Environmental Health Bureau Kicks Off Recycling Program for Big Sur Community

A creative solution for recycling in Big Sur has resulted in a customized recycling program in that community. The Health Department celebrated the unique recycling effort with a kick-off event in late June.

The background of this program is an interesting one: the department received a state grant from CalRecycle for a recycling center in Big Sur as there was no recycling pick up at homes or businesses at the time and locals had to haul recyclables to the Monterey Peninsula.

Unfortunately, placing the center turned out to be dramatically more costly than the grant or county could afford, and the project was nearly shelved.
Instead of returning the grant though, Environmental Health Bureau changed the approach from a centralized location to working with businesses to place recycling bins at locations frequented by locals and tourists. This coincided with increased collection service of recyclables to grant participants by Waste Management which serves Big Sur.

There are now nine locations for residents to drop off recycling in Big Sur and the option for another ten. The County provides all the bins and supplies at each site to accept recyclable materials and will be doing an outreach program within the community.

Clerk of the Board’s Office Uncovers Historic Letter

The Clerk of the Board’s Office routinely deals with a wide variety of documents, but during the process of turning the large amount of archival paper documents into e-documents, a very interesting letter signed by a famous (and infamous) California Senator has surfaced.

“We are doing a scanning project and are finding some real gems of history,” explains Clerk of the Board Gail Borkowski. The ‘gem’ most recently found is a letter dated in 1952 from then State Senator Richard Nixon.

Richard Nixon was our nation’s 37th President, but many do not recall his roots in California and that he was elected to both the Congress and as a State Senator before becoming Vice President and then ultimately President in 1968. While his presidency had many positive achievements, his name is most associated with the scandalous Watergate affair and his eventual resignation.
The contents of the discovered letter aren’t a crystal ball into what was to come. The letter is a response to an inquiry from the County in support of efforts by local fish canners to sell canned fish to the government for relief efforts. Such an arrangement would have been a boon for the local fish industry and Nixon supported the idea and contacted a liaison with the Army to help pave the way.

Local Monterey Fisheries historian Tim Thomas was able to shed some light on what the communication was from the County and the Canners Association at that time.

“The Monterey Canners Association, working with the Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce of the time, was trying to find new markets to sell their surplus products,” explains Thomas. “With the war in Korea winding down, selling canned fish products to the government to help feed the destitute in Korea was a good market. Monterey canners did the same thing after WWII.”

Borkowski has not yet found other resolutions or documents which might be part of a further exchange between Nixon and the County at that time, but is hoping something interesting surfaces!

Prohibition’s Annual Little Hat BBQ Celebrates its 30th

Each year, the Probation Department’s Little Hat Barbeque event is a very popular one, and this year was no exception. 2014 is the 30th anniversary of this lunch which is held during Rodeo week in Salinas, and a large crowd turned out to celebrate.
A total of 355 lunch tickets were sold. Some stayed to eat with friends and colleagues, others took advantage of take-out services for a meal of BBQ chicken or cowboy sausage sandwich, chili, salad, cookies and lemonade.

Little Hat began as a way to bring together agencies and departments which work closely with Probation, but has blossomed into a large gathering and enjoyable way to support the department. Those in attending this year included both of Monterey County’s Presiding Judges, the Honorable Marla Anderson, Adult Presiding Judge and the Honorable Timothy Roberts, Juvenile Presiding Judge. Sitting side by side for lunch were attorneys from both the District Attorney’s and the Public Defender’s Offices, Sheriff Scott Miller and numerous deputies and staff, directors and staff from the Health Department’s Behavioral Health Bureau, Salinas Police Officers, supporters from local businesses and staff from Probation and other county departments.

In honor of the event’s 30th anniversary, a drawing was held and Deputy Probation Officer Meredith Gonzales was the winner of a brand new, stainless steel barbeque grill.

The Probation staff and volunteers would like to thank all those who came and made the event such a success. Also, a big thanks to event sponsors and county staff that helped in many ways, especially:

- Toro Park Rangers (Parks Department) – for donating wood for the barbeque
- Jeff Johnson, Probation Food Administrator - for cooking the beans
- Juvenile Institutions Officer David Sims and his crew – for cleaning and set up
- Juvenile Institution Officers and Probation Officers, including Assistant Chief Marcia Parsons, for preparing and serving the food
- Chief Manuel Real for all of his enthusiastic support