Monterey County’s hardworking trio of Animal Control Officers are the ones you want on hand if your pet is in need. So when National Animal Control Officer Appreciation Week was marked last month, the Environmental Health Bureau of the Health Department made sure these officers were recognized for their hard work and service.

Animal Control is responsible for picking up stray or loose dogs and cats, conducting investigations of potentially
dangerous or vicious dogs, bite investigations and responding to nuisance complaints. This can be difficult, dangerous but very rewarding work. Animal Control Officers aren’t officers you see every day, but when you need one, it’s great to know they’re there.

To say ‘thank you’ to Officers Valiska Lujan, Debbie Palmer, and Nancy Ratto, Bureau staff created a poster that will be on display, publicly thanking them and showcasing the important role Animal Control Officers play in pet and community safety. Bureau staffers signed the poster with messages of thanks to the Animal Control Officers and Animal Services staff.

**District Attorney: Marcia Albert**

Marcia Albert, Legal Secretary with the District Attorney’s Office, was selected as the recipient of the Law Enforcement Office Professional of the Year - Humanitarian Award during a Law Enforcement Professionals Conference.

Marcia was nominated by her colleagues because of her work ethic, efficiency and calm demeanor in dealing with difficult situations. Particularly noteworthy has been her assistance to crime victims, helping them to get through emotionally painful experiences. In one case, Marcia assisted the family of a woman murdered in 1977. She located the family members after the case was recently solved and kept them up-to-date with court developments to the conclusion of the case when the defendant was convicted of first degree murder.

**Sheriff’s Office: Diane Johnson**

During the same conference, Diane Johnson, a Forensic Medical Transcriptionist in the Sheriff’s Office Coroner’s Unit, received the Law Enforcement Administrative Office Professional of the Year – Professional Excellence Award.

A 35-year employee of the Sheriff’s Office, Diane was not nominated for the award because of her longevity, but due to her tenure, her extensive understanding and knowledge of past cases is a valuable asset. In nominating her for recognition, her supervisor noted that without her working knowledge and meticulous record keeping, many cases would grind to a halt.

Johnson was also praised for maintaining
relationships with the agencies and businesses that work with the Coroner’s Unit as well as being the public’s first contact on Coroner matters.

Marcia Albert and Diane Johnson both received their awards at the inaugural Law Enforcement Office Professionals Conference, hosted by the Sheriff’s Office last month. This event was the first of its kind, making it possible for nearly three dozen law enforcement office professionals from Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties to gather for networking, training and career development. Participants included law enforcement agencies from Watsonville, Monterey County, Monterey City, Salinas, the Presidio of Monterey, Soledad, Gonzales, King City, Fort Hunter Liggett, the California Highway Patrol, CSUMB and District Attorney’s Office.

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Employees Deliver Results for Relay For Life

Two Relay for Life employee fundraisers at the County Government Center raised more than $900 for this cause.

On April 24th, a ‘Build Your Own Tostada’ event was held in the Auditor-Controller’s Office conference room on the 3rd floor. Whether it was for the cause or just for a tasty lunch, there is always a big crowd for events organized by the hard-working Auditor-Controller staff. The event was a crowd pleaser and a financial successful, earning $649 for Relay for Life through lunch and drawing ticket sales.

For those who did not get enough to eat that day, the next day featured an afternoon Popcorn fundraiser for Relay single-handedly organized by Linda Rotharmel in Resource Management Agency - Planning. Folks could take a break and pick up a container of freshly made popcorn made in a movie theatre-type popcorn maker in the 2nd floor employee break room. This event popped up an impressive $271 for Relay for Life.
Sheriff’s Office Nets Hundreds of Pounds of Prescriptions

Each year, the Sheriff’s Office participates in the federal Drug Enforcement Administration’s Prescription Take Back Drive. This year’s ‘Take Back’ was held Saturday, April 26th and deputies took in 325 pounds of unwanted prescriptions in just four hours.

Deputies manned three locations in King City, Carmel and Prunedale to make it convenient for those with expired or unneeded medications to safely dispose of them, no questions asked. There were additional drop-off locations throughout the county as well, manned by participating city police departments and the California Highway Patrol.

The Sheriff’s Office participate in the program to help safeguard families from the dangers of outdated or unused prescriptions.

“Storing unused prescriptions is something of a silent danger,” explains Crime Prevention Officer Dave Crozier. “People can forget about them or aren’t sure what to do with them, so they stay in cabinets or drawers and become a target for thieves, a danger to the user due to potency loss and a huge risk if there are young children in the home.”