

The MHCSO is responsible for documenting and covering any graffiti on Mountain House property. When called, the Sheriff's Office will respond but the likelihood is it will be deferred to the MHCSO. The MHCSO does keep a record of all graffiti reported including pictures for later identification and possible legal action against violators. The MHCSO is working hard to find the graffiti, document the graffiti and coordinate clean up efforts. If you spot graffiti, please contact the MHCSO to report it. Efforts to instruct the School District of how the teachers and principals can help reduce graffiti are also underway and I would like to thank the Lammersville School District for their assistance.

Ideas to combat graffiti are being discussed between the Sheriff's Office and the MHCSO. Some of these ideas include greater use of surveillance equipment; passage of aggressive anti-graffiti ordinances allowing for violators to be held civilly responsible for all costs associated with the graffiti, including: the reporting, documentation and removal, and reimbursement for any rewards given to those reporting the activity. Another thought is the construction of a graffiti wall that anyone would be able to use barring any gang graffiti or obscene language. The wall would be covered periodically creating a new surface. The wall would be monitored and violations of the "no gang and obscene language use" would be sent for criminal complaint and civil litigation.

In ending, we all recognize and are concerned with the issues of graffiti. If you are a parent, then spend some time talking to your child about what constitutes graffiti and why it is so destructive to a neighborhood. Working together, thinking "out side the wall" we can greatly reduce the affect graffiti has within Mountain House.

On a separate and more pleasant note, National Night Out was August 5, 2008.

Mountain House citizens worked hard to form, as of now, 19 neighborhood watch groups. Of those groups at least nine hosted block parties. It was exciting to see the level of participation from the citizens of Mountain House. The Sheriff's Office had the pleasure of being able to join in the block parties at all nine locations. In attendance for the Sheriff's Office were several of the Mountain House Deputies, Patrol Deputies, STARS and Sheriff Steve Moore. STARS supplied many of the children with coloring books, crayons, Sheriff's wrist bands and stickers among other items.

During the block parties the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office and California State Senator Codgill recognized Mountain House Neighborhood Watch Liaison and Captain Ruth Figueroa with Certificates of Appreciation for her on-going involvement in Neighborhood Watch, helping it become a hugely successful program in Mountain House. I would like to personally thank Ruth and all the Neighborhood Watch Captains for becoming

involved in Mountain House and committing to working with the Sheriff's Office to maintain Mountain House as a premier community to live, raise a family and build a future.

As Lieutenant in Charge of the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office Mountain House Police Services, I may be reached at (209)468-4150 or jwilliams@sjgov.org.



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SEPTEMBER 2008

Neighborhood News

MOUNTAIN HOUSE COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

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Mountain House celebrates its 2nd Annual Kite Festival at the new Questa Park

Addressing Graffiti Abatement and Celebrating National Night Out in Mountain House

By Lieutenant John Williams,
San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office

Graffiti on the bridges! Graffiti on the Pavilion! Graffiti at the Park!

The Mountain House Community Services District (MHCSO), the Sheriff's Office and the citizens of Mountain House have all observed the graffiti within Mountain House. While the amount of graffiti within Mountain House is less than many areas, it is still a blight issue. It is also a quality of life issue and is problematic. As Mountain House partners, we fully realize this is an issue that must be tackled.

Why should we be concerned about graffiti? Graffiti can range from smiley faces, to nicknames, to tagging crews, to gang turf designation. It destroys the property it is on. It takes our stretched tax dollars to rid the areas of graffiti. Besides being an eye sore, it does raise perceptions of lack of neighborhood caring, lack of law enforcement and higher crime areas.

To begin to address the concerns of graffiti, we must be honest and recognize that the graffiti is coming from within Mountain House. What does this mean? Families within Mountain House are responsible for the graffiti. I say this because graffiti is being done by kids of various ages who live in Mountain House; therefore those families whose children are causing the graffiti are responsible. Combating graffiti therefore begins with families and children. Families need to know they can be held financially responsible for the damage and clean up of graffiti. Parents and school officials should watch for graffiti, monikers and drawings on notebooks, school papers, letters and other media. If it is seen and observed, discussions with those individuals need to take place to ensure it doesn't happen in the public, causing damage.



