assisted with implementing a special assessment collection. The rubberized coating project took only five days to complete and transformed the appearance of the community immensely. The green alternative product that was used increased cost efficiency which saved the community and its residents from having a much larger special assessment. Alltogether, this project saved the Edgebrooke Village community time, money and effort by partnering with FirstService Residential. Since professional management was put in place, the community has been able to better enforce their CC&Rs, identify areas where improvements need to be made, set a plan of action for completing these projects over the next several years and establish financial stability to avoid future special assessments.



"The overall positive impact of hiring FirstService Residential is evidenced by the fact that Edgebrooke's finances improved significantly, and that the board was able to organize and implement a special assessment to repave the community streets... This would not have been possible if Edgebrooke had not hired a management company and the expert services of our community manager."

—Former Board President, Edgebrooke Village

WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN FILLING AN HOA BOARD VACANCY

Finding the perfect homeowner in your community to fill the vacancy on your HOA board of directors is not a task to be taken lightly. If you are able to appoint a member to your board outside of the election process to fill the remainder of the term, you will want to make sure you are picking the candidate that will serve your community to the best of their abilities. Ask yourself why you wanted to become a board member and look for candidates that care about your community as much as you do. If you are stuck on where to start, look to your association's governing documents or your community manager for direction.

You've gone from a fully functioning homeowners association (HOA) board to a leadership group with a gaping vacancy. This hampers productivity, causes confusion, and at its worst, may create worry amongst your association members.

But not to fret. HOA board turnover happens and if managed correctly, you can fill the opening and get back to business in short order. Below are some tips to help you through the process of filling an HOA board vacancy.

1. Start with what you know.

Chances are, your first move will be defined by some information you already have on hand. Begin by checking your association's governing documents and your state statutes – they may define how to fill an unexpected HOA board member vacancy. How you go about appointing a new board member – and whether their term lasts the lifetime of the vacated board member's term or until the next election – may already be spelled out for you.

2. Set high expectations for appointees.

Remember, you're on the board because you understand the responsibility your position entails – and it's not a position you take lightly. To that end, there's no reason to go about appointing another member simply to fill a void. Your appointee should

have the same dedication to service and sense of fiduciary responsibility that the duly elected board members have. In other words, this is not the time to put in a weak link, even if you feel pressured to fill the open spot. If you take your time to vet the candidates and find the right appointee, it will save you immeasurable heartache in the future.

3. Communicate wisely.

Do you tell your community members about your board vacancy? In the interest of transparency, yes. However, if community input will cause unrest or complications counter to the best interests of the association, you may wish to appoint someone with discretion. Yet in many cases, getting the community involved in the process can be a positive experience. By communicating the opening to your association members, a great candidate may step up to take the role, or a member of your community might nominate someone who wouldn't have come forth otherwise. In a nutshell, you'll need to carefully gauge the temperature of your specific community before determining how public to make the appointment process.

4. Timing is everything.

It's a delicate balance: while you don't want to rush through the appointment process (it could prevent you from properly vetting your candidate, or send the wrong message to your community), you don't want to leave the position vacant for too long. Short-term





appointments – lasting three or four months – are a great way to “test drive” a new candidate. If you have a meeting coming up soon, and the spot has just been vacated, be wary about hurrying up to appoint someone. This can create an air of secrecy or unfairness that will potentially create trouble in your community.

5. Make a Checklist

So what makes an ideal candidate? That depends on your community, your association culture, and the current needs. Making a checklist of candidate requirements will help streamline your process. That way you can efficiently gauge each prospect's qualifications based on a consistent set of criteria.

6. Choose the best person for the job.

All too often, an appointment to a seat on the board is made because the new appointee is a friend. This is common, but it's certainly not the best practice. Selecting an association member who has a genuine interest in serving, or who introduces a new skill set to the board, is the best way to go. Someone may immediately spring to mind, or you can look

to individuals who ran for the position and lost the election by a narrow margin. With this kind of appointee, you have the comfort of knowing you'll be working with someone who has a genuine interest in the job – and who is backed by a significant portion of your community.

While an HOA board vacancy can feel like it creates complications, you can navigate your way through the process in a way that yields a quality appointee and a happy community. Just follow the steps we've outlined in this article. For more strategies to improve your association board's appointment process, contact FirstService Residential.

TIPS TO HELP YOUR COMMUNITY RESIDENTS PREPARE FOR A SUMMER VACATION



Summer is here and it's time to hit the road!

Families will be going to beaches, campsites, on cruises, and more. There is a lot to plan for to make sure this summer vacation is one to remember.

But while fun in the sun might be on the mind of travelers everywhere, it's just as important for homeowners to think about the state of their home they'll be leaving behind. Whether you live in a high-rise, condo or master-planned community, it's important to know how to prepare your home for an extended time away.

