

# High Desert Residential Owners Association

## Policy Governing High Desert Communications

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Adopted May 15, 2013

### I. Authority

This policy is adopted in accordance with Section III C, Paragraphs 3.15 and 3.16, of the HDROA By-Laws, which set forth the general powers and duties of the Board of Directors with respect to the administration of the Association's affairs.

### II. Background and Purpose

Since its inception, the High Desert Residential Owners Association has sought to communicate its policies, procedures and activities to its Owners, residents, and the community at large through a variety of channels and to provide useful information to its residents that will contribute to their enjoyment of the High Desert lifestyle. The purpose of this Policy is to define the standards and practices that apply to the Association's current communication efforts and set forth the responsibilities for their administration.

### III. Scope

This Policy applies to the following channels of communication currently utilized by the Association:

- **Apache Plume®** – a quarterly multi-page publication mailed to all Owners. Includes feature articles on various aspects of living in High Desert, news relating to community events and activities, explanations of Association policies and practices, reports on Association finances and other functions, important contact information, and reader feedback. The *Apache Plume* is the official and exclusive print publication of the Association.
- **HDROA Website** ([www.highdesertliving.net](http://www.highdesertliving.net)) – the official website of the Association. Includes current and breaking news stories, notices and reminders of important resident obligations and administrative requirements, a calendar of forthcoming events, informational pages on a variety of lifestyle topics, reports on committee activities, and contact information; provides administrative support to various functions through online transactions; and serves as the official repository and reference source for the Association's governing documents and official policies and procedures.
- **Direct Mailing** – including information included in quarterly billing statements and other direct mailings to Owner. Used to fulfill legal requirements for official notices and financial information and to provide updates and reminders to Owners on important topics of interest.

## IV. Categories and Sources

The Association's communications will generally fall into one of the following categories:

- **Official Communications** – to convey important decisions and actions of the Board of Directors and notify Owners of financial status and other events as required by the By-Laws and Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions. Such communications may originate from the Board of Directors, the President, or the Community Manager.
- **Informational Communications and Community News** – to advise Owners and residents of events and activities taking place in the High Desert community, provide information and guidance on issues relating to home ownership and lifestyles within the community, explain and promote adherence to community standards, and report on the status of projects and programs sponsored by the Association. Sources for articles may include the Community Manager, the Management Company, Committee Chairs, Voting Members, landscape and security contractors, individual directors, government agencies, residents with specialized expertise, or news coverage of events by the Publications Editor.
- **Opinion and Feedback** – to permit residents, Voting Members, and other interested parties the opportunity to express their personal opinions and viewpoints on issues involving the High Desert community or raise questions regarding the policies, procedures and practices of the Association.

## V. Editorial Content and Standards

All articles and submissions, regardless of source, shall adhere to the following general guidelines and standards:

1. Address topics that are directly and exclusively related to the High Desert community.
2. Be informative and factual.
3. Avoid inappropriate language, "hate speech" of any kind, the promotion of any commercial interest, political advocacy for or against any candidate or issue, or attacks of a personal nature on any individual, group, or entity of the Association.
4. Be concise, logical, and focused on the topic at hand.
5. Be balanced and respectful of competing viewpoints and concerns.

In addition:

1. All opinion pieces will be clearly labeled as such with appropriate disclaimers as to their origin and the fact that they not representative of official policies and positions.
2. All news and information articles shall be prepared and edited in accordance with the highest standards of professional journalism, including standards related to proper grammar, accuracy, language, organization, and presentation.
3. The Apache Plume welcomes letters to the editor. All submissions must include the author's name, address and telephone number. Letters must conform to the High Desert Residential Association editorial guidelines. Publication is not guaranteed. Published letters represent the

opinion of the author and do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the High Desert Residential Owners Association, any of its contractors, or the Board of Directors.

## VI. Administration

Responsibilities for administering and ensuring compliance with this Policy lie with the following individuals and Association entities:

- **Board of Directors** – ultimately responsible for the oversight and control of all communications issued by or on behalf of the Association. Reviews and approves final draft of the editorial content of the *Apache Plume* prior to publication. Appoints the Communications Committee. Contracts with one or more external professionals to serve as Publications Editor and/or Website Administrator for the Association. Establishes overall communication policies, approves significant exceptions to or deviations from policy, and considers recommendations for additional communications channels or other alternative methods as needed.
- **Communications Committee** – Interprets and ensures adherence to communications policies, oversees performance of outside contractors, and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors for policy changes and exceptions and for new channels of communication or improvements to current channels. Reviews external submissions, including Letters to the Editor, to determine compliance with editorial standards and recommend disposition. May delegate responsibilities for day-to-day administration of routine matters to a designated Communications Liaison.
- **Communications Liaison** – coordinates routine contacts between the Communications Committee and the Publications Editor/Website Administrator. Reviews and publishes all postings to the website. Proofs preliminary draft layout of *Apache Plume* prior to general approval distribution. Refers policy issues or other questionable items to the full Communications Committee for resolution. The Communications Liaison shall be a member of the Communications Committee.
- **Publications Editor/Website Administrator** – handles all aspects of the publication of the *Apache Plume* including editorial content, advertising, layout and design. Receives and edits all external submissions for style and adherence to editorial content policies and standards. Covers events and activities in High Desert from a journalistic perspective and prepares stories for the newsletter and website as appropriate. Posts all content to website and maintains the website standards of appearance and organization. Coordinates with the Communications Liaison, Communications Committee and Board of Directors as needed and handles contacts with residents, advertisers and other interested parties.

Adopted by the Board of Directors on May 15, 2013