



Laguna Woods WOOD WORKS

Inside This Issue

PAGE TWO

Patio Enclosures

PAGE THREE

Scams and Frauds... Know What to Look For and How to Protect Yourself

PAGE FOUR

City Services
City Meeting Schedules



NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Leslie Keane
City Manager

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS

Gary Gates, Building Official
Orange County Sheriff's Department



CITY OF LAGUNA WOODS



WOOD WORKS is published by the City of Laguna Woods and is distributed as a public service to the homes and businesses of the City. The City of Laguna Woods welcomes your comments, suggestions and questions regarding WOOD WORKS. Please call or write:

Editor, WOOD WORKS
City of Laguna Woods
24264 El Toro Road
Laguna Woods, CA 92637
(949) 639-0500
lkeane@lagunawoodscity.org

City Continues Taxi Voucher Program with Changes

As a part of its Fiscal Year 2010-11 budget, the City Council has agreed to continue the City's popular taxi voucher program until June 30, 2011. Extensions beyond this date will depend on available funding. To assure the sustainability of the program, the Council made the following program modifications:



- ✦ The City will subsidize general travel voucher booklets by 50%. A \$100 book of vouchers (taxi bucks) will cost \$50 and can be used for travel anywhere in the County except John Wayne Airport. General travel voucher will no longer be accepted for airport travel. The general travel voucher program is available for residents who are 60 years or older. Unused vouchers may be returned for a refund at the end of the program.
- ✦ Special travel vouchers to Irvine Spectrum and the Irvine Transportation Center can be purchased for \$6 each way by residents who are 60 years or older. These vouchers are not refundable during or at the end of the current program extension.
- ✦ Special travel vouchers to the John Wayne Airport can be purchased for \$22 each
(Taxi Vouchers continues on page 2)

The 4Rs – Reduce, Reuse, Rethink and Recycle!



The City of Laguna Woods is working toward a goal of zero waste and asking residents to remember the 4Rs.

- **Reduce** the amount you consume
- Find constructive **reuses** for waste material
- **Rethink** and shift your consumption to smart products and services
- And toss it in the blue **recycling** bin, but only as the last resort.

A good example of recycling is tossing your empty water bottles in a recycling bin, but by rethinking and using a water filter and reusable container you can reduce or completely eliminate your need for disposable plastic bottles. Check out the articles on the City's website www.lagunawoodscity.org for information about how you can help yourself and the planet. 🌳

Patio Enclosures



When contemplating the installation of a patio enclosure, residents often ask, “What can be done?” and “Why is or isn’t that required?”

Even though enclosed or covered, patios are still considered outdoor areas. Patio enclosures are not designed or intended to be used as room additions. They are not built to the same standards as livable space in a building. So what can you do in an enclosed patio?

Electrical outlets and lights are allowed in all patio areas. Outdoor lighting needs to meet the Electric and State Energy Codes, but this does not

prevent the installation of adequate lighting or the use of most fixtures. Ceiling fans are also allowed when the roof cover is designed to support the additional weight. You may need to provide engineering drawings or manufacturer’s specifications to demonstrate the strength of the cover before installing a fan. Since patio areas are not constructed to meet waterproofing requirements, moisture may be present and outdoor-type fans and fixtures are generally required. Ground fault protection (GFCI) of the electrical circuits is required to protect against the possibility of electrocution due to moisture.

One of the most discussed topics regarding patio enclosures is that of windows. Double-pane windows are not allowed in patio enclosures. The light frame weight of the enclosure is not guaranteed to hold up during high winds or earthquakes and there is the potential the structure could fail under these circumstances. Dual-pane glass adds more weight and stress to the frame and reduces the stability of the structure’s design strength.

Some property owners want to remove the door between the residence and the patio enclosure. This is not allowed. All doors and windows from the existing residence that open into the patio area must remain. Since patio enclosures are outdoor areas, they are not required to be and may not be watertight or have the type of insulation required in habitable space. While patio installers may use sealers to prevent water intrusion beneath their patio roof covers, these sealers alone do not meet the building standards required to seal a permanent roof. The California State Energy Commission requires that all existing windows and doors on the permanent structure be maintained.

