



# THE POSTING

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A TLMA Code Enforcement Monthly Newsletter

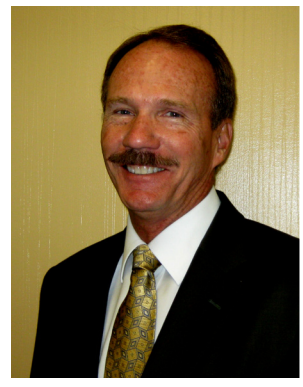
## Mobile Home Park Task Force in Action

*District 4 Officer Frank Mendez*

In the recent months, the Code Enforcement officers have been working with mobile home park owners and residents in addressing immediate health and safety concerns. At this time the department launched the "Safe Parks Now" program to address quality of life issues within mobile home parks in the Coachella Valley. In order to address the health and safety issues found within these parks, a task force was formed. The task force is a collaborative effort between state and county agencies, including Code Enforcement, Housing & Community Development, Catholic Charities, Economic Development Agency, Housing Authority, and the California Rural Legal Assistance.

To date, this group of park inspectors has conducted inspections of 17 unpermitted mobile home parks. The outcome of the inspections has been very positive since the team has identified and addressed numerous life-threatening conditions, such as exposed, energized wires and uncovered cesspools. The diligent efforts of the task force has resulted in these types of health and safety hazards are being eliminated, and the residents, including many children, are not being subjected to ongoing health risks. During the inspections, property owners are also being educated concerning their options and presented with programs available from County agencies, which will assist them to bring their properties into compliance.

In working with the property owners, Code Enforcement has gained significant progress in many of these properties, including the removal of inoperative vehicles, tons of trash, and substandard structures — all through voluntary compliance. According to Officer Frank Mendez, a task force member, "Ultimately our goal is to improve the quality of life in the community." The "Safe Parks Now" program, which is vital to the well-being of the park occupants, will enable Code Enforcement to develop a long-term partnership with the park's community members, be a positive step toward safer parks for our community members and their children today, and promise safer and cleaner parks tomorrow.



**Director John Boyd**

### Mission Statement:

*"To enhance public safety and the quality of life in partnership with communities through fair enforcement of laws and codes."*

### Code Enforcement Administration

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A drastic change in this mobile home park

## A Foreclosed Property with a Happy Ending



Neighbors enjoy seeing this house in restoration

### **District 2 Officer Michael Romero**

Abandoned and distressed homes have reached epic proportions in Riverside County. Often times, when Code Enforcement officers contact the banks, lenders, or those holding title, their directives to maintain the property in a way that is consistent with the surrounding occupied homes tend to be ignored. From time to time, those that purchase or rent a foreclosed home may put a minimal amount of effort into fixing up the property.

Officer Romero managed a code enforcement case that had a slightly different outcome. According to Romero, "The property was bank owned and recently sold at an auction." When Officer Romero made contact with the new owner, he was quite pleased with his willingness to obtain rehabilitation permits to repair the structural defects. "The house was substandard and a dangerous nuisance to the neighborhood," remembers Officer Romero. The new owner is well on his way to remodeling his new property and giving it a fresh new look!

Thanks to the new owner's follow through, the neighbors on this street will now have a good reason to turn their heads and look as they drive by this beautiful restoration in process.

For more information regarding the Distressed and Abandoned Residential Program, contact your local Code Enforcement office or visit our website at [www.foreclosureregistration.org](http://www.foreclosureregistration.org).

## Mead Valley Grant Program - a Huge Success

### **District 1 Community Improvement Specialist Angela Boone-Porcher & Code Enforcement Technician Sue Rush**

Code Enforcement's Community Improvement Program has been very successful in receiving money from Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, through EDA, to help families in need improve the safety and appearance of their properties. These funds, made available through the Voluntary Public Nuisance Abatement Program, provide a level of assistance to qualified communities not otherwise available through other code enforcement programs.

Mead Valley was the recipient of a \$100,000 CDBG award on July 1, 2008. Since implementation, Code Enforcement staff members have been canvassing the neighborhoods, holding community meetings, and talking to as many residents as they can to promote this most worthwhile program. Community Improvement Specialist Angela Boone-Porcher, along with Code Enforcement Technician Sue Rush, have been able to provide cleanup assistance to 42 property owners in the Mead Valley community.

