



The Harbor Village Homeowners Association consists of 584 condominiums and apartments, and it is located in Wilmington, Calif., which is in Los Angeles County. Our analysis of their utility bills and our on-site field inspection of their property uncovered the following utility billing overcharges and opportunities for utility expense reductions.

of Water and Power. These electric meters provided electricity to the three pool/spa/recreation area facilities, common-area lighting, irrigation controllers, cable television, private street lighting, and fire alarms. The association was being overcharged \$252 per month in electricity due to the fact that 21 fire alarm meters were being billed on incorrect, commercial electric rate schedules in-

These actual utility cost reductions are the result of either the correction of utility billing errors, or the placement of several of the association's utility accounts on less expensive utility rate schedules.

The association received 32 monthly water/sewer service bills from the Department of Water and Power. These water meters provide all of the recreation-area water, irrigation water, and domestic water to the condominiums located on the property. Two of these water accounts provided individual domestic water to two apartment tenants, and these two water accounts were not the responsibility of the association. We transferred these two water accounts to the responsible parties and obtained reimbursements of \$1,200 from these parties to the association. In addition, the association is now saving \$840 per year in water utility expenses as a result of the elimination of these two water accounts.

The association received 52 monthly electric utility bills from the Department

of Water and Power. These electric meters provided electricity to the three pool/spa/recreation area facilities, common-area lighting, irrigation controllers, cable television, private street lighting, and fire alarms. The association was being overcharged \$252 per month in electricity due to the fact that 21 fire alarm meters were being billed on incorrect, commercial electric rate schedules in-

stead of the correct multi-family, residential electric rate schedule. The association received credit adjustments totaling \$2,052 after the correction of these utility billing errors and is now saving \$3,024 per year in electric utility expenses!

The association was also being overcharged \$106 per month in electricity due to the fact that ten common-area electric meters were being billed on incorrect commercial electric rate schedules, instead of the correct multi-family, residential electric rate schedules. The association received credit adjustments totaling \$3,453 after the correction of these utility billing errors, and is now saving \$1,272 per year in electric utility expenses! Finally, we placed 14 of these electric utility accounts on alternative electric rate schedules available through

the Department of Water and Power. Due to these 14 electric rate schedule changes that we implemented, the association is now saving approximately \$4,800 per year in electric utility expenses!

This utility audit resulted in a total of \$6,705 in reimbursements/credit adjustments and the association's annual utility budget has been reduced by approximately \$840 in water utility costs and \$9,096 in electric utility costs—a grand total of \$9,936 in annual utility cost savings that will continue indefinitely into the future. These actual utility cost reductions are the result of either the correction of utility billing errors, or the placement of several of the association's utility accounts on less expensive utility rate schedules.

You can bet that the extra \$6,705 in credit adjustments, plus the extra \$9,936 kept in the association's reserve accounts each year, will be put to good use, instead of put into the utility companies bank accounts!

Thanks to the foresight, effort and ingenuity of the Harbor Village Homeowners Association board of directors and the property manager at Transpacific Management Services, a utility audit put money into their reserves at no cost whatsoever! In addition, they will continue to realize these utility cost reductions indefinitely, and they can use the utility auditing company on a no-cost retainer type of service, whereby the association's utility bills are continually audited and any utility questions are answered for free.

■ Erin Kelly is Director of Operations for Pacific Utility Audit, which operates in California, Nevada, Oregon and Washington.