

# RIVER'S EDGE ESTATES ASSOCIATION



DECEMBER-JANUARY 2026

## *RIVER'S EDGE COMMUNITY NOTICES*

### BOARD MEETINGS

January 21, 2026\*

February 18, 2026\*

March 18, 2026\*

April 15, 2026\*

May 20, 2026\*

June 17, 2026\*

July 15, 2026\*

August 19, 2026\*

September 16, 2026\*

October 21, 2026\*

November 7, 2026-Annual Meeting

November 18, 2026\*

(There is no Board Meeting in December, 2025)  
November 7, 2026-Annual Meeting

\*Board Meetings are held at the HOA Office at **4:00 pm** on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month unless otherwise notified. Please call the HOA office if you plan to attend a meeting to allow Jeanne time to add additional seating if necessary.



### OUR ANNUAL MEETING!

We want to thank all of you who took time out of your busy schedules and participated in our Annual Meeting on November 1st. Dave Ratner, our Board President, opened the meeting with the statement that we had already reached our requirement

#### HOMEOWNERS RIVER'S EDGE

25 Blackberry Mtn. Dr, #8101  
Ellijay, Georgia 30536

No short-term rentals allowed

#### OFFICE MANAGER

Jeanne Miller

706-273-3100

Fax 706-273-3201

After Hours Water and

Gate Systems Emergencies

(leave name, phone #

and message)

706-273-3100

#### EMAIL

riversedge@ellijay.com

#### WEBSITE

[www.RiversEdgeofEllijay.com](http://www.RiversEdgeofEllijay.com)

Webmaster:

Penni McDaniel

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

David Ratner, President

Tom Ostby, Vice President

And Water Manager

Jim Carr, Treasurer

David Schmitt, Secretary

Byron Trotter, Member at Large

#### DESIGN COMMITTEE

David Schmitt, Chairman

Esther Lax

Jim Carr

#### Firewise Coordinator

Byron Trotter

Newsletter Editor

Judy 'Carr

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for the quorum with the 30 people who attended the meeting ( 20 households) and the 19 homes who submitted their completed proxies so we were able to vote on community matters. If anyone submitted their proxy and attended the meeting, we did not use their proxy.

Dave introduced our Board Members: Tom Ostby, Vice President and Water Manager, Byron Trotter, Board Member and Firewise Coordinator, Jim Carr, Treasurer and Dave Schmitt, Secretary and Design Committee Chairman, who was absent due to a houseful of company celebrating his Birthday. Dave went on to thank Penni McDaniel for taking care of the website and me, Judy Carr, for preparing the newsletter. Dave also introduced Jeannie Miller who has taken over for Linda Black as our office manager—and who has done a spectacular job!!

He thanked the Architectural Design Committee of Dave Schmitt, Esther Lax and Jim Carr for doing a spectacular job of keeping up with the demands of the community, trying to purpose solutions that enhance our community, address the concerns of our members and are applied unilaterally. Additional thanks were given to the group of men who run to the aid of homeowners in their times of need: Peter Gonsalves, Paul Gegenheimer, Jim Carr, Bryon Trotter and anyone else who runs out there to occasionally assist! Thank goodness, most of the time we don't have to wait and then pay someone to come and clean up after storms!!

Dave invited our guest speaker, Frank Riley, Jr., Executive Director Chestatee/ Chattahoochee Resource Council and Georgia Firewise Liaison who received the 2021 Silver Smokey Bear Award (the highest honor an individual can receive for outstanding wildlife prevention service) to begin his presentation.

Frank thanked us for our participation in the Firewise Program and announced that Georgia is 6<sup>th</sup> in the nation for participation in the program and that the River's Edge Community has received more money than almost any other community in Georgia due to our commitment and program leadership of Byron Trotter and the program Initiator in 2017, Mary Ellen Cates. Without these two individuals, our chipping events and common area clean-ups would be costing us a lot more money! Frank also reminded us that the whole reason for the program is to keep our community safe and fire free.

After Frank's presentation, Dave asked that everyone take a minute to review the "minutes" from last year's Annual Meeting, followed by a show of hands to approve the minutes. The Minutes were approved.