Dramatic improvements to the quality of life for these residents were evident as 24 substandard mobile homes were removed, as well as over 2,100 cubic yards of waste. (That's about fifty-three 40-yard dumpsters full of trash!) According to Community Improvement Supervisor Susana Orozco, the initial Mead Valley CDBG award has been spent already, and a request has been made for additional funding, which according to Code Enforcement's Administrative Services Officer Beth Crawford, "Is essential to assisting people in Mead Valley and allowing us to continue the momentum in this community."



Once filled with trash and overgrown brush, this property is completely clear



## Cement Contractor Cleans Up Spill



This area had a serious cement spillage



Pollution effects everything

### **District 3 Officer Ron Welch**

Pollution in any form, whether airborne or on the ground, can pose a serious health risk to anyone exposed to its toxicity. With the passing of the Federal Clean Water Act, Code Enforcement began wearing the hat of an environmental enforcement officer.

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), authorized by the Clean Water Act, controls water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants into waters of the United States. Code Enforcement now regularly receives complaints regarding the illegal discharge of pollutants as a result of the heightened awareness of the destruction that pollutants have on our environment.

One complaint was received from several sources, including the Transportation Department, the Pine Cove Water District, and several concerned citizens from the

Pine Cove mountain community. "The complaint was for cement spillage from a construction site," recalls Officer Ron Welch. "I notified the California Fish and Game Department, and together we responded the following day. We found that the contractor had been pouring some cement for a residential foundation and allowed the spillage to run down the roadway and into the stream bed."

After his initial discovery, Officer Welch immediately notified the Building and Safety Department, which put a "lock" on the building project. The "lock" essentially put a halt to any future building inspections until the concrete spillage was cleaned up. According to Officer Welch, after the contractors learned their project had been "locked," and that they might be prosecuted by the Fish and Game Department, they expedited the cleanup process, cleaning 100% of the

surrounding area and installing all of the required control measures to contain any future runoff.

Officer Welch stated, "This is one of many examples of the multi – departmental efforts and successes toward preventing area contamination from construction sites. Riverside County NPDES and Code Enforcement are working together countywide to protect the community abroad."

### **A special thanks to:**

Warden Matt Shanley of the California Fish and Game Department, Ryan Ragetti of the County Transportation Department, and Gary Shopshear of the Building and Safety Department for their assistance in getting this environmental pollutant cleaned up. For more information regarding illegal pollutant discharge, please contact your local Code Enforcement office.

## Code Assists Senior Citizen with Neighborhood Nuisance

### **District 5 Officer Lori Lyon**

The story you are about to read falls right in line with the old saying: "Out with the bad, in with the good." Officer Lori Lyon responded to a call from an elderly Homeland resident, who was aghast at the filthy condition of a neighboring property. Not only was the property an eyesore, but the tenants also played loud music, disturbing the peace and quiet of the surrounding properties.

"When I arrived at the location, I observed scattered items including beer cans, overturned lawn furniture, toys, boxes, papers, and other

miscellaneous pieces of trash," said Officer Lyon. "But what really caught my eye was a large pile of dead tree branches and a concrete fire pit located under a tree with very low branches." When Officer Lyon returned to the office, she began a diligent search of the property records to locate the owner. Being successful in her endeavors, Officer Lyon contacted the property owner, who was more than willing to cooperate in getting the property cleaned up.

Not too long after their initial conversation, Officer Lyon remembers receiving a call from the property owner. "I

was pleased to hear that the owner had completed the cleanup of the property." But the owner didn't stop there. In addition to the cleanup, the owner also evicted the tenant, filled in the fire pit, and trimmed up the low hanging tree branches.

"This property had been disrupting the neighbors' lives, making them feel unsafe in their own homes and worried when they were away," recalls Officer Lyon. Thanks to the conscientious efforts of Officer Lyon and the immediate assistance from the property owner, the peace and quiet of this rural community has once again been restored.



At this property the tenant was evicted, fire pit filled, low branches trimmed, and all rubbish was removed!

## Suspect Leads Officers to Substandard House



**District 3 Senior Officer Lionel Martinez**

Code Enforcement and local law enforcement agencies often work together for the common good of the citizens they serve. Referrals from law enforcement agencies concerning code enforcement violations occur on an ongoing basis. The story leading up to this particular referral from the Hemet Police Department is rather interesting.

