



PRESS RELEASE

Riverside Police Department • 4102 Orange Street • Riverside, CA 92501
Phone (951) 826-5147 • Fax (951) 826-2593

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: Tuesday, August 14, 2007
Contact: Steven Frasher, Press Information Officer
Phone: (951) 826-5147

Youths arrested on graffiti warrants

City departments join forces to combat graffiti vandalism

Riverside, CA -- Riverside Police officers and detectives have arrested more than 50 taggers since June 1, 2007, including recent arrests of juvenile vandals in all areas of the City.

- On July 20, UNET (University Neighborhood Enhancement Team) officers apprehended a known 16-year-old tagger who had been vandalizing apartment buildings and walls in the vicinity of Linden Avenue.
- Detective Cathy Nelson, the department's graffiti specialist (and current chair of the Southern California Graffiti Taskforce), led an arrest team on a warrant for a teenage suspect in the West NPC wanted for probation violations and multiple counts of vandalism.
- On July 24, officers arrested a 16-year-old male for felony vandalism of the 14th Street & Vine underpass and for tagging Poly High School with roofing tar, which caused lasting damage costing thousands of dollars. Another member of his tagging crew was arrested a week later.
- On July 31, Officers working graffiti issues in the Central NPC arrested a 16-year-old and two 17-year-old males who had tagged their monikers on walls and utility boxes throughout the City.

Today, before Riverside City Council, Public Works Director Siobhan Foster will present a proposal for a city-wide Graffiti Program Enhancement Plan to strengthen the City's efforts to prevent and remove graffiti, prosecute the offenders and seek restitution from graffiti criminals and the parents responsible for them. The Public Works department administers the City's graffiti abatement program.

The City's 10-member abatement crew responded to 30,000 incidences of reported graffiti vandalism in FY 2006-07.

//... MORE

Riverside Police Department

Youth arrested on graffiti warrants

August 14, 2007

Page 2

The Riverside Police Department works with allied law enforcement agencies, other City departments, school districts, the probation department and the community at large to combat destructive and costly graffiti vandalism.

Beginning in February 2007, the City Attorney began litigation against the parents of youths convicted of graffiti vandalism to help recover administrative, investigative and material costs of dealing with graffiti. To date, approximately \$38,000 has been recovered as an offset to the more than \$351,000 (in 2006) it costs the City to deal with the problem. Calls for graffiti abatement service have increased by far more than 100% in each of the past two years.

The Graffiti Program Enhancement Plan involves cooperation between the Police, Public Works, City Attorney, Information Technology and other departments of the City of Riverside. The City Council will be asked to fund the \$386,000 enhanced program effort with \$211,000 unallocated city funds and \$75,000 unallocated Redevelopment Agency funds from the La Sierra / Arlanza Redevelopment Project Area Capital Projects Fund, which would go to Public Works.

Key elements of the Graffiti Program Enhancement Plan are:

- Educate the public on the prevention of graffiti
- Promote community involvement
- Reward the public for calls that lead to arrests of graffiti vandals
- Rapidly respond to and remove graffiti
- Document and track graffiti offenders
- Improve the arrest rate and prosecution of graffiti criminals

The Riverside Police Department Strategic Plan calls on the Police department, City government and the community at large to work together as “co-producers of public safety.” This plan, proposed by Public Works and the Redevelopment Agency, gives added weight and resources to the City of Riverside’s firm commitment to combat graffiti vandalism, and the culture of fear, intimidation, gang crime and urban blight, that often accompanies tagging.

