

SORREL RANCH



SORREL RANCH NEWSLETTER - SPRING EDITION

APRIL 2014

HOA MEETING SCHEDULE - NEW LOCATIONS

The next HOA meeting will be at the Sorrel Ranch Pool on **July 17th at 6:30 pm.**

Subsequent meeting:

October 16th (Annual Meeting) - Tollgate Crossing Pool Clubhouse

2 NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The Sorrel Ranch Board of Directors was pleased to announce 2 new board members at the April 17th HOA meeting. **Melissa Zajac** and **Pat Colburn** have both given countless volunteer hours to our HOA and are welcome assets to the board. We look forward to working with them in 2014!

REMINDERS

Please remember:

Trash and recycling containers should not appear before 5pm on the day prior to scheduled pickup, and should disappear from view the very same day they are emptied. With everyone's help, Sorrel Ranch will remain a great-looking neighborhood to live in.

The Tollgate Creek Storm Water Detention Basin between StanPac (Fleetwing) and Engle (Steel Dust) and the bridge area at the end of Alexander is an important part of a flood control plan. Dumping

anything but clean water in or along the Basin, even yard waste, is not only extremely unsightly to those who overlook the area - it is also a Federal crime.

All exterior holiday decorations should be taken down by now.

Please clean up after your pets. An additional dog station is being added on the greenbelt that runs alongside dove hill by the tollgate creek (behind Brandt place). If you forget to bring a cleanup bag, each dog station has a supply of these. Please remind your children to also clean up and let them know the locations of the various dog stations. The HOA is continuing to work on improving our common areas. We have new improvements planned for this spring. Piles of dog waste seen near dog stations and throughout the common areas detracts from these efforts. Let's all do our part to keep Sorrel Ranch looking great!

SORREL RANCH REVISION OF GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

At the recent HOA meeting, the Board voted to approve several proposed revisions to the following documents:

- Rules & Regulations
- Walkthrough Checklist

- CEC Charter
- LC Charter
- DRC Charter

**A key change to the rules and regulations includes a change to the allowable time for holiday decorations:

"For the December holidays only, exterior holiday decorations & lighting (*less* inflatables) may be placed outside no sooner than 35 days prior to the holiday, and shall be removed from the exterior of the home no later than 35 days after the end of the holiday. For all other holidays, and *all* inflatables, the permitted period is 21 days prior to the holiday until 10 days after the holiday".

The Board also acknowledged that the Design Review Committee (DRC) has recently approved several proposed revisions to the following documents:

- Design Guidelines
- Design Review Application

**One of the key changes to the Design Guidelines specifies two ways to identify an exterior color change as part of the design review application:

"C. For a proposed change to one or more existing colors, and to enable Committee and Board evaluation:

1) The street address(es) of one or more properties already utilizing the desired color(s) can be referenced in the Design Review Application. In this case, specify which color will be used for each portion of the scheme.

- and/or -

2) a "sample color square" should be painted on the siding of the home, near the bottom of the home and forward of the fence line, but not facing the street or common area. If preferred, a garage door may be used for this purpose. The "sample color square," no larger than 3 feet x 3 feet, should be easily viewable without accessing the property behind the gate. The top "stripe" will be the body color, the middle "stripe" will be the trim color, and the bottom "stripe" will be the accent color. The "sample color square" must be removed or painted over within 30 days of application approval or disapproval."

All revised documents, as approved, will soon be posted on the Sorrel Ranch HOA website. Keep an eye out!

133 NEW HOMES IN SORREL RANCH

Representatives of RainTree Investment Corporation/Paulson & Co. unveiled their current planning and engineering efforts in a meeting on

March 20th for the remaining two Single Family Dwelling filings in Sorrel Ranch (Filings 9 & 10). In general, the plans are for 133 additional single-family home sites that will be similar in size to all of the existing sites. The investment company plans to put the filings up for sale late summer or early fall. Once they are purchased a developer and/or Builder will put in the streets and begin building homes. We could possibly see new homes by Spring/Summer of 2015.

