



Winter/Spring 2011



# SPRING MEADOW Estates

A PUBLICATION OF THE  
SPRING MEADOW ESTATES  
HOMEOWNERS  
ASSOCIATION, INC.

## *A Word from Your Association Manager*

I would like to take a moment to introduce myself as your Association Manager. Hello. My name is Andrew Dorough and I am your direct contact for all questions regarding your Homeowners Association.

My role within your community has many facets. Among them is inspecting the community for deed restriction violations. Spring Meadow Estates has many rules and regulations that homeowners agree to abide by when they purchase their home. Although at times, not everyone realizes the importance of strict adherence to the governing documents, it is important that all residents correct any and all violations as soon as you are made aware of them. It not only maintains the aesthetic qualities which drew many of you to the neighborhood, but also unresolved violations can have negative consequences against the homeowner.



The most frequent violations I observe include not removing weeds from landscaping, not trimming shrubs so that your address plate is visible from the street, trash cans stored improperly, and fences that are either broken or in need of stain. I encourage all homeowners to take a moment on a nice day to take a good look at your property

and ensure you are in compliance with these items. Correcting violations before I observe them saves your association money and helps keep dues steady.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in the coming months. If I can ever be of service, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

Andrew Dorough  
Association Manager  
[andrew.dorough@premiercommunities.net](mailto:andrew.dorough@premiercommunities.net)



## A LOOK INSIDE:

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### *Reminder:*

Storing items including mattresses, BBQ Grills, Trash Receptacles and other miscellaneous items in front of your home is a violation of your Association's Governing Documents.

## VOLUNTEERS

## *Community Participation*



Spring Meadow Estates is a neighborhood that thrives on its sense of togetherness, which is what makes this community feel like home. Community groups or committees are the best way to achieve that cohesiveness. There are four committees you can join, but we will add more as the number of residents increases.

- Social
- Communications
- Safety
- Landscape

We encourage you to join a committee and get involved today! If you want to join an existing committee or start your own, please contact Andrew Dorough with Premier Communities at [andrew.dorough@premiercommunities.net](mailto:andrew.dorough@premiercommunities.net).



## HOA - What are the Benefits?

Homeowners associations protect your property values by ensuring compliance with the community guidelines, design standards, and deed restrictions.

- Volunteers within the community work to shape the quality and cohesiveness of your community by forming committees and organizing recreational activities.
- You automatically share the ownership of common property that you may not have purchased otherwise.
- Your dues, along with the dues of other homeowners in the community, provide for the maintenance of the common areas and the association that manages the property for you.
- Many planned communities also have attractive entry features and landscaping, which create a tremendous visual appeal and enhance your property values.

HOA's are "grass roots" organizations often referred to as the most involved form of democracy in America today. Community members elect a board of directors for the association. Many HOA members also serve on committees that oversee the everyday details of managing the association.

We invite you to become more involved in your homeowners association. All committees for Spring Meadow Estates need volunteers from the community. If you are interested, please contact Andrew Dorough at [andrew.dorough@premiercommunities.net](mailto:andrew.dorough@premiercommunities.net) with your name and the committee in which you are interested in serving on. This is always a community effort.



## What Do My "Dues" Pay For?

Being a part of a homeowners association means paying annual assessments. These assessments work towards maintaining the property value of your home and ensuring your neighborhood remains the place in which you wish to reside. So, what do the assessments pay for? Here are a few items they contribute to:

- Common area lighting, electricity and water
- Social activities
- Landscaping
- Directors & Officers Insurance
- Texas Commercial Property Insurance (liability insurance for common areas)
- Annual audits
- Maintenance and upkeep of all common areas

## What is this PremierConnect™ website?

The World's Most Powerful Property Management System

# PremierConnect™

Exclusively Offered Through Premier Communities

Premier Communities rolled out a new website for homeowners. [www.premiermgmtconnect.com/springmeadow](http://www.premiermgmtconnect.com/springmeadow). A temporary Pin Number 1234 is also needed. You can change the pin number after you have registered.

Each homeowner has the opportunity to register themselves on the website for an individual account. The advantages of this website are many.

- Individuals can look up their account information on this site.
- In addition, forms will be available for download and the community documents are available for review.
- One really great feature that can be used if enough residents enter their e-mail addresses and phone numbers is that a community phone alert or e-mail alert can be sent out for any community emergencies or reminders.



The advantages of this website to the homeowner and community are many but you have to register for it to be of value to you. Please contact your Association Manager, Andrew Dorough, if you need information on how to register.