Wall-mounted air conditioners, swamp coolers and heat pumps are also not permitted in patio enclosures. The California Energy Code specifies the level of wall, floor and ceiling insulation that is required for this type of equipment. Patio enclosures do not meet these requirements and therefore state law prohibits their installation. Portable equipment such as space heaters and fans are allowed.

Patio enclosures may not front on a bedroom unless that room has at least one door or window that opens directly to an unenclosed outdoor space. Both the California Building and Fire Codes have specific requirements for escape and rescue openings from bedrooms. Under certain circumstances, a bedroom may be redesignated as a den or office so that a patio enclosure can be permitted. A property owner certification, which is recorded on the property, is required in those cases.

There are patio enclosures in the community that may not meet the above requirements. If a permit was issued and a final inspection was approved when the patio enclosure was installed, these improvements are grandfathered in and become legal non-conforming structures. Legal non-conforming status means that the patio enclosure can be maintained exactly as it is but cannot be modified or reconstructed unless it comes into

conformance with current building codes.

If you have other questions or concerns regarding patio enclosures, please contact the City’s Building and Safety Department.



Taxi Vouchers, continued from page 1

way. Beginning July 1, 2010, airport vouchers will be available only for residents 70 years or older and people between 60 and 70 years old who are disabled. Residents are considered disabled if they have qualified for the Orange County Transportation Authority ACCESS program or the Laguna Woods Village Lift Bus. Airport vouchers are limited to four round trips per residence (not per resident) and can no longer be used for travel to the Performing Arts Center, South Coast Plaza or Fashion Island. Residents who wish to travel to these destinations should use general travel vouchers (taxi bucks).

☀ There are no changes to the non-emergency medical transportation program. Depending on distance, vouchers are available for \$4 – 12 for travel to and from medical appointments in the County. These vouchers are also available for medical trips to the Long Beach Veterans Hospital. Vouchers are destination and date/time specific trips must be scheduled by City staff, not residents.

Taxi service is available seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Vouchers must be purchased, however, at City Hall in advance of your trip. The City’s taxi voucher program does not provide service to your front door; taxis will pick up at curbside along streets, in parking lots and in cul de sacs. If you require additional assistance, please contact the ACCESS program at (714) 560-5956, extension 2.

All Laguna Woods-subsidized taxi voucher trips must start or end in the City of Laguna Woods. Taxi voucher identification cards are required to purchase and use vouchers and vouchers cannot be sold, traded or given to another person. 🌳

Scams and Frauds...Know What to Look For and How to Protect Yourself

HEALTH INSURANCE FRAUDS

- Never sign blank insurance claim forms.
- Ask your medical providers what they will charge and what you will be expected to pay out-of-pocket.
- Carefully review your insurer's explanation of the benefits statement. Call your insurer and provider if you have questions.
- Do not do business with door-to-door or telephone salespeople who tell you that services or medical equipment are free.
- Give your insurance/Medicare identification only to those who have provided you with medical services.
- Keep accurate records of all health care appointments.
- Know if your physician ordered equipment for you.

COUNTERFEIT PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

- Be mindful of appearance. Closely examine the packaging and lot numbers of prescription drugs and be alert of any changes from one prescription to the next.
- Consult your pharmacist or physician if your prescription drug looks suspicious.
- Alert your pharmacist and physician immediately if your medication causes adverse side effects or if your condition does not improve.
- Use caution when purchasing drugs on the Internet. Do not purchase medications from unlicensed online distributors or those who sell medications without a prescription. Reputable online pharmacies will have a seal of approval called the Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Site (VIPPS), provided by the Association of Boards of Pharmacy in the U.S.

"ANTI-AGING" PRODUCTS

- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Watch out for "Secret Formulas" or "Breakthroughs."
- Don't be afraid to ask questions about a product you are considering. Find out exactly what it should do for you and what it will not.
- Research a product thoroughly before buying it. Call the Better Business Bureau to find out if other people have complained about the product.
- Be wary of products that purport to cure a wide variety of illnesses (particularly serious ones) that don't appear to be related.
- Testimonials and/or celebrity endorsements are often misleading.
- Be very careful of products that are marketed as having no side effects.
- Products that are advertised as making visits to a physician unnecessary should be questioned.
- Always consult your doctor before taking any dietary or nutritional supplement.

