



OFFICE OF THE
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COUNTY OF SHASTA

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PRESS RELEASE

**“DON’T TRASH SHASTA” REPORT GIVEN
TO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

August 12, 2008

District Attorney Jerry Benito gave the Shasta County Board of Supervisors an update on the progress of the “Don’t Trash Shasta” pilot project that has been operating for nearly 18 months. The pilot program began in earnest in March of 2007 and will run until June 30, 2009. The focus of the program is to reduce and eliminate illegal dumping in Shasta County. One investigator, Rich Edwards, and one investigative technician, Karl Howell, work for the District Attorney’s Office and are assigned to respond to and investigate illegal dumping sites.

Thus far, the program has proven to be highly successful. As of the end of July 2008, 587 calls have been made to the toll free number 1-866-61-TRASH (1-866-618-7274). Of those, 331 led to an investigation. The remaining calls represent duplicate reports of illegal dumping or requests for information. A total of 9 prosecutions have resulted from these investigations. This is as expected. The program was designed to focus on stopping illegal dumping, not on creating prosecutions. In addition, 69 suspects voluntarily cleaned up the dump site in lieu of prosecution. Because of the reward ordinances in all the cities and the county, 2 citizens received rewards of \$500 from the city of Redding for their assistance in providing information that led to convictions of illegal dumpers. More rewards are anticipated based on current prosecutions.

To assess the success of the program, in June 2008, the illegal dumping team visited all 317 illegal dumping sites identified over the last 18 months. Surprisingly, of the 317 illegal dumpsite locations cleaned over the last 18 months, only 2 had new or repeat dumping - 315 have had no new dumping over the last year. This is phenomenal. This corroborates what we have been hearing from citizens and landowners about the effectiveness of the program.

The investigative team has been assisted by a number of agencies and organizations. Special thanks go to the Shasta County Public Works Department and the City of Redding for their efforts in quickly responding to dump sites and taking action. Resource Management has been instrumental in publicizing the program. Citizens and citizen groups have been extremely helpful in reporting and cleaning illegal dump sites. Organized clean-ups such as the Salmon Creek and Churn Creek clean-ups keep the spirit going. In addition, landowners have been cooperative in using measures to block access to illegal dump sites on their land.

Recently, our investigative team began using a sophisticated camera that can be used to catch illegal dumpers in the act at chronic dumping sites. The camera can take pictures during both day and night. Shasta County Public Works has just unveiled new signs that will be posted at chronic dumping sites to warn about the potential penalties involved and to notify illegal dumpers that the area may be under surveillance. It is hoped that the signs will deter illegal dumping in these areas.

Although the program has been successful, there is still work to be done. The unit still investigates approximately 15 calls per month regarding new illegal dump sites. Citizens are encouraged to report illegal dumping immediately and to take note of any suspicious activity near illegal dumping sites.

For questions, contact District Attorney Jerry Benito, Investigator Rich Edwards or Investigative Technician Karl Howell at 245-6310.