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Mountain House Community Notes...

Getting Involved at the Mountain House Branch Library

If you are interested in supporting the Library and/or joining the Friends of the Library, visit the branch at 579 Wicklund Crossing, Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 3:00 - 7:00 pm, Tuesday and Saturday 10:00 - 3:00 pm or call (209) 937-8221 or (866) 805-7323 (READ).

Save the Date:

■ Saturday, September 20

3rd Annual Mountain House 5K & 10K Fun Run and Walk starts at 8:00 am, Central Community Park

Join us for some fun with your family and friends. We also offer a free ¼ and ½ mile children's run.



Last year the Mountain House Chicken tried to steal the kid's race but not before he pulled a hamstring. Come out and see what happens this year! Also, we are still looking for volunteers. If you are interested in helping out, please e-mail Jerry.Torres at jtorres@sjgov.org.

3rd Annual Summers' End Celebration 11:00 am - 3:00 pm, Central Community Park

Don't forget to stay after the 5K and 10K Run for the Summers' End Celebration. You are invited to enjoy the many amenities the park has to offer as well as bounce houses, face painting, games, food and getting acquainted with local community services.

Low-cost Rabies Vaccine

1:30 pm - 3:30 pm, Central Community Park

The San Joaquin County Animal Control Department is offering a low-cost rabies vaccine clinic. Costs for rabies shots will be \$6 per pet, other shots available for \$9 each. Cash only. Bring your dogs on a leash and cats in a carrier. Dog licenses will also be available to purchase. \$6 for each spay or neutered pet (certificate required) or \$12 for unaltered pets.

■ Thursdays, October 2 & October 23

MHCSO Board Candidates Forum 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm, Wicklund Elementary Multi-Purpose Room

The Tracy Press is hosting two MHCSO Board Candidates forums. Come learn more about your candidates before voting in this historic election.

■ Saturday, October 25

Mountain House Mothers' Club Harvest Festival 10:00 am - 3:00 pm, Wicklund Park

Come join the Mountain House Mothers' Club for their annual Costume Parade and Harvest Festival.

A Word from the Operations and Maintenance Manager



Harpal Singh, Operations and Maintenance Manager

When it comes to keeping the Mountain House community's infrastructure running like a well-oiled machine, the Operations and Maintenance Department is really where the rubber meets the road. My department is responsible for making sure that the Mountain House water and wastewater treatment plants; the traffic and street lights and even the new interactive fountain in Central Community Park are operating properly and serving the community. In addition, we are responsible for keeping the community looking nice. This includes overseeing landscape and roadway maintenance as well as the refuse collection. Our department also works to clean up any graffiti on public places. As you can imagine it is not an easy job, but by teaming with Mountain House residents we can certainly be more effective and efficient.

First and foremost, it is important to know how you can contact us with any questions or concerns. You can always call the MHCSO office at (209) 831-2300, but what about those times that you might notice a street light is out and the MHCSO office is closed? We realize that you might not remember to call the next morning. That is why we provide Request Partner. Log on to the official MHCSO website at www.ci.mountainhouse.ca.us/ and you will see a link to the on-line service request at the bottom of the home page. It is relatively easy to place your request for service from this site at anytime.

While we work hard to address every issue as soon as possible, we also try to bundle service calls to save the community money. For repairs such as street light outages or potholes, we typically will group these repairs to avoid several separate service calls. It costs approximately \$300 to repair one street light. By grouping many individual street light repairs for a single call, we reduce the overall cost to the community. However, we also believe that safety is of the utmost importance, so we typically address these issues within 3 to 5 days of notification.

One of the best ways residents can help keep the community looking beautiful is by following the Park Rules and Regulations. Park rules are available on the official MHCSO website, but here are a few that are worthy of mention here:

- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited in the parks, except by prior approval through a special event permit issued by the MHCSO.
- No skateboards or roller skates are allowed in any of the parks.
- No glass containers are allowed in the parks.
- Dogs must be on a leash, and make sure you clean up after them.
- No balloons within the fountain area. They can jam up the filters and water balloons can hurt children.
- No pets within the fountain area.

Also, for the sake of your children's health, please do not allow them to drink the water from the interactive fountain.