If you work with a professional association management company, you can reach out to your community manager for vacation preparation tips specific to your community. No matter where you live, here are some simple tips to help ensure your home is safe and well maintained while you are off enjoying the summer sun.

1. Don't Make It Obvious No One Is Home.

Nothing ruins a great trip like coming home to a burglarized property. Thankfully, there are several ways to discourage potential criminals who might be lurking near the neighborhood, observing people's behaviors for clues that residents are away. Try not to pack your car in open view. Use your garage for loading the car to limit the number

of individuals who will know you are planning to be away. You should also consider stopping mail and newspaper service while you are gone, so that it doesn't pile up. You can quickly arrange for your mail service to be held for you at holdmail.usps.com.

Set your answering machine to answer on the second ring, and turn down your ringer volume. A phone ringing off the hook is a good indication no one is home. Be very careful about broadcasting your travel plans on social media such as Facebook or Twitter, regardless of your account privacy settings. This can be a dead giveaway you are out of town and are unable to respond to a crime at your home. Also, if many neighbors are traveling at the same time, residents can contact the local police department and/or your community manager so an extra pair of eyes can be on the neighborhood.

2. Keep Energy Costs Down.

There are many ways to conserve energy while you are out of town, which will do wonders for your summer electric bill. You don't want to leave your home completely dark, because that's an obvious sign you are away. But you also don't want lamps, TVs, and other appliances running unnecessarily. Instead, set your lights and TVs with a timer so that they are on at appropriate times and turn off

when you would be going to bed. Leave your blinds slightly open so that lights and flashing TVs inside the house shine out. Keep your air conditioner on but set at a higher temperature (unless you are leaving pets at home). Your compressor will kick on when temperatures rise, which could be a sign someone is home. Also, consider turning off the circuit breaker or gas valve to your hot water heater, or simply turn it to a lower setting so it isn't working when it doesn't have to be.

3. Make Sure Your Property Is Maintained.

If you plan to be gone for more than a few days - make sure you arrange for your lawn to be maintained, your bushes and landscaping to be tended to, and your pool cleaned. A suddenly unkempt home is another sign residents are away. If you are close with your neighbors, ask one of them to park a car in your driveway and retrieve mail or newspapers (if you haven't suspended these services) so it looks like there is regular activity at your home. If you are traveling without your pets, consider asking a friend or neighbor to pet sit in your home, rather than boarding them in a kennel. This way, there will be activity in your home.

4. Ask For Assistance.

Having a friend that you can trust on your block or in your building can go a long way toward helping you relax while you are gone. Make sure you leave a key with this person and an emergency contact number in case you need to be reached while you're on vacation. Have them check on your home now and again to make sure everything is in order. If you leave before trash day, ask them to put out your trash and retrieve the cans, so it is not sitting outside. Be willing to return the favor when your neighbors are away, and bring them a gift or token of your appreciation for taking time out of their schedule to give you peace of mind. This way, you build a reliable trust network together, form a stronger friendship, and know that any time you have to leave town - you don't have to worry about what's going on around your home.

Following these simple tips can help you save money and energy, keep intruders away from your property, and bring you peace of mind while you're enjoying your time away from home. If you'd like to learn more about this topic or to receive advice from a professional community management company, contact FirstService Residential, Arizona's leading community management company.

2016 FirstService Residential Arizona CONFERENCE & EXPOSITION

SAVE THE DATE

Friday, November 18, 2016

THIS YEAR'S LOCATION

Wild Horse Pass Hotel & Casino
5040 Wild Horse Pass Blvd.
Chandler, Arizona 85226
1.800.946.4452

Registration begins at 11:30 a.m.
Expo floor is open from 11:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Lunch is served from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Cocktail hour begins at 4:00 p.m.

To register early, visit www.fsresidential.com/AZExpo2016
or contact Ashley Tutelo at (480) 551.4318 or via email at
ashley.tutelo@fsresidential.com.



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9000 East Pima Center Parkway
Suite 300
Scottsdale, AZ 85258

www.fsresidential.com

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Connecting with FirstService Residential

Corporate Office

9000 E. Pima Center Pkwy.
Suite 300
Scottsdale, AZ 85258
Phone (480) 551-4300
Fax (480) 551-6000

Peoria Office

16150 N. Arrowhead Fountain
Center Drive, Suite 200
Peoria, Arizona 85382
Phone: (480) 551-4300
Fax: (480) 551-6000

Tucson Office

8375 N. Oracle Rd., Suite 150
Tucson, Arizona 85704
Phone: (520) 219-4520
Fax: (520) 219-4711

Office Hours

Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Excluding Holidays

Executive Team

John Kemper
President

Andrew Way
*Senior Vice President,
Southern Arizona*

Rich Orduno
Vice President

Kirk J. Kowieski
Vice President

Laurie Preston
*Director
Human Resources*



FirstServiceResidentialArizona



@fsrarizona



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