

El Dorado gold



**ASSOCIATION OF THE YEAR**

Serrano - El Dorado  
Owner's Association

2007

# Serrano Named

# Association of the Year

By Lynn Machon

Behind the Scenes of One  
of El Dorado Hills' Most  
Successful Businesses

**H**AVE YOU HEARD THE BIG NEWS around the neighborhood? Our Serrano El Dorado Owners' Association was recently named "Association of the Year" for 2007 by the California North Chapter of the Community Associations Institute (CAI).

So what does that mean to Serrano homeowners? Plenty. An effective, well-run homeowners association can protect and even improve home values in an otherwise volatile housing market. An association that's award winning? Even better.

Here's a closer look at the coveted award. The CAI is a national organization with 58 chapters representing more than 16,000 owner associations and related professionals. Each year, nominated associations in each chapter are judged on education with their homeowners, successful problem-solving and/or overcoming adversity, and their participation within the local community.

According to CAI California North Chapter Executive Director, Marti Wallace, Serrano El Dorado Owners' Association earned the award "because of the exemplary efforts of their Board and community association manager to achieve their vision".

As residents of Serrano, we can't possibly know the extent of work that goes on sun

up to sun down at the Association office, and throughout the various villages. Admittedly, some merely think of the Association as a monitoring body that ensures neighborhood CC & Rs are met. So in celebration of this "Association of the Year" award, we'll take a look behind the scenes at one of El Dorado Hill's most successful "businesses" — one that spends the majority of its time literally on community relations.

As in any business analysis, let's cut right to the numbers. It may surprise you to realize that the Serrano El Dorado Owners' Association is an \$8 million operation. It is responsible for the oversight and

management of more than 4,000 properties, 11 community parks, 17 miles of trails, 19 gated entrances and 53 miles of private roadways in addition to maintenance of more than 800 acres of open spaces, greenbelts and medians. That's just the day-to-day duties.

Now factor in new resident and home-builder orientations, ongoing community workshops, Association-sponsored holiday festivities and community events, monthly Board Meetings and an Annual Member meeting, and you start to get a feel for the beehive of activity taking place every day at the Serrano Visitors Center.

To handle that workload, a whopping 70 professional staff members are directly employed by the Association in seven different departments — Maintenance, Community Standards, Accounting, Communications, Architectural Review, Security and Recycled Water. That number doesn't include contract professionals such as those who maintain much of the common areas and front yards throughout Serrano.

## A Humble Beginning

Arguably, the driving force behind the success of the Association is General Manager John Bowman, who first opened

## Serrano El Dorado Owners' Association Board of Directors:

**President: Brett Hayes**

**Vice-President: Tom Howard**

**Secretary: Kirk Bone**

**Director: John Tyler**

**Director: Jim Parker**



The Serrano Visitor's Center, headquarters of the Serrano El Dorado Owners' Association.

the Association's doors in September 1995. Two years later, Bowman hired a second employee, David Sanders, as Maintenance Manager, in a role he continues to this day.

Through his extensive experience and training over the years, Bowman has earned the designation of Professional Community

factor in Serrano's "Association of the Year" achievement.

While he humbly deflects the credit, Bowman is thrilled with the recognition. "Earning this prestigious award is a direct reflection of the commitment of our staff and Board in ensuring Serrano remains the

### Newly Dedicated Security

In a gated community such as ours, security sometimes can be taken for granted. But controlling access to our neighborhoods and patrolling our streets to help deter crime is a 7 days-a-week, 24 hours-a-day commitment.

Over the last several months, there have been significant enhancements to Serrano security. The Board of Directors recently decided to bring the Association's security team in-house as a way to improve the quality of service. Previously contracted through Allied Barton, Serrano's security team of 28 professionals led by Supervisor Marc Moore is now dedicated to around-the-clock protection of our neighborhoods.

Additionally, Phase 1 of a new state-of-the-art surveillance system was put in place last year with cameras installed at strategic locations.

Yet even increased patrols and advanced technology can't deter all forms of crime. That's why, in partnership with the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department, Serrano

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Association Manager (PCAM), the highest professional recognition available to community association managers, from industry leader CAI.

According to Wallace with CAI/CNC, John Bowman's hard work and his heavy involvement in his industry was a major

premiere community Bill Parker envisioned and our owners expect."

Under Bowman's leadership and the direction of the Board of Directors, the Serrano El Dorado Owners' Association enjoyed several successes and milestones in 2007.

Security has teamed with homeowners to formalize Neighborhood Watch Programs throughout the area. One of the biggest programs, encompassing 250 homes in Villages I, H & L, launched early last summer.

### **Being Environmental Stewards**

According to the industry leaders, another of the criteria that sets Serrano's community association apart from others, is its pioneering efforts to "go green" by conserving natural resources and protecting the environment.

Did you know our homeowners association has its own Recycled Water Department? Those purple pipes you see throughout our community aren't just there for beauty. Serrano's use of non potable water for irrigation purposes is one of the largest residential water reuse systems in the country. It's estimated to save 900 million gallons of drinking water each year. What's more, residents enjoy lower water bills due to the reduced rates charged by the water district for recycled water.

In another push to be environmentally-friendly, Association maintenance crews have reduced the use of petroleum-based chemicals for fertilization in Serrano association-maintained front yards. It's a small yet powerful move that improves the quality of runoff water into neighborhood storm drains and ultimately back into our water cycle.

Moving off the grass and onto the road, you may have noticed a different look for the Association's security vehicles. Late last year, six hybrid Ford Escape vehicles were introduced into Serrano's transportation fleet to help reduce gas consumption and air pollution.

### **Professionalism and Customer Service**

As with any successful business, Bowman says, "The Association's strength is the quality and commitment of our employees." He adds, "Managing Serrano is not unlike running a small town, and it takes a team of skilled and specialized staff to make it work."

## Serrano El Dorado Owners' Association Vision Statement

"To serve our members by keeping their community an exceptional place to live and own property, through our quality maintenance of the common grounds, fair and consistent application of the community standards, and courteous, professional communications."

Toward that end, the Association strives for professionalism in all departments, and fosters a strong team environment through ongoing management and department meetings. Both leadership and staff are encouraged to extend their education through management, customer service, technology and communications training.

Another goal of the Association is communication and education with its customers, Serrano homeowners. This is one of the areas I believe our staff really excels," says Bowman. "In a community of over 3,400 homes, it is a challenge to help residents understand what the Association does and why."

Through newsletters, news briefs, special mailings, one-on-one meetings and the ever-expanding website ([serranohoa.org](http://serranohoa.org)), the Association strives to keep residents informed and the lines of communication open.

Being named "Association of the Year" is by no means

the first award the Serrano El Dorado Owners' Association has received over the last 12 years. Yet it is the first honor captured by the Association as a whole, not just by one department. In that way, it truly and deservedly recognizes all the programs and professionals that make this community thrive. Congratulations! 🎉



Board meetings are held in the Visitors Center on the last Thursday of each month. The Annual Members meeting is scheduled for May 8, 2008 at the El Dorado Hills Library.