Sticking it to the Flu – County Efforts to Keep Employees Healthy Gets a Big Response

The Monterey County Health Department is wrapping up this year’s successful series of employee influenza vaccination clinics. Fourteen clinics were held at a variety of Monterey County locations, and a total of 1,228 free vaccinations were given.

Influenza is one of the many ‘bugs’ circulating this time of year. Getting vaccinated is the most effective way to prevent getting the flu, and the vaccination is covered by county health insurance.

Vaccinated employees stay healthy and on the job and don’t spread the virus to customers, friends and family.

The free influenza vaccine campaign is a win-win for Monterey County and employees alike. Cost-benefit studies estimate that for every influenza vaccine given in the work place, an employer saves
money in sick time for employees who are either ill or need to care for sick family members and lost productivity.

“Beyond the numbers and the health benefits, our flu vaccination outreach is a great way for us in the Health Department to get to know fellow employees,” says Molly Hubbard, Monterey County Health Department Immunization Coordinator. “We had a great time getting to know the other divisions and what they do.”

Partnering with the Health Department in the vaccination clinic series was the Employee Wellness Program. At each clinic, fitness information and healthy snacks were provided.

Superior Court employees and area first responders were also able to participate in the clinics.

If you didn’t make it to the recent clinics and still need a flu shot, don’t worry, there will be two make-up clinics later this month.

Sand Ramp Created at Carmel Lagoon

Resource Management Agency and Public Works division staffs have had the unusual opportunity this month to assist Mother Nature by creating an access ramp to the beach near Carmel Lagoon entirely out of sand.

Due to erosion damage to the State Parks’ nearby parking lot last winter, the ramp was needed to get emergency equipment onto this area of the beach in order to manage the sandbar so that homes neighboring the lagoon are not flooded by rising lagoon waters.

Management is challenging because there are so many influences affecting the water level, such as the Los Padres
Reservoir, the Carmel River, rain and tidal events, and there are multiple agencies that regulate how and when flood management activity can occur.

The Carmel Lagoon is where the Carmel River meets the ocean. As the lagoon fills up before breaking through the natural sand barrier there, those higher waters can threaten nearby homes. To avoid flood damage, work crews in the past have helped Mother Nature along by cutting a channel to release waters from the lagoon, but that work has become more restrictive in order to protect the Carmel River steelhead that live in the lagoon this time of year.

“While we always hope that the lagoon breaches naturally before flooding occurs, that typically has not been the case so we have used mechanical equipment to channel water out of the lagoon,” explains Carl Holm, Acting Deputy Director of the Resource Management Agency who says the channeling is done in consultation with various local, state and federal agencies. Any action also requires the approval of State Parks, which owns the land.

To overcome the access obstacle, the decision was made to create a ramp with materials natural to the area, so over several days, 1,000 cubic yards of sand from Marina was delivered to Scenic Road between Carmello Street and 17th Avenue and bulldozers shaped the materials, creating a ramp suitable for heavy equipment.

Overtime, the sand ramp will be washed away by the wind and sea, but hopefully not before planners have completed plans for a permanent solution. An application is in the works to the Army Corp of Engineers, Coastal Commission and Department of Fish and Game for work on a ‘big picture’ solution that allows the lagoon to breach naturally without impacting homes.