## Safety Tips

If you are leaving town, please keep these safety tips in mind:

- Please cancel your newspaper or have a neighbor pick them up so the papers don't advertise that no one is home.
- Have neighbors collect your mail or have it stopped by the post office.
- Ask a neighbor to park his or her car in your driveway.
- Communicate with your neighbors that you are leaving town so they are aware of any suspicious activity at your home while you are gone. Leave phone numbers where you can be reached in case of emergency.
- Leave the porch light on (buy an efficiency bulb). Also, for the porch light and other home lights you can use random access timers that automatically change what time your lights go on and off each night. Or use a few inexpensive electronic timers. Careful not to set them so that all the lights go on and off together. Lighting patterns that vary appear more natural.
- Close all blinds.
- Remove the emergency string from the garage (the top can be bent down and access gained with a coat hanger)
- **TURN ON ALARMS AND LOCK DOORS.**

Keep these tips in mind when you are shopping:

- Shopping with friends is always a good idea, if possible.
- Park your vehicle in a well-lighted area and near the building where you are shopping.
- Place all your packages in the trunk of your vehicle or somewhere they are not easily visible.
- Be sure that clerks return your credit cards and that you get copies of your receipts.
- Be aware of what is going on around you while shopping and walking to and from shopping areas.
- Always keep your children in sight while you are shopping.
- Keep your handbag close to you when you're in a crowd.

And safety tips to follow all year through:

In many cases of home burglaries, thieves enter the house through a door or window that was left unlocked. The fact is, thieves are "lazy", and many burglaries could be prevented by using simple strategies to deter them from attempting to enter your home. Keep in mind that there's more at stake than your possessions – a significant number of violent crimes that occur in the home are committed during household burglaries.

- Lock all doors and windows when you leave the house and when you go to sleep. Lock your garage door as well.
- Install a dead-bolt and/or secondary locking system on doors that lead outside. Using a lock that can only be operated from the inside is an extra security measure.
- Remember that patio doors with glass panels can be especially vulnerable. Consider installing double-cylinder locks – the kind where you need a key to unlock both sides – so that a burglar can't enter your home simply by breaking the glass next to the lock. Also, insert a board in the bottom of the door, to prevent the door from sliding.
- Be suspicious of anyone who asks to enter your home for any type of "maintenance" reason. There are numerous cases of people impersonating electricians or gas line inspectors who turn out to be dangerous. Always demand to see an official company ID.
- Install peepholes or even wide angle viewers in your doors.
- Replace burned out bulbs quickly. Thieves like homes with inadequate lighting. Consider incorporating light into your landscaping or even installing floodlights to light the walls of your house (review HOA deed restrictions regarding this).
- Keep trees and shrubs around doorways, windows and porches trimmed. The bushes that provide privacy also give burglars a place to hide. Dense shrubs can even make for a makeshift ladder, helping a thief into your home through a window.
- **GET INVOLVED IN A "NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH" GROUP.** This can be organized through your Safety Committee and the local police department.
- Consider installing an alarm system.





# Be Green!

## Heating

- Improperly sealed/caulked windows can account for up to 25% of total heat loss from a house.
- Almost half of the average home's energy consumption is used for heating.



## Lighting

- Lighting consumes up to 34% of electricity in the United States.
- Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) are an energy-saving alternative to incandescent bulbs - they produce the same amount of light, use one third of the electricity, and last up to 10 times as long.
- If every household replaced its most often-used incandescent light bulbs with CFLs, electricity use for lighting could be cut in half.
- Where electricity is produced from coal, each fluorescent light bulb that is used prevents 1,300 pounds of CO2 emissions and 20 pounds of sulfur dioxide from being pumped into the atmosphere.

## Appliances and Electronics

- If you need to warm up or defrost small amounts of food, use a microwave instead of the stove to save energy. Microwave ovens use around 50% less energy than conventional ovens do.
- A refrigerator built 20 years ago uses 70% more energy than today's energy-efficient models.
- Today's dishwashers are about 95% more energy-efficient than those bought in 1972 — your old dishwasher may be costing you more money in energy bills than it would to buy a new one.
- Idle electronics — TVs, VCRs, DVD/CD players, cordless phones and microwaves use energy even when switched off to keep display clocks lit and memory chips and remote controls working. Nationally, these energy "vampires" use 5 % of our domestic energy and cost consumers more than \$8 billion annually.
- In the past, LEDs have been relatively expensive, but prices have been steadily coming down. Today, a strand of LED holiday lights typically goes for between \$20 and \$30. They are available in a wide range of colors and styles, from icicles to snowflakes and more, and can be ordered online, from local hardware stores or big box retailers like Home Depot, Lowe's, Target & Big Lots.

## Big Tips for Small Fixes



Do-it-yourself projects can be immensely rewarding, but even a small repair can turn into a more frustrating and time-consuming job when you encounter unexpected problems. Here are some easy tips for tackling common home hardware problems that will leave you with a sense of accomplishment rather than a sense of frustration:

**Loose Screws:** If a screw is so loose that it's barely gripping, remove it, wrap its threads with a few strands of steel wool, and screw it back into its old hole.

If a screw has been ripped out of its hole entirely and the hole is too big for the threads to gain hold, slide a wooden match into the hole and then replace the screw.

