

# CMA'S LEADERSHIP ADVISOR



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## Small Choices Can Make A Big Difference

Judi M. Phares, President and CEO, RTI/Community Management Associates, Inc.

Dear Leaders:

As a new year unfolds, it's a perfect time to start planning for a "greener" future. While scientists are still sorting out the implications of global warming, I'm a pragmatic optimist about putting environmentally-friendly "green" business practices in place. CMA is committed to initiatives such as going paperless with everything from electronic invoices and bill paying, to recycling aluminum beverage can pull-tops from our breakrooms (and benefiting a charity, too).

Small choices can make a big difference. Who would have foreseen in 1964, that the cumulative evidence about the risks of smoking, a habit firmly entrenched in our culture, would see the number of new smokers decline and the practice banned in many public places today? And not just in the U.S., but even in French bistros!

Decisions we make about how we operate associations make a difference in the future welfare of your community, too. This edition features ideas you can use in your community and your home to sustain a "greener" future. It's a matter of our collective interests to preserve not only the quality of life of your owners, but the endangered resources of this home we all share, planet Earth.

Sincerely,

Judi M. Phares, CMCA®, PCAM®  
Publisher

## Going Green in Your Community Association



### Planning for a Sustainable Future

Sustainability. Environmentalists apply the term to practices which "meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs." As Board members, you know that maintaining and preserving value is inherent in the role of your community association. Your Board serves your community association to sustain its quality of life now, and for the future.

(Please see "Going Green" – page 2)



### FROM THE EDITOR

You'll notice that you've received this issue in an electronic format. Paperless publications are more environmentally friendly, as well as timely and cost effective. CMA wants to do its small part in saving trees and holding our costs in line. Leadership Advisor has kept its distinctive look and informative articles, which have been enhanced with these convenient interactive features:

- Comment to the editor.  
[EditorLeadershipAdvisor@cmamanagement.com](mailto:EditorLeadershipAdvisor@cmamanagement.com)
- Remove me from distribution of the Leadership Advisor.  
[LeadershipSubscription@cmamanagement.com](mailto:LeadershipSubscription@cmamanagement.com)
- Link to our sample welcome packet.
- Link to resources and website references in the articles.

Just click on the links to connect with information and resources which offer tips for "green" living.

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Membership in such a community tacitly acknowledges our understanding that our behaviors and choices affect others, as theirs do us. These impacts increase exponentially on a global scale. The average American is responsible for about 20 tons of carbon dioxide emissions each year, a far greater per capita number than that of any other industrialized country. Home energy use and transportation represent approximately 40% of all U.S. emissions.

Green living is about change, and a great part of it involves changing the way human beings produce and use energy. Like making withdrawals instead of deposits to our bank account, we deplete finite resources until we run out of cash or change our behavior. Put in terms of what your association can do, it involves simple measures like changing light bulbs, reducing the amount of paper we use and making more energy-efficient choices.

### Energy Efficiency Hits Home

Energy efficiency means getting the most benefit for your energy dollar. For example,

older heating and air conditioning systems don't perform as efficiently as newer systems. Today's best air conditioners use 30 percent to 50 percent less energy to produce the same amount of cooling as air conditioners made in the mid 1970s. Even if your air conditioner is only 10 years old, you may save 20 percent to 40 percent of your cooling energy costs by replacing it with a newer, more efficient model.

The efficiency ratings of energy-impacting assets – appliances, HVAC, insulation, windows and doors, hot water heaters, etc. – are significant criteria when planning for maintenance and replacement for common area facilities. Often, the higher initial cost of an energy-efficient model will be repaid several times during its life span.

Lacking new construction options, many associations and owners focus on renovations, retrofits and upgrading equipment to optimize energy efficiency. Architectural Review Committees face difficult choices when owners wish to make upgrades which change exterior features, such as windows and roofs, that alter the appearance of the community.

(Please see "Going Green" – page 3)

## A Lightbulb with a Twist

**When planning maintenance and replacement of lighting in common areas, your association should evaluate the benefits of switching to these energy-efficient green alternatives.**

A quirky looking twist of frosted glass is revolutionizing home lighting. A **compact fluorescent lamp (CFL)** is designed to replace an incandescent lamp and can fit in the existing light fixtures formerly used for incandescents. Compact fluorescent bulbs use 75-80 percent less electricity to make the same amount of light, last up to 10 times as long and give off 70% less heat. While these bulbs are not a replacement for traditional overhead fluorescents, don't overlook the potential to change out lights in closets, powder rooms, and storage areas. Fluorescent bulbs contain mercury and should be recycled or disposed of properly. Overall they contribute less mercury than regular incandescent bulbs because they use less electricity. Coal-fired power plants are the biggest sources of mercury emissions in the air.

