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# Communicator

GREENBELT HOMES, INC. | A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

## UPDATE ON CRAWL SPACE WORK, COST AND TIMELINE

By Sheri Swaim

Since 2010 the Buildings Committee, GHI's staff, and the Homes Innovation Research Labs (HIRL) have worked together to determine what improvements should be made to the crawlspaces of the frame and masonry homes. During 2014 and 2015, much has been accomplished: All the crawlspaces have been inspected; all sump pumps have been inspected, repaired or replaced; all steam tunnels in frame crawlspaces have been sealed; and yards have been inspected for drainage issues. A test program for improving crawlspaces without the use of spray foam insulation is well under way. The results will help determine the scope of work for the rest of the crawlspace improvements.

The community wide improvements for masonry crawlspaces are scheduled to begin in spring 2016 since the solution is essentially the same as that tested during

the Pilot Program. Frame crawlspace work is scheduled to begin in spring 2017 after the results of the test program are known, since the solution being tested is different from what was tested in the Pilot Program.

The upgrades for the frame and masonry crawlspaces are estimated to cost approximately \$4.2 million. GHI has \$1.2 million on hand to spend on these improvements, leaving \$2.8 million to be financed. The



Frame crawlspace after improvements. Photo by GHI.

membership approved a loan of up to \$3 million at the May 2015 Annual Meeting to cover this extra amount. However, the Board of Directors is working diligently to create a plan to avoid the costs of a bank loan, hoping to save members around \$200,000 in loan origination fees and interest payments. The current plan aims to accomplish this by increasing co-op fees at graduated amounts from 2016 to 2018, and then leveling out payments until 2026.

Increases to co-op fees to pay for the crawlspace improvements will start in January 2016 at a monthly cost between \$4 and \$7, then increasing to between \$14 and \$20 per month from 2018-2026. The amount will be allocated based on the square footage of each member's unit. When the upgrades have been fully paid for, co-op fees will no longer include the additional amount.

More details of the work on the crawl spaces and co-op fee increase estimates can be found in the script and slides from the September 2015 HIP Financial Information town hall meetings, both available at the GHI office or online at <http://www.ghi.coop/content/homes-improvement-program> (look for the links under "Current Resources").

### 2015/2016 BOARD of DIRECTORS' OFFICERS

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## THANKFUL FOR GHI'S "STAR" EMPLOYEES

By Susan Walker

Have you seen the GHI vans and trucks with signs indicating a number of years on the back? You may have thought the signs indicated the years of service of the vehicle. But actually, the signs indicate the number of years the driver has been working for GHI. And the sign with stars on the driver's side door indicates the number of times the driver has been commended for outstanding service. The star program, which began in 1997, awards a star when an employee receives written or verbal commendation from either a member or GHI staff for meritorious service. George Bachman, the Director of Maintenance, created the vehicle signs a year ago to enhance the bond between GHI employees and the people they serve.

James Duckett (a.k.a. JD) has been an employee with GHI for 22 years. He started doing janitorial duties and worked his way up to Carpenter II. He works on porches and stoops, as well as plastering. He has 34 stars for outstanding service since the program was instituted.

Matt Thomas has been GHI's Mechanic & Special Projects Assistant for 18 years. He is also GHI's wrought iron and steel specialist. In addition, he monitors the tree removal program and is the snow captain in the winter. He has been awarded 44 stars for outstanding service since the program was initiated.

Both Matt and JD praise the education provided by GHI to learn new skills, giving an employee the chance to advance within GHI. Due to the skills that they have developed, they are often selected for special projects. They agree that GHI is a good place to work due to their colleagues, the positive organizational environment, and the community. Many skilled craftsmen work as contractors and do not have access to benefits, so being a part of an organization that offers health care benefits, paid leave and retirement is also a real draw.



**JD Duckett and Matt Thomas show off stars awarded on one of their GHI trucks. Photo by Sheri Swaim**

Members are fortunate to have so many skilled employees at GHI like JD and Matt. So if a maintenance employee does an outstanding job for you, contact George Bachman, Director of Maintenance, at (301) 474-4161 ext. 132 or email [gbachman@ghi.coop](mailto:gbachman@ghi.coop). Your call or email could mean a star for the

employee. Both Matt and JD like the program, because each star means that a member appreciated the work they did. That makes them proud. When the member and the employee are both satisfied, that is a win-win for everybody!

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

Unless otherwise noted, meetings are held at the GHI Administration Offices on Hamilton Place, and are open to all GHI members. Dates are subject to change.

### November

|    |          |                                  |
|----|----------|----------------------------------|
| 2  | 7:00 pm  | Pre-Purchase Orientation         |
| 5  | 7:30 pm  | Board Meeting                    |
| 6  | —        | OFFICE CLOSED                    |
| 9  | 7:00 pm  | Member Outreach Committee        |
| 9  | 7:30 pm  | Marketing Committee              |
| 10 | 7:30 pm  | Historic Preservation Task Force |
| 11 | —        | OFFICE CLOSED: Veterans' Day     |
| 12 | 6:30 pm  | Investment Committee             |
| 12 | 7:30 pm  | Finance Committee                |
| 14 | 11:00 am | Pre-Purchase Orientation         |
| 17 | 7:30 pm  | Companion Animal Committee       |
| 18 | 7:00 pm  | Woodlands Committee              |
| 19 | 7:30 pm  | Board Meeting                    |
| 20 | —        | OFFICE CLOSED                    |
| 23 | 7:00 pm  | Communications Committee         |
| 25 | 7:00 pm  | Buildings Committee              |
| 26 | —        | OFFICE CLOSED: Thanksgiving      |
| 27 | —        | OFFICE CLOSED: Thanksgiving      |

**Call 301-474-6011 for emergency maintenance outside of normal hours or when GHI is closed.**

## Member Announcements

### New Marketing & Pre-Purchase Orientation Videos Released

On October 25<sup>th</sup>, GHI's new pre-purchase orientation video premiered at the Old Greenbelt Theatre. If you were unable to attend, feel free to stop by a pre-purchase orientation meeting to view the film. Meetings are offered twice a month and members are always welcome. Additionally, our new marketing video can be seen at [www.ghi.coop](http://www.ghi.coop). We encourage you to share it via your social networks to help promote GHI. We know that word of mouth is our best advertising tool, so help spread the word!

### Need Storage Space?

GHI has an interior storage space, as well as boat/RV spaces for rent. Contact Christine Gyemfi at 301-474-4161 x147, or email [cgyemfi@ghi.coop](mailto:cgyemfi@ghi.coop).

### Power Outage Contact Info

With winter approaching, keep Pepco's contact info handy in case of a power outage: 1-877-PEPCO62