SORREL RANCH ANNUAL WALK THROUGH

The Sorrel Ranch Annual walkthrough organized and led by the Community Enhancement Committee, will take place during the month of June. As in prior years, this is a peer review conducted by Sorrel Ranch homeowner volunteers, but can include members of the HOA's Board of Directors and its committees. The purpose is to protect and preserve the value of our community by maintaining the upkeep and appearance. We will need five teams of three walkers per team. Each of these teams will walk through one of the filings i.e. Engle, StanPac and so on. This year, the teams can choose any day or weekend in the month of June to perform their walkthrough. If you wish to volunteer, please contact scott@weststarmanagement.com. You will be contacted with more information as the time gets closer.

XCEL ENERGY PROJECT

Last month, at a series of public open houses, XCEL unveiled plans to complete the final leg of the new Pawnee-Daniels Park 345 kV transmission line, a section of which will border the eastern portion of Sorrel Ranch.

Specifically, a new set of pole-like towers will be erected along the same XCEL right-of-way between Sorrel Ranch and Tollgate Crossing as occupied by the existing towers, only a tad closer to Sorrel Ranch. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2018, and be completed by 2019.

There is much more information to be found on: <http://www.sb100transmission.com/>

XCEL intends to be a good neighbor, and mitigate concerns to the extent possible. They are also offering an amenity, such as a playground, picnic area, trail, etc. (what Xcel representatives referred to as "a give"). Please be thinking of what amenities would be most beneficial and desirable to the majority of Sorrel Ranch residents, and share your thoughts with the HOA's Board of Directors.

SORREL RANCH NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH NEWSLETTER

Hello. My name is Matt Morroni and for the past year, I have been acting as the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator for the Sorrel Ranch community. I also happen to serve as a Board Member. This is the first of a new series of newsletters dedicated to the Neighborhood Watch for our community. My hope is to provide our homeowners with some tools that will allow for our community to be safer for everyone.

A number of the articles that follow recommend calling Aurora Police Depart Non-Emergency Dispatch. The phone number is **303-627-3100**. It is recommended that you keep this phone programmed into your mobile phone and keep it with your other emergency numbers for quick phone calls. In addition, you can also contact our **PAR Officer, James Salazar** during daytime hours Tuesday through Friday. His contact information is **303-627-3177** or jsalazar@auroragov.org. James has been a huge help and is wholly dedicated to helping us improve our community in any way he can. Aurora PD has a newsletter signup that allows you to receive weekly e-mails that provide you with recent criminal activity in our area as well as other information related to upcoming events. If you would like to sign up for this newsletter, please let me know by e-mailing me at the address below. Finally, we are looking for volunteers for a number of upcoming programs including block captains, patrols, and newsletter development. If you have interest in volunteering, have an idea for an article, or would like more information on these or other programs, please let me know by contacting me at morro945@regis.edu.

An update on the "Bridge to Nowhere"

Most of you know that the east end of Alexander Drive dead-ends at a bridge. Currently, the bridge and the road from the east side of Brandt is still privately owned by an investment company. Until the back end of Sorrel Ranch is sold to a developer and finished out, this road will not be completed and the bridge handed over to the City of Aurora. For quite some time, the underside of the bridge as well as the area surrounding it has been a hotbed for various crimes due to the reclusiveness. Some of these crimes include the discharge of firearms, lots of graffiti, the discharge of pellet guns and other similar weapons, dumping, discharging illegal fireworks, etc. I met with the Aurora Police Department as well as the owner's representative to discuss the issues and it was discovered that much of the graffiti was actually from various Hispanic gangs from other parts of Aurora. We developed some potential solutions to this and other problems and we came up with some options. All but one or two have been implemented including having concrete barriers added to the west side of the

