Reflections on the Tenth Anniversary of 9/11

This week, our nation marked the tenth anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001.

Most of us can still remember where we were or what we were doing that morning ten years ago. That personal connection makes September 11th much more than just a tragic milestone in our country’s history. While we mourn as a nation, we also feel the loss at a personal level. I hope each of you paused to commemorate this anniversary in your own way.

Here in Monterey County, flags were flown at half-staff, as they have on this date each year for the last ten. September 11th is now known as Patriot Day, a national day of service and remembrance.

While the focus of 9/11 tributes are usually the victims and heroes of that day in New York, Pennsylvania and Arlington, Virginia, it is also important to remember that 9/11 was not just a terrible, deadly singular series of events – it was the beginning of a war on terror that our country’s servicemen and women are still fighting today.

Here in Monterey County, we continue to honor the heroes and survivors of 9/11 by supporting the troops that continue to put their lives on the line for freedom since that terrible attack. Monterey County’s Welcome Home Troops Ceremony was created by the Board of Supervisors to honor returning troops from Afghanistan, Iraq or other overseas Global War on Terror assignment. If you know someone who has returned from overseas, please contact Wes Morrill at morrillrw@co.monterey.ca.us.
Are You Prepared for a Disaster? OES Says Take Time to be Ready

Disasters rarely provide any warning before they occur, so preparedness is the only way to be ready for the unexpected. Monterey County has seen its share of disasters, such as earthquakes, fires and floods. With this county’s “disaster history,” it’s important that everyone understand the importance of preparedness, not just the emergency agencies whose job it is to respond and protect.

The month of September has been proclaimed as National Preparedness Month, making this a good time for all of us to stop and think about whether we as individuals, our families and our communities, would be ready to handle a disaster.

How would you answer the following questions:
- Do you have an emergency supply kit?
- Do you have a family emergency plan?
- Would you be prepared to help a neighbor in the event of a disaster?

If you answered ‘no’ to any of these questions, you might be ill-prepared to weather a disaster.

As Monterey County employees, it’s also important for us to remember that in the event of a disaster, we play an important role as Disaster Service Workers.

The Monterey County Office of Emergency Services has a wide variety of information and web links to help you better understand the importance of disaster preparedness and how to better prepare yourself and others. Please visit http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/oes/

Breastfeeding Awareness Efforts ‘Take to the Streets’

The Monterey County Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program hosted the 5th Annual Breastfeeding Awareness Walk last month at the Salinas WIC Clinic.

Judging from the attendance, this effort to raise awareness about the importance of breastfeeding is gaining in popularity.
Prior to the walk, Board Aide Wendy Askew presented the 2011 Breastfeeding Resolution on behalf of Supervisor Jane Parker and the Board of Supervisors to Dr. Lisa Hernandez, Monterey County’s Deputy Health Officer. Network for a Health California provided a warm-up, pre-walk exercise program for 250 participants.

Besides the walking event, there were lots of festivities to enjoy. More than a dozen local health agencies offered informational booths, Clínica de Salud Del Valle de Salinas provided free blood pressure and glucose screenings, the Farmers Market was open for business and children were able to enjoy arts and crafts activities provided by Arts Council of Monterey County and Building Healthy Communities.

Organizers say this year was the best so far, with more than 100 families taking part in the event, and 250 walkers.