



Across the Back Fence

August 2007

News For Neighbors From The City of Mesa Neighborhood Services Department

Code Compliance Cost Recovery Program in Mesa

The goal is to resolve more violations and preserve neighborhoods while recovering expenses. Effective August 1, the City of Mesa's Code Compliance Division implemented a Cost Recovery Program.

Under current procedures, courtesy notices are sent to all responsible parties about a complaint or observed violation with first inspections conducted seven days later. If a violation is found, the responsible party will receive a notice of violation with ten days to bring the property into compliance. Under the Cost Recovery Program, if the violation still exists after the second inspection of the property, a \$200 re-inspection fee will be charged and a civil citation may be issued. The \$200 fee is over and above any civil citation fines imposed. A \$100 re-inspection fee will be charged each time the Code Officer re-inspects the property, along with issuing a civil citation, until the violation has been corrected.

"Across the country programs like this one not only provide funding for code compliance, but also create an incentive to have violations abated quickly." Mesa Acting Neighborhood Services Director Ray Villa said. Similar

Code Compliance Recovery programs exist in cities, such as San Jose, Sacramento and Fresno.

The idea for the City's Code Compliance Cost Recovery Program came from members of the Mesa Institute for Leadership, an extensive ten-week program that gives current and future supervisors a unique opportunity to significantly enhance their leadership skills. In November 2006, class members presented a proposal entitled Code Compliance Incentive Program to City Manager Chris Brady. The purpose of the presentation was to illustrate research done by the group in the area of cost recovery and to demonstrate what it would mean to the City of Mesa Code Compliance Division.

The fees for the Code Compliance Cost Recovery Program were based on staff time incurred for the various inspections. Estimated costs to be recovered include \$448,800 for the \$200 re-inspection fees and \$49,300 for the \$100 re-inspection fees.

For more information, contact Mesa Acting Neighborhood Services Director Ray Villa at (480) 644-4546 or Mesa Acting Code Compliance Director Mike Renshaw at (480) 644-4706.

New Housing & Revitalization Director for Mesa

The City of Mesa has announced that after a nationwide search, Carolyn Olson has been selected as the new Housing and Revitalization Director. Olson will begin serving as Director September 4.

"With her experience, Carolyn will bring a fresh perspective to our department that will help enhance our programs," Mesa Acting Neighborhood Services Director Ray Villa said.

Olson is currently Executive Director of Fort Dodge Housing Agency in Fort Dodge, Iowa. She has extensive knowledge of state and federal programs, including Section 8 and HOME (Home Investment Partnerships Program). Prior to her current job, she was County Center Director for Community Action Agency in Fort Dodge.



As Housing and Revitalization Director for the City of Mesa, Olson's duties will include ensuring compliance with the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) and Home Investment Partnerships (HOME) programs. She will also oversee the Office of Human Services, the City's comprehensive housing assistance program and develop policies and procedures for programs that serve low and moderate-income households and special needs populations.

Olson earned an Associates Degree in Pre-Law at Des Moines Area Community College, a Bachelor of Arts in Human Services at Buena Vista University and a Masters in Public Administration at Drake University. She is certified as a Public Housing Manager with the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO).

For more information, contact Mesa Acting Neighborhood Services Director Ray Villa at (480) 644-4546

"Your Healer Within"

It is a fun human body show for the whole family! Mesa Southwest Museum will be hosting "Your Healer Within," a new temporary exhibit that continues until September 9. The exhibit focuses on the science of self-healing and self-directed wellness and looks at health issues you should know at every stage of life from the cradle to the grave. It features numerous inter-active tools including:

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A virtual reality tour through the immune system, "Boarding Around Town" which has a model skeleton skateboarding to music of your choice a virtual pond which lets you move water and melt ice with your hand and "Cell Warrior" which lets you imagine yourself as a white blood cell to help the body heal.

Save Money

Free home energy efficiency improvements. Low-income electric customers may qualify. Call MesaCAN at (480) 833-9200 ext. 252 for details on the home weatherization program.



Volunteers Come One Come All

Consider sharing your most precious gift with your neighbors — your time. The City of Mesa offers many opportunities for citizens to help make our community an even better place to live. Volunteers are needed in the Mesa Arts Center, libraries, museums, neighborhoods, parks, police, fire department, courts and many other areas. Whatever you can spare — an hour a week or a few hours a day — we need your help. Some of our current needs are listed below. We hope to hear from you soon.



Neighborhood Outreach is seeking Volunteers for the 2007 Tax Season for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA). The VITA program offers free tax help to low to moderate income community members who cannot prepare their own tax returns. Volunteers receive training to help prepare basic tax returns. There are several different job functions within the VITA program including: tax preparers, greeters and site coordinators. For more information visit, www.cityofmesa.org/neighsvc/volunteer or contact Katie Brown, Volunteer Coordinator at (480) 644-3705 or Katie.Brown@cityofmesa.org

Mesa Arts Center will be kicking off a new season of performances, artist exhibitions and fall classes in September and as a result is in need of recruiting volunteers for key events. Those with a love for the arts, or those who would just like to get involved and give back to the community while enjoying and supporting the arts are encouraged to apply. For more information, visit www.mesaartscenter.com/volunteer, or contact Courtney Tjaden, Volunteer & Tours Coordinator at (480) 644-6627, or Courtney.Tjaden@MesaArtsCenter.com

Buried Gas Line?

Did you know that natural gas piping from the meter to your appliances belongs to you? Customers have always owned this piping but may not have been aware of that. This piping belongs to you and is your responsibility to maintain. Gas piping is part of the building, much like your plumbing and electrical systems, and you need to maintain it accordingly. This also includes the piping to your outdoor appliances (grills, pool heaters, etc.) The City of Mesa operates and maintains the piping system up to and including the meter found outside a home or business.

In order to maintain the safest system possible and avoid any potential hazards in this portion of the piping system, periodically inspect your pipes for leaks and corrosion (rust). If repairs are needed, it is recommended that repairs are made by a qualified plumber or heating/cooling contractor.

If you have any questions regarding customer piping, please visit our web site at www.cityofmesa.org/utilities/gas or call the City of Mesa at (480) 644-4552



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