bridge, posting no trespassing signs, and installing additional fencing. In addition, we have the existing graffiti cleaned up and APD has increased their patrols of the area. I also complete patrols myself from time to time and report suspicious activity. The combination of these different solutions has improved the area dramatically. The Hispanic gang activity has been eliminated and much of the dumping has been reduced. We have had the police arrest multiple minors for discharging various types of firearms and the amount of graffiti has been reduced and general foot and vehicle traffic have dropped dramatically. With all of these successes, we still are having issues. Graffiti is still being added from time to time, bottles smashed and dumping continues. Additional options including adding remote video surveillance cameras and adding street type lighting is much more costly and would need to be paid for by the HOA. Therefore, we will continue to patrol the area as much as possible, however, we need help from all homeowners (not just the ones living near the bridge) to keep a close eye on the area and report any suspicious activity to Aurora Police Department immediately. Simple things that can be done including making a quick drive by on your way home in the evening or on your way to work in the morning. When activity is observed, call the APD non emergency dispatch.

Suspicious Vehicles

The most common way to profile a community is by car. It is easy to observe potential opportunities without drawing much attention. If you see a car that is not familiar to your street, driving slowly, or has travelled the block more than once, make it abundantly clear that you are observing them. More than once I personally have done so and the person suddenly sped off out of the community. If you are driving and notice something, again make it clear that they are being observed. For those of you who I have approached or will approach, I apologize. It is not my intention to be nosy, but rather keep our community safe. Make no mistake, our community is constantly being profiled. Make these people aware that we are paying attention and we can minimize the potential risk.

Garage Thefts

By far the most common form of theft from residences in SE Aurora remains theft from garages. There is a large number of our residents that continually leave their garage door open throughout the day, even if they are not outside. This is an open invitation for thieves to profile the house from the street and it is amazing how often those bikes, tablets, phones, and other high value items disappear from an unmonitored open garage. In addition, most of the homes in the community have a side window to the garage. Leave this window closed, and make sure that valuables are not left in the car, even in the garage, or at the very

least, out of site. Because the window does not directly access the house, glass break sensors supporting a security system may not detect this window being smashed and it is much more difficult to hear. If you can, cover the window with blinds. Finally, lock your door that provides access from the garage to the house. Recent videos have been flying around showing how a simple wire coat hanger can be used to easily gain access to the garage by sticking it through the top of the door and pulling the manual pull cord and in doing so, it allows easy access to the rest of the house if the door to the house is not locked. This is a very simple way to keep your valuables and, more importantly, family members safe from someone wanting to gain easy access to your home.

Vehicle Break-ins

There has been a recent vehicle break-in in our community. In addition, we have had vehicle break-ins in the past including a theft of police gear from two law enforcement officers who live in our community. Therefore I wanted to briefly remind everyone that there are simple things that we can do to prevent vehicle thefts. First, park your cars in the garage or on the driveway if at all possible. Have visitors do the same, especially if they plan to leave the car overnight. Vehicles parked on the driveway are less likely to be broken into. Second, do not leave valuables of any kind in the car, especially left in sight. A potential thief is less likely to break into a car if they can't see anything worth taking. Finally, if you see someone you don't recognize acting suspicious, call APD immediately. It is better for someone us to say something and be wrong than to be right and not do anything.

Suspicious people

Recently, there have been a number of suspicious people wandering the community. These people have pretended to be lost, waiting for someone, or just keeping distance from others. If you think that something is not right or that someone is acting out of sorts, you are probably right, and again, it is better to be wrong and report it than to be right and do nothing. If you feel this person may be dangerous, do not approach them or antagonize them. Most of the time they will notice that they are being watched and immediately work their way out the community. Rather, call APD Dispatch. This is especially true for those people who back to open spaces because there is less people traffic and it allows them to profile without developing suspicion.