A home robbery invasion occurred in the city of Hemet on September 28, 2008. Hemet Police Department responded to the location, and upon arrival, the suspect fled the location on foot. A lengthy foot pursuit ensued. Hemet Police Department chased the suspect three blocks through backyards, over fences, and leading out of the city and into Riverside County jurisdiction. The suspect ran into his house,

locking the door behind him. Hemet police made entry through the rear of the residence, apprehending the suspect in the living room.

In some instances, this would have been the end of the story, but not in this case, said Senior Code Enforcement Officer Lionel Martinez. "Hemet Police Department was keen enough to know there were some major alterations to the dwelling, resulting in some very serious substandard conditions." Riverside County Code Enforcement was called out to address the hazardous violations. Officer Martinez, accompanied by Code Enforcement Officer Brett Pollard, conducted a thorough inspection of the structure.

"We found an illegal door cut through a load bearing wall leading into the garage, which could put the structural integrity of the home at risk,"

said Officer Martinez. The officers also observed hazardous electrical wires to the service box, bare wires in the garage, vent and seismic straps not properly attached to the water heater, and a breach in the fire wall separating the garage from the main house.

Notices were issued to the property owner, which will require that the interior modifications adhere to current building code standards. In addition, all electrical hazards must be corrected, along with the other code violations observed.

Senior Officer Martinez summed up his experience this way, "Not only did this person commit a heinous crime, but he also jeopardized the welfare and safety of others who lived around him."



Substandard home with dangerous wiring



## A Successful Fusion of Department Resources



Hiding place for illegal dumping is gone

**District 5 Supervisor Marr Christian**

For several months, officers from the Special Enforcement Team have been responding to dumping complaints on Post Road in Good Hope. As a somewhat isolated dirt road with overgrown weeds and vegetation offering concealment, it was very attractive to illegal dumpers. Officers found yard waste, tires, furniture, and slaughtered animal remains at the dumpsite. It was difficult to investigate the dumping because it was thrown into the weeds and low tree branches, making it inaccessible. The location was cleaned up repeatedly and then new dumping would take place.

Officers Ed Torres and Ryan Dolan contacted Community Improvement Specialist Chaka Ferrell and leaned on her expertise and wisdom. Chaka was able to not only have the smelly, rotting trash cleaned up, she even had the weeds and overgrowth removed with the use of Community Development Block Grant Funds – Supported by Supervisor Marion Ashley's office and the Riverside County Economic Development Agency. Now, the area is more open and visible. Since then, no new dumping has occurred.

Thanks to the funding that has been provided for the Good Hope Impact Plan, the area has remained clean. Officers remain vigilant, patrolling the area regularly in hopes of prosecuting any dumpers who may return to the location. Teamwork at its best!



## Neighborhood Watch Group Becomes Proactive

### **District 5 Supervisor Mary Overholt**

The vision of the Code Enforcement Department is to develop, establish, and maintain "sustainable healthy neighborhoods." A small community outside of the city of Desert Hot Springs, known as the B-Bar-H Ranch, has taken a positive step toward developing their community as a sustainable healthy neighborhood. Supervisor Mary Overholt explains how the sustainable neighborhood idea became a reality. "Area residents recently flagged down Code Enforcement Officer Pike while he was in the area responding to code complaints. The residents asked many questions regarding Code Enforcement, County code requirements and penalties for non-compliance."

Armed with this valuable information, the residents decided to begin spreading the word. Supervisor Overholt recalls, "The community group drafted a newsletter and distributed a copy to each of the 180 homes in the B-Bar-H Ranch area, encouraging voluntary compliance with County codes prior to the commencement of a Code Enforcement action. They even went as far as setting up an online blog to encourage discussion and share information about ways in which residents could preserve their quality of life." And to top it all off, the community organized their very own Neighborhood Watch program to help keep the spark alive.

So, what started out as a simple impromptu meeting with Officer Pike along the side of the road, has blossomed into an organized effort aimed at self-educating the residents of the B-Bar-H Ranch community concerning ways in which they can develop, establish, and maintain a sustainable healthy neighborhood. Supervisor Overholt wishes to pay special thanks to Officer Pike for taking the time to encourage the residents and to Ms. Anna Miller (*pictured above on the far right*) for her role in coordinating the guest speakers for the Neighborhood Watch planning meeting.