Next up Dave introduced the Board Members and asked them to begin their presentations:

First up, Tom Ostby, Vice President and Water Manager. Tom told us we had a good year with the wells. Not that we went without incident, but we were able to correct the problems in a reasonable amount of time and cost. And our community members are on top of letting the office know they are having a problem and Jeannie calls for help with one of the two well companies we have on speed dial and gets the one that can come the quickest!

Dave Ratner spoke for Dave Schmitt, stating that there were 25 projects that needed attention this year. Eight were new construction (including homes and garages), and nine tree removal projects. The rest were smaller projects. Dave Ratner inserted that the Architectural Design committee is doing a great job.

Next up was **Byron Trotter**. His initial statement was "what Frank said!" Then he went on to say--This year we submitted a Firewise grant proposal to start a multi-phased project to clear trees from a 1,700-foot stretch of hillside running along the north side of Lazy River Lane. The project started at the intersection of Blackberry Circle and Lazy River Lane and finished near the end of Lazy River Lane as you head west. In January the first 600 feet was cleared and Firewise awarded us \$3,375 for that effort. By the second week of this November, the remaining 1,100 feet was cleared.

The Firewise reasons for this project are multipurposed.

- **First - It increases the size of the roadway's overhead fire breaks.**
- **Secondly - In the event of a wildfire, it increases the amount of room on the street that emergency equipment can operate in, allowing more space for residents to exit.**
- **Third - It prevented the trees that had been growing at an angle on the hillside from possibly catching fire, falling across the road and blocking the ability to exit safely. Every couple of years or so, high wind and rain were already downing some of those hillside trees.**

There are also other benefits of this project.

- **It helps to reduce the amount of tree roots growing under the edge of the asphalt causing bumps along the side of the road.**
- **And it also provides more sun on the street, allowing for quicker water evaporation. This helps to prevent cracking and potential ice buildup in the winter.**

Also, in 2025 we updated our community action plan, reported on grant projects, and highlighted neighborhood clean-up efforts, so Firewise renewed our "good standing" certificate through 2026.

And finally, it was Jim Carr's turn. His initial statement was "how many of you would like to find an extra \$10,000.00 in your pocket?" That's what happened this year simply because the Board is putting your reserve money into CDs. Yes, we made \$10,000.00 in interest that goes towards our infrastructure repairs." He said that we have \$272,000 in our reserve CDs. He mentioned that we really had a few expenses this year including the well maintenance, the mailbox area, and the gate.

Jim reminded everyone that by pitching in to help with what you can, also saves us a lot of money for the inevitable larger repairs. This year the mail area was updated! The mailbox area cover structure had to be rebuilt.

And then there is the gate! The Board knows it is frustrating and seems like since we have put in the new gate, the problems persist! But we need to know that while the gate is new, the gate wiring and mechanism are not new and is the cause of many problems. It seems like we get one problem solved and then lightning hits it!! So, while it is frustrating, please remember that several people spend hours trying to keep it working!

The Roads! As Byron explained, we are working on the areas along the roads to cut down trees for fire prevention. And for the last couple of years, you have heard us talk about cutting the trees and their roots along the roads to prevent our roads from buckling and you have seen a handful of community members work on the project. It is a slow process as it takes a combination of money and community help. This year, we are ramping up the project. We have asked our community member, Brandon Bridges, to help. Brandon's line of work is road improvement. He has agreed to put his expertise to work by evaluating our road system, making suggestions, and will bring in his team to assist us. We will use some of our reserve money to expedite this effort. After his review, we will start with the worst and most traveled roads.

Next, Jim asked everyone to review the attached 2026 budget, explaining that there is an increase of only 2%, followed by a request to approve the 2026 budget. By a show of hands, it was approved.

Following the Board Members' reports, Dave announced that there are two members whose terms will expire next month and so far no one from the community has come forward requesting to put their name in the hat, but if someone from the meeting would like to, now is the time. No one came forward. Both Tom Ostby and Dave Schmitt have agreed to serve again. Dave asked for a motion that Tom Ostby and Dave Schmitt be approved for the Board of Directors. The motion was made and they were approved by unanimous vote.

