

New signs mark entrances to Bridle Path community

By Robyn Flans: Ventura County Star

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The Bridle Path Equestrian Community in Simi Valley knows that perseverance pays off.

For four years the homeowners association has been working to complete design, approval, funding and installation of entrance signs.

On Tuesday, two granite boulder signs, weighing 4,000 pounds each, were installed in the medians off First Street at Nonchalant Drive and at Mellow Lane.

"We, who were active in the process, are so proud that even in tough times, we were able to pull the funds and manpower together to bring our older community up to date and make it more attractive," said Linda Pierce, vice president of the Bridle Path Home Owner's Association. "We hope this is just the beginning of adding more curb appeal to our unique equestrian neighborhood."

In 2007, Jennifer de la Torre, who headed up the events committee, and association board member Juli Weltsch came up with the idea of entrance signs to the equestrian community of 630 homes.

"We looked at every kind of sign possible," Weltsch said. "Wood, slab with a concrete base, everything out there. We decided on the boulders because of the lower maintenance required. They are weather proof, nobody can steal them, we can have them graffiti coated and they are also inherently characteristic of the Bridle Path neighborhood, which is what we liked most about it."

A design contest was then held — Weltsch and Marilyn Olsen won the contest.

"Marilyn Olsen sent me a picture of a design she saw and I took that picture and worked with an artist and revised it into the final design," said Weltsch.

In January of this year, the Bridle Path board proceeded to allocate the funding and work with the city to complete the project.

"This is very positive for the community," said Ronda Apodaca, Bridle Path HOA supporting staff. "These are tough economic times and we felt if everyone pooled our money together as a community this would be something positive and it would also help our aesthetics and our property value by investing in and improving our community, which is over 35 years old."

The community members managed to raise the funds by providing homeowner services themselves, instead of hiring outside contractors.

"We all pay HOA dues, which goes to maintaining our trails and our arena," said Apodaca. "If we were capable of doing certain jobs, we did them, instead of paying somebody. I painted jumps, for instance. My husband, Bill, fixed gates instead of paying someone else."

Together, the two signs cost \$10,800, which included the graffiti-protection coating. The crane to install them cost an additional \$2,000.

Next year, two more signs are to be installed.



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