DHS Community Cleanup event. Back row left right: Officer Anthony Green, Leg. Assistant Steven Hernandez, community member, Officer Tom McMullen. Front row: community members

## Voluntary Compliance on the Rise in Home Gardens

### **District 2 Officer Diana Parra**

Code Enforcement officers encounter incidents of illegal construction routinely throughout their workday. Many times people are not aware of the code requirements for construction. Code Enforcement Officer Diana Parra ran across such a case where the property owner had constructed a two-family dwelling unit, commonly referred to as a duplex, on their property without the requisite building permits. "I met the property owners and advised them that the duplex was illegally constructed," recalls Officer Parra.

"I was concerned about the safety of the occupants since the electrical, gas, and other elements of the building were

never inspected by the County." Once the property owner realized that the building was illegal, he began efforts to tear it down. As a gesture of good will, and in the spirit of cooperation, Officer Parra contacted Angel Olivo, the department's Community Improvement Specialist assigned to District 2, for assistance with the demolition project. Angel Olivo was able to provide the property owner with five roll-off dumpsters free of charge, which were used in transporting the demolition debris to the landfill.

When asked how the residents of Home Gardens are responding to illegal construction issues, Officer Parra said, "The responses to the requests to remove illegal

construction have been very positive. A majority of the residents are more than willing to do what it takes to make their property code compliant. I am finding more and more people in this community want to do what is right. Having worked in the Home Gardens area for one year, many residents are now bringing their properties into compliance with little or no intervention from Code Enforcement."

Thanks to the hard working Code Enforcement staff and the effective education and outreach programs put on by Community Improvement through the Home Gardens Impact Plan. Home Gardens is on the road toward becoming a sustainable healthy neighborhood.



Owner demolished this illegal structure



## Protecting the Public from Themselves



### **District 3 Officer Keith Ross**

The first action phrase you will read in the Code Enforcement Department’s mission statement is “To enhance public safety...” Sometimes Code Enforcement officers must enforce codes and ordinances in order to protect property owners from dangerous conditions caused by the owners themselves. Code Enforcement Officer Keith Ross was involved with an investigation concerning severe hazardous living conditions. Because of the serious nature of the violations and a history for non-compliance, Officer Ross decided to put together a task force to address the substandard living conditions.



Tampering with the electrical meter can lead to fire, injury, or death

Ross recalls, “I contacted Southern California Edison’s Revenue Protection Unit because I had reason to believe someone may have tampered with the electrical meter. I also called out Riverside County’s Environmental Health specialists to address raw sewage and household refuse violations.” According to reports, the occupants were burying their household trash on their property instead of properly disposing of their refuse at a county landfill or other approved waste collection site. Once on-site, the task force swung into action and addressed a multitude of violations including hazardous electrical, unapproved recreational vehicle occupancy, the storage of hazardous materials, the burying and burning of trash, and improper sewage disposal in the form of a makeshift bathroom facility.



With the assistance of Southern California Edison, the electric meter was removed to eliminate the hazardous electrical condition and prevent a possible fire. According to Officer Ross, there had been at least two structural fires on this property in recent years. The Environmental Health specialists addressed the raw sewage issue and were able to chemically treat affected areas. The Riverside Sheriff’s Department accompanied the task force and kept the peace while staff performed their duties. The property occupants were issued criminal citations and will have to appear in court and answer the charges brought against them.

At the end of the day, Officer Ross and the team of enforcement professionals abated several hazardous conditions that could have ended in physical injury or even the loss of life. Officer Ross wishes to pay special thanks to Southern California Edison representative Robert Richter, Environmental Health Specialists Heidi Barrios and Jason Roy, and the Sheriff’s Department for their role in providing public safety enhancement to Riverside County residents.

## Together Everyone Achieves More



### **District 2 Officer Jane Tate**

Andrew Carnegie once said, “Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.” The teamwork exhibited by Officer Jane Tate and Community Improvement Specialist Angel Olivo definitely fits this mold to a tee.





CDBG program used to remove materials, trash, & debris

It all started when Officer Tate approached Specialist Olivo with a difficult code enforcement case. “The case involved a substantial amount of outside storage of materials, trash, and debris,” recalls Tate. “I remember the property owner telling me they didn’t have the funds to clean it up.” Tate, an experienced officer in District 2, knew this was not the end of the road for the owner. She immediately sought the assistance of Community Improvement. “I know that Community Improvement has resources to help families in need clean up their property.” Officer Tate wasted no time in approaching Specialist Angel Olivo with her situation. The moment she heard the information, Specialist Olivo wasted no time and contacted the property owner. After meeting with the owner and explaining the various programs available, Specialist Olivo was able to sign up the owner for the Community Development Block Grant program.