Kids and Traffic

As we enter the spring and summer seasons, kids will continue to emerge from home to play more and more. Please keep an eye on your own children. They are ultimately your responsibility and it is important to make sure they are safe. This includes making sure

they are not unnecessarily playing or riding bikes in the street, that they pay attention to vehicle traffic and they stay away from strangers. Stories of recent kidnappings in and around the metro area are strong reminder that predators continue to prowl our communities. Ensure kids play in groups and that you trust the parents that you think are watching your kids. If you don't have young children or are just out in the yard, please take the time to keep any eye on other's kids. This is part of being a member of a community. Finally, pay attention to all traffic signs, especially stop signs and speed limit signs. Kids too often assume they are seen by the driver of vehicles and/or assume that the vehicle will stop. I have asked that APD step up patrols in our community with the intent to especially observe stop signs and speed limits. In the past, they have been a bit lenient on handing out citations so that we all have the opportunity to receive a warning. I have asked that this not be the case this year.

No Soliciting

Hopefully you have noticed by now that the HOA has paid to have No Soliciting signs posted at a number of the entrances to our sub-communities. There are a number of reasons for this, one of which is to remove the opportunity for thieves to profile the community; however, signs only go so far. It is up to us as members of Sorrel Ranch to enforce these signs. According the APD, over 99% of all solicitors going through our communities do not have the appropriate license required by the City of Aurora. If you are approached, either while outside or at your door, please kindly remind all solicitors that this is a no-solicitation community even if they have a license and ask them to leave Sorrel Ranch immediately. If they push back or ignore you, call APD dispatch with the indication that this person was asked to leave and that you are concerned that they are profiling the neighborhood. When you answer the door, leave your security door locked if you have one. If you don't have one, do not step outside and keep your door as closed as possible so as to not allow for the person to view inside. If you see someone leaving flyers, again, ask them to immediately leave or that neighborhood watch will be reported for littering.

Upcoming Garage Sale

The annual community garage sale is coming up. As a reminder if you plan to participate that there is no better opportunity than during the garage sale for profilers to check out the community. Garages are open, people are constantly entering/exiting their home, and it is easy to act as if you are browsing the items for sale. My wife and I both have experienced people who made odd comments/questions such "How many people are home during the day in the community" or "This is a really nice neighborhood." It sounds stupid that someone would actually make

these kinds of comments off hand, but I personally have heard both. Keep your garage door closed unless you are using it as part of your sale and always pay attention to what is going on around you even as you make your fortune.

4 way stop at DeGaulle

In past HOA newsletters, I have provided some updates on the status of the potential of turning the intersection of DeGaulle and Alexander into a four way stop in hopes we can improve the safety at this intersection for both vehicles and pedestrians as well as to reduce the amount of non Sorrel Ranch traffic. Briefly, we can tell you that we continue to work with the city, however a traffic counter was placed last year near this intersection and this intersection is far from meeting the standards that the City of Aurora utilizes to add the additional two stop signs. Therefore, we are pursuing other avenues to get this done. For additional details, please attend our HOA meetings where I can more easily provide updates, however it is my hope that this will be complete by the end of the year.

Pool parking lot

The pool parking lot is increasingly becoming a place for loitering and other activity. We have added signs indicating that the parking lot is not to be used unless for accessing the pool during open pool hours. We are also planning to add signs with information regarding towing and we are going to begin ticketing these vehicles and having them towed away at owner's expense. I realize that this seems a little harsh, however I have personally observed illegal activity in this lot and so we have needed to take this step in order to prevent any additional activity. This parking lot is a private lot and we as homeowners pay to maintain the lot and so APD has given us the go ahead to tow unauthorized vehicles. Finally, we realize that the lights supporting the parking lot have not been working properly. We are working to have this issue resolved and hopefully will be taken care of this summer.

NW meetings

This summer we are hoping to have an event at the park in which you will have an opportunity to meet myself, the other HOA board members, as well as our PAR Officer. I am also hoping to have the fire department as well as our City Councilman (Bob Broom) in attendance. In addition, the Aurora Police Department holds regional meetings that provide us with updates related to our community as surrounding areas, upcoming events, and other important information. The schedule for these meetings is available when you sign up for the neighborhood watch newsletter provided by the police department discussed earlier.

