

# The Ridges Landowners' Association Newsletter

**Number 23  
Summer 2001**

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*In an effort to keep all landowners in The Ridges informed of the status of the development of the community and issues that may affect you, we are distributing this quarterly newsletter. We hope that you enjoy this periodic update and find it useful.*

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## **Natural Gas Vote Postponed**

A special meeting of the homeowners was held on Tuesday June 13th to discuss and vote on whether to extend natural gas services into The Ridges. A representative from Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM) was scheduled to be present at the meeting to answer questions. Unfortunately the representative was unable to attend and many residents had questions about the conversion that remained unanswered. This prompted a decision to continue the meeting at a later time when PNM engineers could be present to answer questions. The June 13th meeting will be continued on Wednesday, July 11th at 10 AM in the conference room at the PNM building, which is located on highway 14, nine-tenths of a mile from I-25, on the right hand side of the highway. A meeting to vote on the conversion is being scheduled and homeowners will be notified of the time, date and place as soon as possible.

The board of directors extends appreciation to John Brown and Dave Kingston for all of the work they put into preparing the report "Natural Gas for The Ridges", a copy of which was mailed to each household.

## **What Grows in The Ridges? Piñon Trees**

Wherever you drive in The Ridges, you will see the remnants of the giant piñon-juniper forest that once covered the area. Prehistoric Indians were the custodians of this once vast "orchard" that provided them with materials for food, fuel, building, tools, and medicine.

The piñon pine is a small to medium evergreen tree that grows up to 40 feet in height. A native of New Mexico, it grows at elevations of 4,000 to 9,000 feet, often on dry, rocky ridges or on shallow soils. The tree is easily recognized by its rounded crown and irregular shape. Needles are short and are clustered in twos. The bark is dark and rough. Cones are reddish to yellow-brown, oval to globular in shape, from 1 to 3 inches long.

Each cone contains about 20 seeds, which are edible. The great piñon woodlands where many prehistoric villages were located surely provided basic nourishment for the people prior to their cultivation of corn. Tewa Pueblo tradition still holds piñon nuts to have been their most ancient food. Containing over 3,000 calories per pound, piñon nuts must have constituted the most valuable local wild plant food source for many prehistoric peoples living in this ecozone.

At Frijoles Canyon, in Bandelier National Monument, whole piñon cones have been found in house ruins from the 12th Century, suggesting that, of the many ways of collecting nuts, a simple one favored early on was to unscrew the pitch-covered cones from the branches and carry them home to open by heating or drying. This method of collecting early in the season would have avoided competition with piñon jays and other birds and animals. Once the cones opened and the nuts were removed, the empty, dry, pitchy cones would make good kindling.

Local Pueblo families, raking up the litter beneath piñon trees, can gather 150 pounds of nuts in a single day. This means about 70 pounds of nutmeats, the equivalent in calorie value of the same weight of chocolate.

Miscellaneous historical use of the piñon are legion. At Jemez, in the early part of the 20th Century, a red pottery paint was obtained by mixing the resin of old and new trees. A turquoise paint was fabricated by boiling the piñon gum. An all-purpose glue could be made by warming the pitch, and this was used to secure turquoise in jewelry setting, sinew to the back of bows, and stone heads and feathers to arrows. Piñon pitch is still used medicinally by Rio Grande Puebloans, powdered and sprinkled in wounds as an antiseptic. It is also chewed as a gum or chewed and swallowed for clearing the head during a cold.

Adapted by Ray Olson from "Common Conifers in New Mexico Landscapes" and from "Wild Plants of the Pueblo Province".

## CAUTION: SNAKE CROSSING

Summer has arrived, and with the hot, bright, rainless days we welcome back our cold-blooded buddies, the snakes of Northern New Mexico. We are fortunate to have a variety of these reptiles, efficient decimators of vermin that they are, and equally fortunate that few are a danger to people.

In The Ridges one is likely to see several species including the Coach Whip or Red Racer, the Gopher or Bull snake, The Checkered Garter snake, and occasionally the Western Hognose and Glossy snake. One should be cautious when walking through high grasses that one doesn't startle or step on a Prairie or Western Rattlesnake. These snakes are in the area though they make themselves scarce.

All snakes enjoy a nice sun bath after a cool evening and so it is not surprising to see them on the roadways of The Ridges, especially soakin' up the heat on the blacktop. Please be cautious as you drive our roads. If you see one of these creatures, just drive around it. Those of us who are a bit more adventuresome might assist our scaly neighbors with a gentle prod with a stick to move to the side of the road. If you see a rattler you should call Santa Fe County animal control for assistance.

### Tis The Season for No-See-Ums

Those little, unseen varmints that bite during the month of June, leaving seriously itching welts that last for a month, belong to the family of biting midges (*culicoides* or *lipticonops ceratopogonidae*). The tiny insects feast on human blood, injecting a toxin that

evoke varying degrees of inflammatory response, depending on the sensitivity of the individual. Most common during the month of June, they breed in moist vegetation. Protection is afforded by staying indoors, wearing a full covering of clothing, and using a protective chemical. Avon's *Skin So Soft*, which includes a sunscreen, will protect for 20 —30 minutes, thus requiring frequent application. 100% DEET is a longer lasting, effective protectant, but carries with it some risk of allergic reaction. Thermal foggers that contain pyrethrum can be used to fog an outdoor area before the hors d'oeuvres, but the next generation of midges will probably move in soon after dessert is served.

By Ray Olson (direct communication from Maurice Craig, Ph.D., NMSU Coordinator of Entomology Laboratories)

## NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

We have several new residents moving into our community and would like to extend a welcome to all of you.

Jane Burns and David Gamble—1 Hijo de Dios

Peggy Cross and Tim Anies—2 Hijo de Dios

Victoria Hall—15 Hijo de Dios

Yolanda and Victor Hesche—16 Hijo de Dios

Jennifer Noble & Donovan James—25 Immanuel

Carol Wilson—10 Estrella de la Manana

Joyce & Michael Kominski—5 Estrella de la Manana

Lisa & Scott Newman—6 Pan de Vida

Karen Larsen—20 Buen Pastor

Suzanne Scripps-LaFlamme & Jeff LaFlamme—100

Principe de Paz

***The Board of Directors and the Association officers are listed for your information.  
Please feel free to call for assistance or information.***

<b>NAME</b>	<b>OFFICE</b>	<b>TELEPHONE</b>	<b>COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN</b>
<b>Ray Olson</b>	<b>President</b>	<b>505-466-1202</b>	
<b>Michel Marx</b>	<b>Vice President</b>	<b>505-466-9038</b>	<b>Architectural Control Committee</b>
<b>Barry Weinstein</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	<b>505-466-6223</b>	
<b>Jim Shanaberger</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>505-466-6909</b>	<b>Roads</b>
<b>Estee Roll</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>505-466-2827</b>	
<b>Debra Hayden</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>505-466-9026</b>	<b>285 Coalition</b>

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