TELEMARKETING FRAUD

- Don't buy from an unfamiliar company. Legitimate businesses understand that you want more information about their company and are happy to comply.
- Always ask for and wait until you receive written material about any offer or charity. If you get brochures about costly investments, ask someone whose financial advice you trust to review them. And, always remember that not everything written down is true.
- Always check out unfamiliar companies with your local consumer protection agency, Better Business Bureau, state Attorney General, the National Fraud Information Center, or other watchdog groups. But, remember that not all bad businesses can be identified through these organizations.
- Obtain a salesperson's name, business identity, telephone number, street address, mailing address and business license number before you transact business. Some con artists give out false names, telephone numbers, addresses and business license numbers.

Verify the accuracy of these items before you purchase or send money or give your credit card number.

- Before you give money to a charity or make an investment, find out what percentage of the money is paid in commissions and what percentage actually goes to the charity or investment.
- Before you send money, ask yourself a simple question: "What guarantee do I really have that this solicitor will use my money in the manner we agreed upon?"
- Some con artists will send a messenger to your home to pick up money, claiming it is part of their service to you. In reality, they may be taking your money without leaving any trace of who they are or where they can be reached. Mail checks to legitimate businesses after you have verified the facts.
- Always take your time before making a decision. Legitimate companies won't pressure you to make a snap decision.
- Don't pay for a "free prize." If a caller tells you the payment is for taxes, he or she is not telling the truth and is violating federal law.
- It's never rude to wait and think about an offer. Be sure to talk over big investments offered by telephone salespeople with a trusted friend, family member or financial advisor.
- Never respond to an offer you don't understand thoroughly.
- Never send money or give out personal information such as credit card numbers and expiration dates, bank account numbers, dates of birth or Social Security numbers to unfamiliar companies or unknown persons.
- Remember that your personal information is often brokered to telemarketers through third parties – how many people do you want to know your mother's maiden name or the date you graduated from high school?
- If you have been victimized once, be wary of persons who call offering to help you recover your losses for a fee paid in advance.

If you are the victim of a fraud or if you have information about a fraud, report it to state, local or federal law enforcement agencies. 🌳



**Check out the OC
Library at City Hall!**




CITY HALL
24264 El Toro Road
Laguna Woods, CA 92637
8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Plan Counter Hours: 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.
OC Public Library: 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Phone: (949) 639-0500
Fax: (949) 639-0591
Website and E-mail Links:
www.lagunawoodscity.org


CITY COUNCIL
Milt Robbins, Mayor
Bert Hack, Mayor Pro Tem
Cynthia Conners, Councilmember
Marty Rhodes, Councilmember
Bob Ring, Councilmember


Leslie A. Keane, City Manager

Get Connected to City Services

Attend City Council Meeting

 3rd Wednesday of each month,
2 p.m., Laguna Woods City Hall,
Council Chambers, 24264 El
Toro Road. Cablecast live on LW
Communications Channel 31.

 **Visit the City's Website**
www.lagunawoodscity.org

 **Call us at (949) 639-0500**
TTY phone at (949) 639-0535



Tune In
Channel 31



Write To Us

City of Laguna Woods
24264 El Toro Road
Laguna Woods, CA 92637



Send Us an E-mail

cityhall@lagunawoodscity.org
Share your thoughts and ideas.

Apply to Serve on a Committee
Call the City Clerk's office at (949) 639-0500.

City Meeting Schedules

- ❖ City Council 3rd Wednesday of month 2 p.m.
- ❖ Community Services Committee 4th Wednesday of month 9:30 a.m.
- ❖ Public Safety Committee..... 2nd Wednesday of month... 9:30 a.m.
- ❖ Land Use and Design Review Committee 2nd Thursday of month 9 a.m.

Meetings are held at City Hall, 24264 El Toro Rd., Laguna Woods CA (949) 639-0500.

Meeting schedules are subject to change.