Volunteers

As you can tell by the large amount of content in this newsletter, I am trying to accomplish a lot. Therefore I am asking for volunteers from Sorrel Ranch to assist me in improving our program. For those of you who have volunteered in the past, I ask for you to please re-sign up to confirm your continual interest. Most importantly, we are looking for block captains that will be responsible for communicating information to your fellow neighbors on your street. Other needs include content for upcoming newsletters as well as completing patrols around the community and reporting suspicious activity. Ultimately it is my hope that we can have enough volunteers that we can select 30 minute intervals in which we patrol the five sub communities during peak problem hours. If you have interest in volunteering, please contact me at the information provided above and I will plan to schedule a meeting in mid-May.

SORREL RANCH EVENTS CALENDAR

Pool Opening - The pool opens Saturday, May 24th.

Sorrel Ranch Garage Sale. The garage sale will be the weekend of May 30th and 31st. A dumpster will be available at the pool May 30th - June 3rd for homeowners to use as they do their spring cleaning.

Celebrate Summer at the Sorrel Ranch Pool! Join us for a pot-luck lunch at the pool to kick off the summer season on **Saturday, June 14th at 12:30.** The social committee is planning a great event where neighbors and kids can gather at the pool for the afternoon.

Bomb pops and 4th of July. Swing by the pool on **July 5th at 2:00** for a Popsicle social.

Come one come all. Meet your neighbors, have a swim and celebrate July 4th at the pool with free popsicles for the kids.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Openings currently exist on all of our committees.

- **Landscaping:** Monitors the maintenance of Sorrel Ranch common areas to include watering, fertilization, snow removal, retention ponds, irrigation issues and other items that maintain all of our common grounds. Each year the committee plans and submits the landscape plan for the next year.
- **Community Enhancement:** The mission is to make recommendations to the Board of

Directors that will preserve, protect and enhance the aesthetic, architectural and economic value of the homes in Sorrel Ranch HOA through a consistent and fair application of the Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&R's) and the Rules and Regulations.

- **Design Review:** Reviews all homeowner requests for exterior modifications to include repainting, decks, landscape changes, patios, solar panels etc.
- **Social:** Plans community events, social groups and the annual garage sale.

Contact Scott@weststarmanagement.com.

Did you know, the city of Aurora is now allowing back yard hens?

Green eggs and ham....

.....could soon be on the menu at *your* house!

You can now raise hens that will lay not just green eggs, but also pink, blue, deep red and speckled brown eggs just to name a few.



You might ask, "why not just buy eggs at the grocery?" Sure you can, but think of the tremendous opportunity for family education and fun.

Teaching your child where our food comes from and the responsibility for pet upkeep and care are real-life lessons that last a lifetime.

Yes, even when it rains or snows. The hens are depending upon you.

With the Arapahoe fairgrounds just around the corner, this is a great way to introduce your child to the 4H.

Enable them to have a project. To be able to raise and show their hen? You can't buy that kind of pride for a child. Just look at the smile on this young man's face- Priceless!

Do your homework before you get your little peeps.



There are several varieties of hens which are cold hardy, lay colorful eggs, bear confinement well and are fun, friendly birds.

When designing your coop/run enclosure, there are some key things to consider.

- Ventilation - your birds will need lots of fresh air, so having screened windows will help.
- Electricity - having power to your coop will allow you to add a heat lamp when the weather gets cold.
- Ample run - Because the hens must be confined at all times, provide as much run space as your backyard allows.
- A clean-out drawer is very helpful too.

Final thoughts.... Consider carefully before you choose one of those prefab units, as some just do not provide enough room for good confinement and are not as sturdy-or predator proof.

To get all the facts for "Chicks in Aurora, " visit:

<https://www.auroragov.org/LivingHere/PetsLivestockandWildlife/Chickens/index.htm>

Another helpful website:

www.backyardchickens.com

Resource websites:

Chickensforbackyards.com; Cacklehatchery.com

****Remember also to refer to our Design Guidelines for Chicken Coop & Run requirements****

Now get "crackin'!" Have fun and make some family memories.

Submitted by Joy Jordan
Resident, Sorrel Ranch

Photo compliments of "Cackle Hatchery".