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A Large Number of Mountain House Resident Throw Their Hat into the Ring

The historic step toward independence for Mountain House took on epic portions when 18 residents decided to run for the Mountain House Community Services District (MHCSO) Board this November.

"It is rewarding to see residents step up to the plate at a crucial time in the development of Mountain House," said Paul M. Sensibaugh, General Manager of the MHCSO. "This election is of historic proportions."

"This election is of historic proportions."

In July prior to the candidate filing deadline, the MHCSO hosted a community meeting for potential Board candidates. Supervisor Leroy Ornellas, MHCSO General Manager Paul Sensibaugh, Special District Counsel Michael McGrew and MHCSO Financial Consultant Dwane Milnes provided short presentations and answer questions from potential Board candidates.

"We wanted to do our best to make sure that everyone understood what would be required of them as Board members and what it would take to run a campaign," said Sensibaugh.

The MHCSO Board Candidates include:

Timothy George MacDonald	Nichica F. Smith
Andy Su	Doug Stevens
Jim Lamb	Aaron M. Lehtikoinen, Sr.
Thomas A. Lee, III	Carl Hutchings
Warren Fortes	M.L. Gordon
Michael E. Klinkner	Martin Ngozi Kanu
Venita Norman	Eric Payne
Manny Penn	Matthew Balzarini
Cherlye Bernard-Shaw	Bernice King Tingle

The Tracy Press will be hosting two MHCSO Candidate Forums to be held on October 2 and October 23 from 7 to 9 pm at Wicklund Elementary School. Mountain House residents will have the opportunity to meet and hear from the Board candidates. For more information regarding the forums, please contact the Tracy Press.

continued from previous page **Manager's Word**

We are very excited by the tremendous activity currently happening with the Neighborhood Watch groups. We know this type of involvement and commitment by Mountain House citizens is what makes our community a very special place to live. We also need your help preventing graffiti. Please make sure you take the time to read Lieutenant John Williams' article regarding graffiti prevention.

As always, it is a pleasure to serve this wonderful community of Mountain House. If you have any concerns/questions, you can reach me or my staff at (209) 831-2300.

After hours emergency call numbers:

[List SWWC, Sheriff, Fire, etc. ---check w/Harpal]



Autumn is the Perfect Time to do some Landscape Maintenance

By Jerry Torres, Neighborhood Administrator

As we approach the fall season, you can take advantage of the cooler weather to take care of a few landscaping items which will not only benefit you but also your neighborhood:

FRONT YARD LANDSCAPING: Per the MHCSO Master Restrictions, each owner should maintain their front yard landscaping in a neat and attractive manner. This landscaping responsibility extends to the landscaped strip of land located between the sidewalk and the street known more commonly as the "park strip" and the trees located in the park strip. All grass, hedges, shrubs, trees, and flowerbeds should be mowed, trimmed, pruned, weeded, and fertilized at reasonable and regular intervals. The MHCSO criterion for overgrown grass is the presence of "seed stalks" in the lawn. Under normal growing conditions it takes 2-3 weeks for seed stalks to appear.

WATER CONSERVATION: Adjust your sprinkler system to water at dawn and at dusk. Watering during the middle of the day can cause lawn burn and result in higher water usage due to heat and evaporation. With the warm summer weather ending residents will revert to lower water allotments. Beginning in October 2008 and ending in March 2009, each residence can use up to 12 units of water a month (1 unit = 880 gallons). Higher water usage will result in residents being billed at a higher rate tier. Many varieties of lawn and landscaping become dormant during the fall and winter season. Residents are encouraged to adjust their watering frequencies and lengths to account for these seasonal changes.

TREE MAINTENANCE: Per the Master Restrictions, residents are responsible for the care and upkeep of the trees planted in their yards and within the park strip frontage of their property. Most of the tree varieties found in Mountain House are deciduous. These trees lose their leaves and become dormant in the fall and winter months. November and December provide prime opportunities for residents to prune and re-stake their trees. Pruning lower limbs during the winter will cause less stress to the tree and will encourage growth during the spring. Trees that are leaning due to the strong spring and summer winds should be re-staked to encourage upright growth. If you are unsure on how to take these actions, the MHCSO encourages residents to consult with a professional landscaper for assistance.