Another innovative lighting trend is HID lights for outdoor spotlights and floodlights. High Intensity Discharge (HID) lights help protect the environment and offer additional benefits to associations. Popularized by their use as ultra bright headlights integrated into luxury automobiles, they consume less than 50% of the energy of the common light bulb. Halogen bulbs, once thought to be more efficient for security and landscape lighting, are replaced and discarded every few months. HID lights often last several thousand more hours than comparably specified halogen lights. This dramatically reduces the landfill impact, since most HID lights last decades.



*Compact fluorescent bulbs use 75-80 percent less electricity to make the same amount of light, last up to 10 times as long and give off 70% less heat.*

## Green Living in Action

**Green living changes the choices you make about how your association operates. Here are ten ways your association can “go green.”**

1. Install sprinkler system rain sensors for rainy weather.
2. Specify recycled mulch for landscape use in common areas.
3. Upgrade heating and cooling of clubhouses (when it's time to replace or repair units).
4. Schedule regular maintenance for air conditioning and heating units, changing-filters and checking for insulation leaks.
5. Install programmable thermostats indoors and motion detector controls for outdoor lighting.
6. Conserve resources by reducing runoff and capturing rainwater, reusing gray water for landscaping and planting drought-tolerant native plants.
7. Reduce the use of chemicals, such as pesticides and fertilizers in landscaping. Choose organic alternatives.
8. Reduce mailings of newsletters and directories by switching to e-mail and websites.
9. Tune up with an energy audit. Your Board may wish to hire a professional to perform an audit of your common areas. Audits help you identify leaks in ductwork and other sources of wasted energy in association buildings, which can be addressed as a part of scheduled maintenance or replacement.
10. Encourage owners to pay assessments online. CMA offers options for owners to pay their assessments online by credit card and by direct bank debit. The bank debit (ACH) form can be downloaded from the CMA Customer Service Website by visiting [www.cmamanagement.com](http://www.cmamanagement.com). The completed form must be received at the address indicated on the ACH form at least 15 days prior to payment due date. Owners may access online payment by credit card through the [CMA homepage](#).

## Going Green *(continued from page 2)*

### A Choice Between Green and Aesthetic?

Many Boards and Architectural Review Committees are turning thumbs-down to solar panels, solar window screens and storm doors, as they wrestle with how to balance the desires of some owners against their CC&Rs. Communities may encourage homeowners to caulk and insulate existing windows as an incremental step. The challenge comes from satisfying the sometimes conflicting interests of preserving aesthetic appeal (and the value of homes and the community), while maintaining community goodwill and helping owners find acceptable “green” solutions.

Your ARC can take a proactive approach by researching options and recommending acceptable revisions to the architectural guidelines. Likewise, advance planning can position the association as a helpful resource, providing information to owners about products which conform to the community’s architectural guidelines. For example, an owner wishing to upgrade to energy efficient windows could request information about acceptable styles and models from the ARC.

Your Board can set up an ad hoc committee to work with your manager to identify vendors who will supply the required documentation for ARC requests and install acceptable upgrades. Also, you can communicate the information to owners in newsletters, websites, welcome packets, and with ARC forms. An appropriate disclaimer from the Board assures that information you supply to owners is not an endorsement, guarantee or obligation to an exclusive vendor, or a means to bypass the ARC approval process.

By serving as proactive facilitators, Boards and ARCs may prevent potential frustration for owners, as well as head off violations of architectural review procedures. Your thoughtful planning can help owners adapt in the future by choosing aesthetic, energy-efficient options, which conform to your community’s standards. In addition, the mar-

ketplace often steps up to meet the demand, responding with attractive and affordable solutions which will satisfy both the CC&Rs and enthusiastic renovators.

### Involving Your Community

Community involvement is a great strategy to multiply the impact of small changes and raise awareness of environment-friendly alternatives. Partners to help you as a Board member and as a consumer are as close as the neighborhood school, your city waste management department and maybe even your child or grandchild. (They taught you about the Internet, didn’t they? They’re way ahead of us in “getting it.”)

Why not establish an association committee to investigate opportunities to partner on “green” initiatives with volunteers, schools and city programs? Schools have taken the lead on recycling through paper drives. Many cities offer recycling of chemicals, as well as discarded computer and electronic equipment. Help owners satisfy their urge to purge garages and closets by sponsoring a recycling roundup for your association in conjunction with your city or school’s recycling schedule.