Dave Ratner then opened the meeting to comments and questions:

1) Larry Buckland asked if River's Edge well water is better than city water to which Tom said that well water is far better.

2) Paul Gegenheimer mentioned that ETC buried the fiber optic lines fairly close to the street. He was concerned the road repair crew may hit one of those lines-Jim Carr said that prior to any digging, 811 will be called.

3) The most responses were concerning the mail delivery of boxes. Many people seemed frustrated by not knowing where to find their packages-at the HOA office, the mail box, or at the Post Office. (Please see the article in this newsletter, as things have changed again!)

4) Larry Buckland asked if increased prices are affecting prices of services that we use. Jim answered yes that they are and that they will continue in the future as some vendors are nearing retirement and the new service providers charge more. **WITH THAT, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED!**

## KEEPING UP WITH THE BOARD

### IMPACT FEE INCREASE

**In case you did not attend the Annual Meeting or read the Annual Meeting Review in this newsletter, we have had an increase in our impact fees:**

**New Construction is now \$5000**

**Architectural Projects including garages and additions, etc. are now \$2500.**

### MAIL PACKAGES!

**The Board sent out an e-mail last week addressing our on going USPS mail package delivery problem! The Board suggests that if you are having problems with your deliveries, you could address the larger items to yourself and use the HOA office address of 25 Blackberry Mountain Drive, #8101, Ellijay, GA . This will reduce your frustration of determining where your package is supposed to be delivered. Please remember, you will be responsible for the tracking of your own package. Jeannie will not be calling you each time you receive a package. Most businesses that you order from, will send you a delivery notice. The office is open from 9am to 5pm weekdays. If you receive a package on the weekend, USPS will do one of 3 things, leave the package on the HOA porch, leave it in the office mail locker, or leave a slip at the office**

**It has come to the Board's attention that people in our community think we have a River's Edge Facebook page. We do not, nor have we been approached by anyone to ask if we should have one. So, whatever is out there, is totally the opinions of whomever posted on the site and is not sanctioned by the Association!**

## ARE YOU WINTERIZED AND READY FOR COLD & SNOW?



### Old Farmer's Almanac

Gilmer County is not with the rest Of Georgia in the Farmer's Alamanic! We are with the "Deep South", Region 8 (along with Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana while the rest of Georgia is in Region 4). Region 8 8 predictions are as follows:  
This area will have a warmer than normal Winter, with the coldest periods in late November, mid-December, early and late January, through early February. Precipitation and snowfall will be below normal, with the best chances for snow in mid-November, late January, and early February. April and May will wind up warmer than normal, while precipitation will be above normal.

**This is a reminder for everyone who lives here full time, new residents, and our part-time residents who are not used to cold weather! We all could have used this reminder before the week of freezing weather!!**

Even though the Farmer's Almanac predicts a warmer than normal winter, other predictions for us are to have a hard winter. It is hard to tell when cold and freezing weather will appear! Last year we saw disastrous freezing the first of November and it happened again this November!! Here are a few suggestions that could help us from having a horrible outcome whenever the freeze come!

**Fuel and Heat:** Check your propane tank fuel level. Don't rely on your propane company to routinely check your tank. As it gets colder, the propane companies get busier! During the winter months, it is a good practice to keep your tank no less than 25% full, higher if you leave your home for extended periods of time during the winter months. Do you have an alternative heat source like a fireplace? If so, make sure your chimney is clean and you have a good supply of seasoned wood.

**Water:** Protect outside spigots and water pipes with insulated covers. If it sounds like there is a possibility of electricity loss, remember that we are on the same circuit as the county jail and therefore we should not be without power for long periods of time. However, as we learned last year, in cases of extreme damage to the county, it could take longer than we would like! And when the electricity goes out, so does the water, so you should have a supply of water on hand for drinking, cooking and to flush toilets. If you plan on being away for an extended period of time, you may want to consider shutting off the water supply and draining the inside water lines. Also, set your thermostat at 50 degrees or above and open cabinet doors where the water pipes are located to prevent freezing.

