



COUNTY OF MONTEREY
CAO Weekly Report

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SPECIALREPORT



These munching machines get to work clearing brush and improving fire safety in Oak Hills.

County Notes

- > The Schilling Place Café menu is now available [online](#).

No 'Kid'-ding: Goats Go To Work for RMA

Sometimes the right tools for the job...have four hooves and a big appetite.

What happens when you take 300 goats, add one herder, two herding dogs and insert into a fire clearance project? A job well done!

This was the first time the county called in goats for a vegetation removal and the results were so successful that the Resource Management Agency wants to have them 'baaaack' again for other projects.

County Service Area 45, which encompasses the Oak Hills community in north Monterey County, was in need of help. In this area, there are more than 26 acres that need vegetation cleared annually for fire safety. Several years ago, the acreage was mowed at a cost of over \$1,000 per acre. The goats chewed that price in half, costing just under \$500 per acre, and were able to get into tricky spots that the mowers and human crews couldn't or wouldn't reach such as under oak trees and in poison oak thickets.

The goats were managed by a herder and two border collies. When they needed to be moved across streets and through narrow sections next to busy Highway 156, community volunteers got involved in the project, helping to create a "human fence" in order to direct the animals where they needed to go.

The goats 'work' by being fenced into areas for a time then are moved to the next spot. Goats can eat up to eight pounds of weeds, poison oak and low hanging oak tree branches a day and need at least one to two gallons of water to help digest their food and stay hydrated. So, how do you get water to 300 goats who are working in open space areas where there are no faucets? With a portable trough, about a dozen 100-foot hoses and one fire hydrant! During the 25 days that the goats were grazing, they drank approximately 5300 gallons of water. That's about 200 gallons per day.

Bryan Flores, who works for the Special Districts Division of the RMA, says the project was a success both environmentally and financially and the community loved seeing the animals.

"The goats did an incredible job, better than any human crew could do," he says. "They ate the poison oak to the ground, brought the canopy of the oak trees up so that fire can't jump from the ground to the trees to homes and devoured invasive thistles. One unexpected bonus, they also helped with litter control by eating paper and cardboard that had been discarded."



Getting to work! A goat makes the leap (above) from its trailer to the Oak Hills area where it will eat for the next month. Goats relax, taking a break between grazing (below).





The cost of the project was covered by a property-related assessment specifically for open space management that CSA 45 residents approved through a Proposition 218 election.

The critters did such a good job, the RMA created a contract with the herder to use the goats in other county service areas and possibly at San Antonio and Nacimiento Lakes.

Oh, wondering where you do find goats to do this work? There is a company for that.

“Goats R Us,” says Flores.



The Art of Sustainability Celebrated at Health Department

Is it art or a new way to showcase care for our environment? Or both? You can decide for yourself when you stroll through the Health Department hallways and enjoy the Sustainability Art Show.

The artwork now gracing the hallways of the department show how artist interpret the concept of sustainability and how recycling and reusing can be beautiful!





Administrative Secretary Susie McKee (left) and her mother Glenda McKee (right) stand near some of their creations now on display at the Health Department (above). At right, a close up of one of their collage works.

Artists submitted works and Health Department employees were on the jury panel selecting works, including Krista Hanni, Planning, Evaluation and Policy Manager and Gabriela Carbajal who works in the recycling program.

Among the artists with works on display, the Health Department's very own Susie McKee, who along with her mom Glenda, are avid artists, using a variety of mediums, found objects and collage to create whimsical designs.



The artists featured responded to a call for artwork from the Arts Council for Monterey County, which has curated exhibits in the Government Center and is a county partner in other programs. Many of the pieces interpret serious subjects such as environmental protection and economic practice. Pieces include depictions of sea creatures, touch on health topics such as chemotherapy and use recycled materials. There is even a working clock!

Sheriff's Citizen's Academy Gives Inside Look

The Sheriff's Department wants you – to get to know it.

That is the idea behind the Sheriff's Citizen's Academy program, which is offered twice a year.

The next academy begins September 7th and runs for 11 weeks. It is a major time commitment but promises eye-opening experiences. During the program, participants will go behind the scenes and inside Sheriff's operations for an understanding of what it is like for law enforcement in today's world. Activities include tours of the Coroner's Office, jail and county communications center; demonstrations by K9's, Patrol, Narcotics, Explosive Detection, Bomb Squad and much more.

County employees are encouraged to take part. One recent participant was Richard Geng, who works in the Sheriff's Department's Records Division and hopes to become a deputy someday - someone you wouldn't expect to jump in.

"I learned a lot about how the various branches of the department all fit together," he says. "Despite being an employee, I was still surprised how many different things go on in the department. When thinking about the Sheriff's Office, one might mainly think of patrol and jail but there is so much more."



Geng goes through evidence processing as part of the Citizen's Academy.



Geng is congratulated by Sheriff Steve Bernal upon completing the Citizen's Academy.

Geng says it was fascinating to learn how changes in legislation impact the work of law enforcement on a daily basis and tips from experts on home safety produced an 'ah hah' moment: don't leave your garage door opener in the car when parking in your driveway.

But he says, the part of the program that had the biggest impact on him was the use of force scenario. He urges anyone who is concerned or wants to know more about this issue to get involved.

"When seeing stories about officer-involved shootings on the news or internet, it is easy to think that the use of deadly force could have been avoided," he says. "There surely are cases where this may be so, but being put in the shoes of a peace officer (quite literally), with a gun in hand (training gun, shooting paint pellets), going through a dark garage looking for a suspect who is armed with a gun lets you feel the real-life emotions peace officers deal with on a daily basis. It was

quite eye opening having to make the decision if and when to raise that side arm and pull the trigger."

If you'd like to sign up for the program, you can fill out an application [online](#). For more information, visit the Sheriff's Office [website](#).