DATE: May 30, 2011

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Lew C. Bauman
County Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: County Administrative Officer’s Report for the week of May 30, 2011

This is the weekly report by the County Administrative Officer.

This Week’s Topics: The Silver Star Resource Center celebrates an anniversary and a move, the Office of Emergency Services offers a drill for its partners with some help from local schoolchildren and our series from the District Attorney’s Office continues about the risks facing consumers who hire unlicensed contractors.

**Probation**

To celebrate both its 6th anniversary and its new home, the Silver Star Resource Center (SSRC) held an open house May 25th at its new location, 855 East Laurel Dr. Bldg H, in Salinas. About 100 people – family, friends and community members - attended the event.

Jane Parker, Chair of the Monterey County Board of Supervisors, presented a resolution recognizing the success of the program, its value in the community, and the dedication and passion of staff and collaborative partners. Three young program participants gave heartfelt speeches about their experiences, and the positive impact of the program on their lives.

The Silver Star Gang Prevention and Intervention Program (SSGPI) was established in 2005 with the support of Congressman Sam Farr and in response to rising violence and gang activity in the local community. Congressman Farr forged a partnership with the
County of Monterey to fund, design, and implement gang prevention and intervention services to at-risk youth and their families.

The Probation Department assumed project leadership and partnered with County agencies, alternative education, and community-based organizations to create and implement a “one-stop-shop” resource center to offer a variety of services and evidence-based programs to at-risk youth and their families. SSGPI’s mission is to discourage, reduce, or terminate gang association, membership and activities among youth in Monterey County.

That mission appears to be gaining a foothold in the community. SSGPI has received more than 3,000 referrals for services, providing opportunities for youth and their families to improve their overall quality of life, and has demonstrated, through data collection and program evaluation, positive participant outcomes in terms of reduced recidivism rates, increased resiliency to risk, and improved education.

This program has been recognized at the national and local level for its commitment to youth and the dedication of its staff, the collaborative and integrative nature of partnerships, the use of evidence-based programs and strategies, and its ability to leverage and optimize human and financial resources. It has become a model program and a critical resource for the local communities, with services now extended to South County.

**District Attorney**

In this latest installment from the District Attorney’s office about the dangers of unlicensed contractors, the risks and dangers are explored.

The Contractors State License Board (CSLB) requires licensed contractors to have a written contract for all home improvement projects over $500 in labor and materials. The contract is meant to protect both parties by including information on the project as well as rights and responsibilities. The law also limits the amount of a down payment a contractor can charge before starting the project.

“Consumers should verify the licenses of the people they hire to work on or in their homes,” says Monterey County District Attorney Dean Flippo. “There are safety, financial, even legal ramifications that can put people at risk through hiring illegal operators.”

In the beginning, an unlicensed contractor’s bid may be lower than a licensed contractor’s, but that is usually a ploy to get the job. Owners then can find the actual
costs escalating with no recourse but to pay or get someone else to complete the job. While licensed contractors are put at competitive disadvantage by unlicensed workers, it's usually the homeowner who pays the price when something goes wrong. For instance, if the project is abandoned, homeowners have few options for getting back their money.

Another scenario is when a person who owns a property acts as his or her own general contractor as an "owner/builder." The owner/builder assumes full responsibility for all phases of the project and its integrity. The owner/builder must pull all building permits and is responsible for the project passing code and building inspections. Without the proper construction knowledge, an owner/builder can make costly mistakes and take far more time than an expert to complete the project properly and legally. An owner should also be wary of unlicensed individuals claiming to be contractors, but who prey upon homeowners by illegally promising to guide the permit process for a consulting fee.

The owner/builder must either do the work personally or hire employees or subcontractors for the project. If an owner/builder has employees, then he or she must register with the government and is responsible for all applicable employment taxes as well as securing workers' compensation insurance. Usually unlicensed contractors or subcontractors do not have workers’ compensation insurance coverage for their employees. The property owner may be liable should an uninsured worker get injured while on their property. In January 2011, the California Supreme Court held that a homeowner who hired an unlicensed contractor for a remodel project was liable for an injury sustained by the unlicensed contractor's worker.

Licensed contractors have completed CSLB’s stringent requirements for their license, secured a bond, provide good jobs and pay proper taxes and insurance. Look for a licensed contractors at the CSLB website at www.cslb.ca.gov.

Office of Emergency Services
Monterey County's Office of Emergency Services and some of its key partners got to brush up their skills and stay prepared in the event of a real emergency with a lot of help from first graders at Toro Park School.

On Wednesday, May 25th, Monterey County Emergency Communications Department (9-1-1) sent a test message to Toro Park School, part of the Washington Union School District initiating an evacuation drill that would result in the off-site evacuation of 41 first grade students to Toro Park. The children traveled by bus to the drill's evacuation center set up at the Park by members of the American Red Cross Monterey Bay Chapter with assistance from the Central Coast Citizens Emergency Response Team (CERT).
The children and school staff were processed into the Evacuation Center as if there was a genuine evacuation in progress. Directly adjacent to the Red Cross Evacuation Center was an SPCA Animal Evacuation Center and household pets were being processed for sheltering by SPCA staff as if there the real thing. As dogs were being processed for sheltering, a horse trailer arrived and members of the Large Animal Evacuation Group set up a temporary corral on site for the horse.

The children and adults were fed by the Red Cross with assistance from the Central Coast CERT out of the Emergency Response Vehicle from the American Red Cross.

This drill provided valuable opportunities for practice for emergency response teams that respond in the event of an actual evacuation or disaster. This particular drill focused on children, pets and livestock as well as special communication needs. The test message announcing the drill was sent using the Alert Monterey County Telephonic Notification System and included the TTY line for communicating with the deaf and hard of hearing population.

The Alert Monterey County system was used to call out emergency response teams and the alert was sent by text message, email and landline. The next call could be a real one, so it’s important for everyone to register at www.alertmontereycounty.org

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