

Surveillance Cameras at suspected illegal dump sites

A Sonoma County multi-agency program to crack down on illegal dumping has led to the prosecution of its first violator. "This site was near a creek," Deputy District Attorney Jeffrey W. Holtzman said, "seemingly innocuous household garbage – such as milk and sugar – can destroy the oxygen in the water, harming fish and other aquatic life, including endangered steelhead. Illegal dumping of household trash often includes hazardous substances such as insecticide, cleaning products, paint or motor oil that could pose an even bigger threat to inquisitive children, wildlife or pets." According to Holtzman, who prosecuted the case, "This situation is a clear example of how a small dumping problem can snowball into a much bigger problem. Mr. Paredes had seen other people dump trash at this location in the past, so he did so."

A motion-activated surveillance camera captured Teodosio Valdivia Paredes, age 39, of Windsor, CA unloading a large quantity of trash from his vehicle near a tributary of the Russian River. When confronted by a Sheriff's deputy the following day, Paredes admitted his guilt and returned to clean up the garbage. Paredes appeared before Sonoma County Superior Court Judge Dana Simonds and pled to a criminal charge of illegal dumping of trash near a waterway. He was fined \$250, assigned 40 hours of community service, and placed on 12 months of probation.

The unfortunate Paredes is the first dumping perpetrator to be

prosecuted under a new County program called Keep Sonoma Clean, a cooperative effort between the Sonoma County Department of Health Services' Environmental Health Division, the Sonoma County Department of Public Works, the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department and the Sonoma County District Attorney's Office's Environmental and Consumer Protection Unit. Through Keep Sonoma Clean, Public Works employees have installed surveillance cameras at suspected illegal dump sites throughout the County.

The program, which includes a reporting hotline, is designed to reduce illegal dumping, which can lead to the spread of mosquito- and rodent-borne diseases, environmental pollution and declining property values.

Sonoma County offers numerous options for recycling or discarding unwanted items that are inexpensive or even free to residents. Legal disposal options include the following:

- Donating saleable items to thrift stores or other charities
- Dropping off unwanted items at County Refuse Disposal Sites
- Participating in Community Cleanup events in designated areas
- Curbside recycling and garbage collection, including bulky item pickup in some localities.

For complete information about proper disposal or recycling of unwanted goods, consult the Keep Sonoma Clean Web site at www.KeepSonomaClean.org. To report an illegal dump site, visit the Web site or call 877-565-DUMP (3867).

It's TAX Season!

There is a new tax office in Guerneville: **West County Financial Co-op**. Diane Offill, Patty Moynihan and Sumer Withers are not new to bookkeeping, tax law or tax preparation, but they do bring to the River a new kind of tax office. Each and every client is given full attention to review past tax situations, deal with the present tax filing and plan for the future. The philosophy in their office is to empower each taxpayer to feel knowledgeable and confident in their tax situation and future. They never want a client to leave the office with papers they do not understand. "We love being a part of the taxpayer's team and making their

lives less stressful where taxes are concerned. We are available all year long to answer questions. We have clients who look forward to our annual get together and that means a lot to us, because we look forward to that as well." West County Financial Co-op has an Enrolled Agent, 12 years of tax preparation experience and multiple years of bookkeeping and small business experience, but these things are not nearly as important as the fact that they are committed to making the tax experience empowering rather than frightening. Go by and say hi. All initial consultations are free. 707 869-9764

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