Working together, Officer Tate and Specialist Olivo pooled resources and eventually got the property cleaned up. The property owner couldn’t be happier! Officer Tate wanted to give special thanks to Community Improvement Specialist Angel Olivo for coming through again to help clean up the community in Rubidoux. I think we owe a level of gratitude to both staff members for showing us the effects of good teamwork.

# November 2008 Calendar of Events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Clean Money Cleanup Mesa Verde Cleanup Lakeland Village Cleanup
2	3	4	5	6	7	8 Thousand Palms Fair Cabazon Cleanup
9	10	11  <b>Veteran's Day</b> <b>Offices Closed</b>	12	13	14	15 Ripley Cleanup & Kickoff Event Mead Valley Tire Event
16	17	18	19	20	21	22 Desert Hot Springs Kickoff
23	24	25	26	27  <b>Thanksgiving</b> <b>Offices Closed</b>	28 <b>Holiday</b> <b>Offices</b>	29 Clean Money Cleanup
30						



## Daylight Savings Time Ends Sunday, November 2, 2008



## Dilapidated Dairy Site Receives Immediate Attention

**District 2 Officer Donna Payne**

One-by-one dairies have moved out, making way for new residential and commercial development in the fast growing community of Eastvale. Some dairy sites, however, have remained undeveloped; the abandoned structures soon becoming targets for vandalism. These old dairy sites become magnets for illegal dumpers.

One such property caught the attention of Code Enforcement Officer Donna Marie Payne. "When I conducted the initial inspection," recalls Officer Payne, "I found five

substandard buildings, along with copious amounts of trash and debris, covering the 22-acre parcel." After researching the property records, Officer Payne learned that the property was recently purchased at a trustee sale.

Armed with current property ownership information, Officer Payne was able to contact the Real Estate Owned (REO) supervisor responsible for managing this property. "After speaking with the property manager, they agreed to take immediate action to remove all the buildings and trash from the site," said Payne. The property manager hired a

demolition crew and began working to raze the substandard structures. A contractor specializing in the removal of hazardous waste was called to the site to remove barrels of waste oil abandoned by the prior owners.

"I was amazed and pleased with the expedient cleanup and the end result," says Jim McMennamin, a local developer and contractor. The bank has since fenced the entire property and is in the process of installing "No Dumping" signs around the perimeter of the parcel.



Real Estate Owned (REO) property gets cleaned up



# Riverside County's Code Enforcement Department's 1st Annual Neighborhood Conference is a Success



Our neighborhoods start with our families. As such, all were welcome at the Neighborhood Conference.



Code Enforcement Director John Boyd expresses his gratitude for all the dedicated community leaders and volunteers in attendance.

## **Administration** Senior Officer Kenneth King

On Saturday, October 25, 2008, the County of Riverside Code Enforcement Department held the First Annual Neighborhood Conference in Palm Desert. "Community Partnerships for Sustainable Neighborhoods" was the theme of the conference, and as such workshops were held for community members on Asset Based Community Development, Foreclosures, Making Meetings Work, Lush and Efficient Landscaping, Living with Diversity in your Community and 12 Steps of Emergency Preparedness.

Numerous public and private organizations provided information for the participants throughout the day. Lunch and activities for children were provided, and residents were offered transportation to the event if necessary.

Richard Campanaro, the keynote speaker for the conference, presented the "Broken Windows Theory" as well as strategies for transforming your life and your community. When surveyed, the majority of the participants stated that this presentation was powerful and the highlight of the conference.

In addition to our innovative Community Impact Plans, this conference is another method for our Department to establish and maintain a beneficial relationship with our communities which we serve. We will continue to work with these community stakeholders to educate and empower residents to improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods and to establish sustainable and healthy communities, while making the best use of all our resources.

Due to the success of this first Neighborhood Conference plans are already in process for next years event which will include more information and strategies to assist residents and further our efforts to provide our valuable services throughout the unincorporated communities in the County of Riverside.

## What the Community is Saying...

“ Helped to educate me on the simplicity of empowering residents to effect change.

Excellent presentation with lots of ideas to share with my community.

Very well organized, please come back next year. I will tell my neighbors to come.

Very informative...

Code Enforcement did a great job... Lots of good information.



” Keynote speaker Richard Campanaro's presentation on the "Broken Windows Theory" received rave reviews.