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Common Ways to Save with Community Security

BY BRIE SHOUPPE

t is sometimes thought there is a fine balance between saving money and having effective security systems at a community. Yes and no. It's no secret that most security systems are an investment by an association. This investment is often made with the plan to save money in other areas by utilizing the equipment

or security methods in place. On the surface, however, there are a few common ways that many communities save money with one or more security solutions strategically placed in the neighborhood.

Gated or not, many planned communities in Florida have amenities for all residents to use. Typically this is a pool and clubhouse, but it is not uncommon to find a fitness center, tennis court, or other amenity that the residents contribute dues to maintain and use. So what are the most common issues that communities have with these amenities? Trespassing and/or vandalism.

Whether it's pool furniture thrown in the deep end or dish soap in the hot tub, the damage that some communities experience at their amenity starts to add up. Those examples aren't even the worst of it. Without a proper security system in place, a community is likely to continue experiencing these incidents and deal with the costs to clean up the damage.

If access control isn't already installed, it should be. Managing access to an amenity has far more benefits than just keeping trespassers out, but that is certainly one pro. What about the people who hop the fence, though? This is where the real investment comes into play.

Implementing an active monitoring system for the pool is one of the most cost

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effective methods for deterring trespassing and preventing vandalism. Think of it like an invisible tripwire, and when that line is crossed during closed hours, an alert is sent to a real person who can remotely view the area. If trespassers are indeed at the amenity, the virtual guard can speak directly with those people and demand they leave. This type of proactive system prevents vandalism before the damage can be done, saving the community associated repair costs.

An active video surveillance system requires an initial installation investment and monitoring fee; both will vary based on the size of the system. However, this effective solution is also more affordable than hiring a person to physically oversee an amenity all night, and many associations find the system pays for itself with the incidents that are prevented.

For gated communities, the most common and frustrating costs are often related to gate damage. There are not any exceptions; if you have a gated community, you will have gate damage. While there are ways to prevent (not eliminate) the occurrences, it is best to have a method in place to recoup the damage costs.