DATE: August 8, 2011

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Lew C. Bauman
County Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: County Administrative Officer’s Report for the week of August 8, 2011

This is the weekly report by the County Administrative Officer.

This Week’s Topics: A cooperative county effort results in a new look for one rural community and the District Attorney’s Office continues its series on workers’ compensation and insurance issues - why it’s a crime for an employer to be uninsured.

Department of Economic Opportunity
In the north Monterey County community of Pajaro, the streets are looking better thanks to a cooperative effort between the Department of Economic Opportunity’s Redevelopment and Housing Office (RHO), the Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Sheriff’s Office.

The idea for the clean-up collaborative began in May, when the Pajaro Citizens Advisory Committee expressed concern that streets in the small community are dirty and poorly maintained, contributing to an image of neglect and blight. Specific concerns include accumulation of dirt in the gutters, weeds in the sidewalks, faded or chipped curb painting and faded or worn striping.

Inmate trustees work on a section of roadway in Pajaro (inmate faces are blurred to protect their identity).
County staff attending the meeting realized that by working together, the improvements the committee was hoping to have done could be accomplished. Redevelopment and Housing Office staff arranged through the Sheriff’s Office to have an inmate work crew deployed to do the street cleaning and Department of Public Works utilized their equipment to place traffic control signs as well as load dirt and haul away debris.

The street cleaning took three days. Beginning on July 6th, a crew of seven inmate trustees arrived in Pajaro and began working in designated areas. Public Works staff used traffic safety signage, cones and flashing beacons to divert traffic away from the workers. On July 7th, more equipment was brought in to remove dirt overflowing from road shoulders. On July 8th, a mechanical street sweeper was brought in to vacuum up loose dirt and complete the job. A total of 11 tons of dirt was removed from the streets!

“You can really see the difference that this intensive effort made,” says Julie Oliver, Chairperson of the Pajaro Citizens Advisory Committee. “The streets look so much cleaner than before.”

Kudos to these departments and staff for going the extra mile for this community, and making it a clean one! Many thanks to: Bill Vermilyer, Arturo Tovar, Jim Peterson, Bob Torres, Ivan Curiel, Scott Moser, Manuel Sanchez, Larry Altemeyer - DPW; Jerry Hernandez, Gordon Siebert - RHO; Robert Pulido and Sean McConnell - Sheriff’s Office.

**District Attorney**
The California Labor Code requires all employers to insure against liability to pay workers’ compensation.

The rationale behind the directive is simple, the law requires all employers to have workers’ compensation insurance so that there is an assurance of adequate medical coverage and other entitled benefits for employees who suffer any work related injury or illness that may occur. An employer’s failure to secure workers’ compensation insurance is a crime and has a penalty of up to one year in jail and up to double the amount of the premium owed with a mandatory minimum of $10,000.

The Workers’ Compensation Unit of the District Attorney’s office investigates and prosecutes cases involving employers who do not carry workers’ compensation insurance. The law provides authority for District Attorney investigators assigned to investigate workers’ compensation fraud, at any time, to require an employer to furnish a written statement showing the name of his/her insurer or the DIR certificate to self-insure. Criminal cases are discovered through sting operations or are referred to the District Attorney’s Office from many sources such as competitors, current or past employees, and from other State or County agencies.
Employers who do not have workers’ compensation insurance not only put their employees at risk, but have an unfair economic advantage over businesses that obey the law. Did you know that part of the workers’ compensation premium employers pay goes to a State Fund to supplement injured workers whose employers did not have coverage?

Being insured can be accomplished by obtaining a workers’ compensation policy from an insurance company, from State Compensation Insurance Fund [SCIF] or receive a certificate of consent from the Director of the Department of Industrial Relations [DIR] to “self-insure.” Usually, only large companies have the financial ability to “self-insure.” Nevertheless, State law mandates all employers carry the coverage so, if an employer cannot secure an insurance policy from a private insurance company, they can always obtain coverage from SCIF.