

Annual Backflow Prevention test contracted by the Association

The Association has contracted to provide backflow prevention to the community.

Easdale Backflow (lcb# 8787) will perform the legally required annual inspection of all backflow assemblies within the Summit during each calendar year. Owners are encouraged to contact their current backflow prevention tester to inform them of this change and to cancel upcoming inspections they have scheduled to avoid this annual expense.

Grand Oaks Board

Questions and Answers

Q: What is a backflow prevention device?

A: A backflow prevention device prevents contaminants from groundwater (like fertilizers) from getting into our drinking water. Annual testing is required. Information on backflow prevention testing can be found at: <http://www.ci.corvallis.or.us/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=439&Itemid=373>

Q: My backflow prevention device has never been tested before, why now?

A: If this is true, then you are out of compliance with city regulations, and could be putting the community drinking water at risk. This program will help you meet the city requirement above.

Q: What will this service provide?

A: The Association provided service will be limited solely to the required annual inspection. It does not include any annual startup or shutdown services of sprinkler systems. Should testing indicate failure, the tester will leave a note on your door, and may offer service. The Owner will retain responsibility to have their device repaired by a provider of their choice.

Q: When will this testing occur?

A: Spring 2010. Exact dates are still being finalized, and will be communicated via email.

Q: My device was recently tested. Will you test it again?

A: Any device tested and reported to the city water department after August 2009 will be exempt this year. The Association will not test this year (nor incur any cost), but will add your device to the Spring 2011 schedule.

Q: How much will this testing cost me?

A: There will be no increase to you as an Owner for this service. The Association assessments you currently pay will cover this added service, without any increase.

Q: Is this Association service mandatory?

A: No. This is a service the Association is offering to provide on your behalf. If you choose to maintain your own contract, and continue paying for this service directly, you can "Opt out" of this program by contacting the Grand Oaks Summit Owners Association at contactus@grandoakscorvallis.com or by phone at 541-714-3033.

Q: Does my sprinkling system need to be "on" to be tested?

A: No. Your sprinkling system need not be activated for this test.

Q: Do I need to be home for this test to occur?

A: No. The device is located beneath a panel in your front yard near the sidewalk, typically accessible by service personnel from the sidewalk.

Q: Who is Easdale Backflow?

A: Easdale Backflow (lcb# 8787) is a licensed and bonded company from Albany. They are on the list of approved backflow testers from the city of Corvallis public works department.

Q: How was Easdale Backflow selected?

A: The Association, through Willamette Community Management, solicited bids from local providers, including our current landscaping company, and local nurseries. In addition to Easdale Backflow's reputation, they were the lowest bid.

Q: What is the Board's philosophy on meeting Association needs?

A: As a volunteer board elected by the Owners, we are agreed on providing the greatest value to our Association Owners and offering differentiated

services to attract potential buyers to our community, while working within our annual budget. The Association has been operating on a budget established by the builder since it was turned over control, and we're very proud of the fact that we have not once increased the Association fees.

Q: Why is the Association doing this now?

A: The request to look into an association level contract was raised by an Owner as a way to add value to the Association. The idea was vetted through our management company, who provided guidance, and informed us of other associations providing this service, and that the city water department supported the idea. The concept was presented at our annual meeting, and after months of discussion and investigation, the Board requested bids, and then approved it unanimously.

Q: How much is this costing the Association?

A: The Association is incurring a very small cost per tested device, only \$14. In fact, by contracting as an association, the value to our members is roughly 2-3 times greater as a service vs. the cost to contract for this service as an individual (usually \$35-45).

Willamette Community Management was willing to take on the additional responsibility to administer this program at no additional fee, as long as it was kept simple and straightforward, which is what we endeavored to do.

Q: Has the Association provided services like these before?

A: Yes. While the Association has a primary responsibility for the care and maintenance of common property, such as landscaping of the grounds and the upkeep of the pool and the clubhouse, the Association does allow for other services to its Owners. The Association already provides all landscaping services for Owners in The Grove, including backflow assembly testing. Additionally, in 2008 the Association funded the pruning of trees along the streets within the Summit Owners' parkways, and started a new service to provide pool attendants throughout the summer months.

Q: I'm in the Summit, but don't have a sprinkling system.

A: No inspection will be required of your property. Should you decide to add a sprinkling system in the future, please contact Willamette Community Management to add your backflow assembly to this service.

Q: I'm in the Grove. Does my backflow testing change also?

A: No. The testing of backflow assemblies within the Grove will continue to be maintained under the current landscaping contract.

Q: I'm in the Grove, how does this program benefit me?

A: In addition to the general assessment paid by the Summit & Grove Owners equally, the Owners within the Grove are assessed an incremental amount for Grove specific landscaping services, inclusive of backflow testing.

In recent years this Grove specific budget has been insufficient to meet the growing costs of the services rendered. The Association has avoided increasing this area of assessment by offsetting the cost overrun with Grove specific retained earnings from prior years.

As this new backflow program is funded through the standard assessment, paid equally by Summit & Grove Owners, the Board was agreed to transfer an equivalent amount per Grove household from the general budget to the Grove specific budget already paying for this service within the Grove.

In doing so, Grove Owners fully participate in this new program, and the retained earnings within the Grove can be better preserved to help the Association avoid assessment increases in upcoming years.