Some communities have adopted programs, such as “4 for the Planet” to encourage owners to simply replace their four most-used 100-watt incandescent bulbs with four comparable 23-watt compact fluorescent bulbs to save \$108 over three years. If all U.S. households did this, the country would save as much energy as is produced by 30 power plants annually. Online resources such as [www.LighbulbsAmerica.com](http://www.LighbulbsAmerica.com) can support groups in promoting a community fund-raising campaign.

We invite you to join with us and accept the challenge to anticipate and facilitate creative choices for “green” solutions. Your decisions and actions will lay the groundwork for a sustainable future which protects your community and the environment.

## CMA Debuts a New Welcome Packet

Have you seen CMA’s newly revised welcome packet for new owners? This bound print booklet is mailed to new owners as a convenient reference full of helpful information about the community and services provided by CMA. [Click here](#) to preview a sample of the packet. Your association manager can tell you more about customizing the attractive, informative new templates for your community.



# “Green” Trend is the New Granite in Homebuilding Photos courtesy of Wilbow Corporation.

What do new home buyers seek in their ideal homes? The trend points to greater interest in “sustainability” as builders are fitting out homes with Energy Star-rated appliances, HVAC, hot water heaters, windows and other energy efficient design options. Technology is the draw for many of these buyers, plus the appeal of reduced operating costs over the long term.

Wilbow Corporation is a residential developer that has established itself in the growing “green” market. The twenty year old company is developing Greenspoint, a recreation-themed, “green” community in Prosper. Greenspoint was designed by TBG Planners and Landscape Architects, which have won numerous design awards for their work. The community’s CC&R’s comprise a comprehensive set of building guidelines for green building, landscaping, and sustainable site development in general.

“Working with landscape architects instead of civil engineers allows us to consider the site’s natural characteristics into the design,” said Chas Fitzgerald, President of U.S. Operations for Wilbow. “It is a different approach, with an end view to enhance a site rather than change it. For example, storm water systems can sometimes be minimized and the best features of a site preserved and incorporated into the design of the neighborhood.”



*Greenspoint, a recreation-themed, “green” community in Prosper, incorporates features such as natural systems for handling storm water so that runoff is purified before it drains into the lake.*

Lots in this community typically orient north-south for the most favorable solar orientation and to avoid large amounts of windows facing the harsh west sun. The company strives to use drought-tolerant native plantings in their landscape. When trees must be removed for development, they are mulched and reused on site to protect the remaining trees.

“The environment benefits when we replicate natural systems in handling storm water or plant choices,” says Fitzgerald. “Often we can trap post-development storm water and treat it before releasing it into public storm pipe systems. Rainwater gardens can be an amenity in a common area, providing seasonal interest and wildlife habitat. Our CC&R’s typically require that our common areas are fertilized with organic-type fertilizers to minimize polluting runoff. These restrictions can also extend to homeowners in the care of their lawns.”

Wilbow works with builders who conform to Energy-Star, Green Built North Texas, or the highest nationally recognized level of LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). Owners benefit from reduced energy costs, improved indoor air quality, cleaner and tighter built homes, and longer term, a better investment.



*Irrigating landscapes with reclaimed water is an environment-friendly alternative and reduces the costs of watering.*

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## Quote

"If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt, we must leave them more than the miracles of technology. We must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not just after we got through with it."

—President Lyndon B. Johnson

## RECOMMENDED READING



### Best Practices Report #6—Energy Efficiency

Foundation for Community Associations Research

*Best Practices Report #6—Energy Efficiency* is a free 20 page report available for free download from the [Foundation for Community Associations Research](http://www.cairf.org) ([www.cairf.org](http://www.cairf.org)). Written specifically for the community association audience, the report summarizes best practices to implement many energy-efficient ideas for community associations. A series of cases studies of associations highlights the benefits they are reaping for their communities.

## Did you know?

Paying bills online will save trees and also reduce fuel consumption of the trucks and planes that transport paper checks. If every U.S. home viewed and paid bills online, the switch would cut solid waste by 1.6 billion tons a year and curb greenhouse gas emissions by 2.1 million tons a year. (Javelin Strategy and Research)

## RESOURCES FOR LIVING



Check out your city's website for a schedule of collections, recycling, recycled mulch sources and more. The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) and municipal governments have cooperated to provide timely information about local recycling initiatives at [www.TimetoRecycle.com](http://www.TimetoRecycle.com).

A helpful brochure is offered by the U.S. Department of Energy. You may download it free online at [Energy Savers: Tips on Saving Energy and Money at Home](http://www.energy.gov) ([www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov)).