

ODED'S WEEKLY REPORT

03-13-2026

PAINTING OF MAILBOXES – Here is some great news!! This week, and after a few months of delay, Mr. Tamas Pataki, who needs no introductions, and his crew started painting the project of all mailboxes and mailbox posts in the community. More on this project in next week's report, but for now, please don't be alarmed by the two guys driving around with a golf cart, grinding, and thereafter painting the mailboxes around your house.

RESIDENTS DIRECTORY – More good news, please note that the 2026 Residents Directory is now available! As every year, residents are invited to pick up their directory at the LakeRidge Falls Clubhouse. As previous year, you will not be required to sign your name when picking up a copy. As in the past, this year's directory is provided to you at no cost thanks to the outstanding generosity of three businesses that agreed to advertise with the Association. Please show your support to those small businesses by considering their services. Also, a big thank you to Ms. Jo Mooy for providing us with the amazing cover picture. Please remember that each household is eligible to receive one copy of the directory. If you take more than that, we may need to print more copies, which would result in unnecessary expenditure. Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

ANNUALS – A couple of weeks ago, BrightView Landscape, the Association's landscape maintenance company, replaced the annuals and installed dwarf Pentas in a variety of colors instead. This was done based on the

recommendation of the Landscape Committee. As reported in the past, the University of Florida advises that “[w]hen other plants fade in Florida's hot and humid summers, perennials like Pentas...truly shine. These attractive plants... are a great source of food for hummingbirds and butterflies.”

Now comes the better part of the story. The original recommendation by the Committee was to use 600 6” SunPatiens. Unfortunately, the extremely cold weather during January and February damaged local nurseries' crops.

Nevertheless, and thanks to the leadership of Mrs. Linda Cowett, Landscape Committee's Board liaison, and Ms. Annmarie Locascio, the new Landscape Committee Chairperson, the Association received, at no extra cost, 900, i.e., fifty percent more!, Pentas. The downside, however, is that the Association received 4” annuals instead of 6”. However, considering that it takes a couple of weeks for an annual to reach this size anyway, the greater quantity, and hence the greater coverage, makes this a winning trade-off.

That said, the next change-out is planned to take place during the months of June or July.



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BACK EXIT GATE – Please allow us to start from the bottom line: the back exit gate works flawlessly.

Yes, following last week's Weekly Report, Murphy's Law kicked in as the arm gates acted out for a couple of hours. It took the new gate maintenance company two minutes to determine that the issue was with one of the harnesses of the loop detectors. In super simple terms, the harnesses are the wire plugs that connect the loop detectors to their power source. Apparently, the constant plugging and unplugging of these harnesses caused intermittent electrical issues, which led to a couple of incidents in which the arm gates didn't perform properly. That said, the two harnesses were replaced, to be on the safe side, and the back exit gate has been working without a problem since then. With that said, thank all for their understanding and patience over this matter.

EMERGENCY ONLY GATE – Staying with gates, here is the latest, and hopefully the last, episode in the saga *Unexplained Wonderworld*. For those who may not be familiar with it, here is a [link](#) to the previous episodes. As most know, LakeRidge Falls Community Association has three vehicle entry points:

- **Front Residents Only Lane** and **Guests Only Lane** - manned 24-7 – located off Tuttle Ave.
- **Back Resident Only Gate** - designated for approved residents only – located off Lockwood Ridge Rd.
- **Emergency Only Gate** - designated for emergency vehicles only - located off Lockwood Ridge Rd.

Per Manatee County Code of Ordinances, Section 2-28-2, gated communities are required to have a designated emergency access system that would allow first responders immediate access in case of an emergency. While the code requires a single designated system, LakeRidge Falls, until a few years ago, had three systems on each of its vehicle gates: Remote-Control, SOS, and Knox Box.

- The **Remote-Control System** is a system in which one uses a remote control, similar to a garage door opener, to open the gate.
- The **SOS system** is a system in which one uses the emergency vehicle's Yelp Siren to open the gate.
- The **Knox Box System** is a system in which a unique key is used to open and close the gate.

In 2016, the Association concluded after thorough research that the Remote-Control System was severely compromised. Evidence was collected to show that parcel vans, county trucks, commercial vehicles, and unmarked cars were gaining access to the community using the Remote-Control System's clickers, commonly known as **Emergency Clickers**. In investigating this matter, the Association discovered that anyone could go on Amazon.com and purchase a clicker for a cost of about \$10. As a side note, now for this price one can get two of these clickers. This notion triggered a major concern with the Board of Directors and the Security Committee at the time, as well as the Boards and Committees that followed thereafter.

After all, the Association is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars each year on security measures, some of it for the sole purpose of keeping unwanted individuals from entering the community. Knowing all those measures didn't mean much because they could be bypassed by a widely available and inexpensive device, compelled the Board of Directors to take action on the matter.

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Knowing it holds a fiduciary duty to its members, various Boards of Directors invested much time and effort addressing this matter with Manatee County over the next few years. In general, they pleaded with Manatee County to amend the code that operates the Remote Control System or adopt a new access system. Unfortunately, these efforts have proven to be fruitless... until 2019. If you wonder what happened...well... this is a good time for you to read the previous episodes, again, by clicking [here](#).

By early 2021, decisions were made by various Boards of Directors to disconnect the Remote Control System on both the Residents' Only Back Gate and the Front Gate while requesting all county departments and agencies to use the other two emergency access systems, i.e., SOS and Knox Box Systems, instead.

Regarding the Emergency Only Gate, however, the decision was to continue and have all three emergency access systems. After all, this is a side unseen entrance with low usage, i.e., designated only for the use of emergency vehicles, which makes it relatively easy to monitor with the Association's electronic security measures. But as you may guess by reading this piece, the status quo changed recently.

While a few incidents of unauthorized use of the emergency clicker took place in the past couple of years in that location, the one that took place in December of 2025 was a game-changer. During that incident, the Association observed and documented an unauthorized vehicle, a private sedan carrying a Texas license plate, accessing the community's private property through this Emergency Only Gate. As it did in the past, the Association filed a complaint with Manatee County Code Enforcement in accordance with Manatee County Code Enforcement Section 2-28-2, subsection (6).

However, the response the Association received was mind-blowing, for lack of a better term. In response to the complaint, Code Enforcement indicated that they **"cannot process vehicles with out-of-state license plates."** In simple terms, a person entered the community without permission using an emergency clicker in clear violation of Code Enforcement Section 2-28-2, and no action was taken because this person drove a vehicle that is registered outside the state.

Given that such code violations cannot be reliably enforced, and recognizing that Section 2-28-2, subsection (7) states that **"[t]he provisions of this section are intended to ensure a minimum level of access to emergency vehicles during emergencies and shall not be construed to guarantee the safety of a gated development,"** the Board of Directors, in fulfilling its fiduciary responsibility to protect the safety and security of its members, finds itself compelled to take further action. This action was to notify Manatee County that it will deactivate the emergency clicker access system at the Emergency Only Gate, effective March 1st, 2026, while respectfully requesting that all county emergency staff utilize the SOS and/or the Knox Box Systems, both of which are fully operational.

As advised before, the Association truly hopes this shall be the last episode in this bothersome reality.

Have a quiet and safe weekend,
Oded Neeman, LakeRidge Falls Community Manager