**Tight Screws:** Twisting screws into a bar of soap first makes them easier to insert. A few drops of white vinegar will help remove stubborn screws from a metal surface.

**Better Grips:** Improve your grip by wrapping a thick rubber band around the plastic handle of a screwdriver. This makes tightening and loosening screws less strenuous.

**Hammer Help:** When hammering a small nail, brad or tack, slip the fastener between the teeth of a pocket comb to protect your fingers from the hammer's blow. Don't have a comb handy? You can also use a bobby pin, a paper clip or tweezers to hold the nail.

## Advertise to Your Neighbors

Advertising will be published in the next available quarterly newsletter ONLY after Premier Communities has received the advertising form with the payment and a copy of the advertisement.

For more information or to obtain a form, please contact Gracette Rivera at [gracette.rivera@premiercommunities.net](mailto:gracette.rivera@premiercommunities.net).

### Quarterly Newsletter Schedule for 2011

(Ads and articles must be received by  
the following dates)

May 01, 2011  
August 01, 2011  
November 01, 2011  
February 01, 2012



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PRSR 1ST CLASS  
US POSTAGE PAID  
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SME0303

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**Association Manager-**

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[andrew.dorough@premiercommunities.net](mailto:andrew.dorough@premiercommunities.net)

**Accounting / Billing questions-**

(877) 378-2388

[accounts@premiercommunities.net](mailto:accounts@premiercommunities.net)

**Amenities/Reservations Questions-**

[reservations@premiercommunities.net](mailto:reservations@premiercommunities.net)

**Resale & Refinance Certificates-**

(888) 679-2500

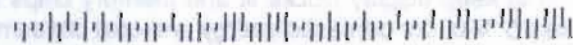
[www.premiercommunities.net/resale.html](http://www.premiercommunities.net/resale.html)

**After hours Property Emergency number-**

(214) 871-9700 ext. 350



236368307 19 AMBXNP1 75048



[www.premiermgtconnect.com/springmeadow](http://www.premiermgtconnect.com/springmeadow)

### Avoid Silly Mistakes on Your Tax Returns

Tax time is fast approaching. Many of you prepare your own tax returns, so we wanted to remind you of a few common mistakes and offer ways to avoid them.

- Prepare your tax return as early possible. Waiting until the last minute increases your chances of making mistakes. Give yourself time to gather documents or research details. Better yet, collect these documents throughout the year in a special file so you have them ready at tax time.
- Use the correct tax rates. Tax tables can be dense and difficult to read; use extra care.
- Fill in every line. If a line item on a form doesn't apply to you, put a zero or a strike through where the amounts would be. That indicates you determined it doesn't apply to you.
- Make sure all your documents are complete. Attach forms, schedules, supporting statements and explanations
- Rounding is OK. Round off all amounts on your tax return. Round up to the next dollar all amounts that are 50 cents or more. Round down all amounts that are between one and 49 cents.
- Pay on time. File on time. The quickest way to get the IRS' attention is to pay your taxes late or file your return late.

### Get in Gear – Spring is just around the Corner...

Spring Cleaning Facts that will help you cut that time in half...

Cleaning takes time that most of us would rather use doing other (more fun) things. The average adult spends about 10 hours a week just keeping up on regular cleaning. That's more than one full work day! If that number seems unrealistic, time yourself doing cleaning tasks in just one day. Here are just a few surprising averages for cleaning chores that most people do:

- Washing/Doing Dishes: 2.5 hours weekly
- Sweeping/Washing Floors: 1 hour weekly
- Laundry: 2.5 hours weekly
- Beds: 1.5 hours weekly (those 10 minutes per bed really add up)
- Cleaning the Bathroom: 40 minutes weekly
- Vacuuming: 1 hour weekly



See how it all adds up? You CAN cut the time you spend cleaning by half with a weekly household cleaning schedule, some helpful household hints, a few surprising cleaning facts and the right tools to do the job.

**Surprising Cleaning Facts:** Your kitchen sink has more germs than your toilet seat, and scrubbing won't get rid of them. When you tackle your kitchen, start by clearing off countertops and emptying the sink. Spray the sink and countertops first – then leave them wet while you move around the room to spray the appliances. By the time you get back to the sink, the cleaner will have killed the germs – and started to power the deep-seated grime loose. Wipe it down with a sponge, then wet it again – but this time, tackle it with a good scrubbing brush. Get in around the faucet fitting and behind the fixtures with the brush to loosen up the grime that hides household odors and germs. When you're done, spray it with the sink spray, and wipe clean with a paper towel or soft cloth.

**Least Favorite??** The least favorite job in the house? Believe it or not, it's not cleaning the bathroom. It's sweeping the stairs! Keeping the outside stairs clean can literally save you hours of work by keeping dirt OUTSIDE where it belongs. A good utility brush with a curved, comfortable handle may not make anyone LIKE the job, but it will certainly make it easier to do.