

## President's Letter

10 June 2024

### **Hello Fellow Members of the Strawberry Property Owners Association!**

After a rainy and snowy end to the winter of 2023-24, it's been great to see everyone emerge from their hibernation to stretch and enjoy the sunny weather of spring and summer. And no place could be more inviting than our beloved Strawberry, Pinecrest Lake, Sonora Pass, Yosemite, and all of the many other beautiful distractions and attractions of the high Sierra.

I'm writing to catch you up on the work of your association and to **invite you to attend our annual members meeting**. Here are the details:

When: Saturday, 6 July 2024

Time: 10:00-12:00 noon

Arrival and Check-in: 9:30 am

Location: Pinecrest Expedition Academy

30433 Old Strawberry Road

Among our line-up of speakers we expect to have the Honorable Anaiah Kirk, Tuolumne County Supervisor; Chief Gamez, Tuolumne County Fire Chief; representatives of the U.S. Forest Service; Dee Martin, SPOA Vice President and President of the Strawberry Volunteer Fire Department; Kevin McDowell and Charlies Segerstrom representing our first FireWise community; and Dennis Kelley, Web Manager.

We will also have several pop-up tents and displays with information and brochures from various groups available for you after the meeting.

**Your association has a surprise for the Strawberry community this year.** An order has been placed for the creation of nine street signs to cover some of the most well-traveled locations in Strawberry, as well as 10-foot posts to be installed this summer (and possibly as early as July). While these will assist residents and their guests in finding our cabins, the signs will be of great help to first responders in finding us should anyone need assistance in case of emergency. This is one of the ways your dues help to make a project like this possible. Once these signs are installed, the Board is certainly open and interested in installing other signs in Strawberry locations not currently posted. Please let us know if you have suggestions.

The emergency alert alarm funded by Tuolumne County is installed and has been tested. That's the good news. The not so good news is that the testing showed there is still work to do in order to get an alarm that can be heard across the Strawberry-Pinecrest-Cold Springs area. We hope to have more information on this at the annual meeting.

Speaking of emergencies, if you aren't already signed up, I urge you to go to [www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/1170/emergency-alerts](http://www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/1170/emergency-alerts) and get registered with your cell phone number. There is no cost, and you do not have to be a resident of Tuolumne County. What you will get is any emergency alert in the county with regard to wildfires or other emergencies, along with instructions about what to do to evacuate if necessary.

One of the big disappointments of this year's annual meeting is that we continue to be unsuccessful in convincing President Bob Fortino—or any representative of Del Oro Water Company—to attend and speak to

our members. We all know about the aggressive price hikes we've experienced for water in the mountains—and we understand that Del Oro has yet another rate increase proposal ready for the CPUC as soon as the November elections are in the rear view window. In addition to rate hikes, DOWC has failed to fulfill an important commitment to its Strawberry customers in that our water continues to be contaminated by carcinogens called Halo Acidic Acids (HAAs). Our water does not meet California fresh water standards, nor has it made any attempts to address this issue—either publicly with the CPUC or in any communication with Strawberry ratepayers.

I plan to bring a letter addressed to Fortino and the CPUC demanding that Public Utilities Commission refuse any additional rate increases until this matter is corrected. In addition, we will demand that Mr. Fortino plan to visit our group at the 2025 Annual Meeting, as it will have been the first time he's been here to talk to us since at least 2017. If DOWC is so prompt in raising our water rates, they must be equally prompt in addressing clean water standards and facing their customers to explain why these relentless rate increases are justified. If you would, please sign the letter and include your Strawberry address. We will then send the letter to DOWC and the CPUC.

I want to announce that three of our long-time SPOA Board members—Dave Robertson, Ed Elliot, and Jim Pappas—will end their terms of service effective at the end of this month. I ask you to join with me in thanking these dedicated men in serving our community through their board involvement all these years. In each case, they have served for at least ten years, and some much longer than that. This also means that we are in need of new board members! If you have any interest in serving, please approach any of the existing board members who will be in attendance, or write to Secretary Jan Barton at [jb4spoa@gmail.com](mailto:jb4spoa@gmail.com) and let us know.

Finally, I mentioned earlier our street sign project. As you know, SPOA membership is strictly voluntary, but we kindly ask that you **pay your annual dues of \$40 per family** (cheap!) one of two ways: via Zelle with payment made to [108SPOAdues@gmail.com](mailto:108SPOAdues@gmail.com) (accessed through your online bank account) or in person when you register at the annual meeting.

I look forward to seeing you on July 6!

Very sincerely,

Don Barton

President