**Roads:** Our roads are not maintained by the county. If you are concerned about getting out of your home due to snow or ice, make sure you have a supply of ice melt to apply to your porch, sidewalk and driveway.

**Other Staples:** You are advised to keep a supply of bottled water, medications, batteries, flashlights, and non-perishable food items to make your day a little more pleasant.



**FROM THE BOARD and myself, we wish you a safe and VERY MERRY HOLIDAY SEASON**

**FUN THIS TO DO NEAR US!!**

**Light Up Ellijay at the Lions Park is November 24 thru December 30.**

**Merry Mountain Town Festival starts Friday November 28<sup>th</sup> downtown Ellijay at 12pm-5pm with the Parade and lighting of the tree Starting at 6 pm**

\*\*\*\*Barnhill Tree Farm in Dahlonega, choose and cut your Christmas tree at this family-owned Christmas tree farm near Dahlonega. Enjoy free hot chocolate by the fire pit and shop for handcrafted items made from farm-grown products. Pet-friendly. Opens November 22, 2025. **BARNHILL TREES FOR TROOPS**—Barnhill partners with other Georgia farms to donate free Christmas trees to military families in all branches throughout the US. For every \$50 donated to the Trees for Troops jar at our checkout, we will donate a Christmas Tree to go to a military family, or you may sponsor a tree in full on your behalf.

\*\*\*\*Christmas in Lights, November 27- December 23, Mountain Country Christmas in Lights is a holiday treat for the entire family! The Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds will transform into a spectacular, magical holiday light show immersed in Christmas music, arts and crafts, food, fun, entertainment, photo opportunities, and a visit with Santa Claus. Hundreds of new lights plus a Walk Through Lighted Tunnel! Event runs Thursday, Friday, & Saturday from November 27 - December 6th. Open EVERY night from December 11th - 23rd! (closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day) Admission: \$9.00 (Children under 12 Free).

\*\*\*\*Holiday Market ~ Blue Ridge Mountains Arts Association (The Art Center), November 21, 2025 - December 23, 2025, Open Tuesday - Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., We will have a multitude of artistic and handcrafted items for sale, all made by our member artists. So whether it is jewelry, pottery, paintings, or anything in between, they have that unique gift for your holidays.

\*\*\*\* Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberly, November 28, 2025 - December 21, 2025, Blue Ridge Community Theater, 2591 East First Street Blue Ridge, GA [706-632-9191](tel:706-632-9191). A sequel to Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice" set two years after the novel ends, MISS BENNET continues the story, only this time with bookish middle-sister Mary as its unlikely heroine. Mary is growing tired of her role as dutiful middle sister in the face of her siblings' romantic escapades. When the family gathers for Christmas at Pemberley, an unexpected guest sparks Mary's hopes for independence, an intellectual match, and possibly even love.

\*\*\*\*[Live Nativity Drive Thru](#), December 5th-December 7<sup>th</sup>, Mount Moriah Baptist Church, from 6:30pm-8pm. Remember the true meaning of Christmas with a Nativity Drive Thru at [Mount Moriah Baptist Church](#), 4127 Highway 2, just outside of Blue Ridge!

\*\*\*\*Helen Christkindlmarkt, Helen, GA November 29 & 30<sup>th</sup> and December 6 & 7, traditional German event that offers everything from unique gifts and decorations to sweet and savory foods, drinks and treats. Free admission.

\*\*\*\* The Oak Ridge Boys Christmas Celebration Tour, Friday, December 5th, 2025, From 7:00pm to 11:00pm, Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds in Hiawasse, GA

\*\*\*\*Kris Kringle Market Blairsville GA. Saturday Dec 6, 2025, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM over 100 local vendors selling produce, plants, honey, meats & cheeses, baked goods, and unique handmade gifts for everyone on your Christmas list! 290 Farmer's Market Way, Blairsville, GA

\*\*\*\*[Christmas Tour of Homes](#), Sunday, December 7th, from 1pm to 5pm, Fannin County Family Connection, one ticket \$30, 2 for \$50.