



Across the Back Fence

March 2008

News For Neighbors From The City of Mesa Neighborhood Services Department

Building Strong Neighborhoods

The City of Mesa's next Building Strong Neighborhoods Initiative is underway in the neighborhood located immediately north of Banner Baywood Hospital. The program began with an orientation or "kickoff" meeting Thursday, February 28 at Jefferson Elementary School. Residents heard results of a survey the City of Mesa Neighborhood Outreach Office has been conducting in the neighborhood bound by Power Road, Broadway, Main Street and East 64th Street. For the first time, the survey was made available on-line.

"This neighborhood has a lot of great assets, including a robust business community," Mesa Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator Jo Ellen McNamara said. "We are hoping for a great opportunity for collaboration and community building between the neighbors, the hospital, and the business community here."

The primary goal of the Building Strong Neighborhoods Initiative is to preserve and strengthen neighborhoods by providing residents and businesses with education, training, and access to existing resources to address neighborhood issues. Neighborhood Services will present one Building Strong Neighborhoods Initiative in each Council District during the 07/08 fiscal year. The newest initiative is in District 5. The program has been successfully completed in District 2, District 3, and District 4.

For more information about District 5's Building Strong Neighborhoods Initiative or if you would like more information about the Building Strong Neighborhoods Initiative in your neighborhood.

Contact Mesa Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator Jo Ellen McNamara at (480) 644-5434

Economic stimulus payment

Even if you are not otherwise required to file a tax return, you may still be entitled to an economic stimulus payment from the federal government.

Did you receive: Social Security benefits, disability compensation, pension or survivor's benefits.

What you could get: You could receive a payment of \$300 for individuals or \$600 if you are married and file a joint tax return with your spouse. Eligible taxpayers who qualify for a payment may receive an additional \$300 for each qualifying child.

What you need to do: All you have to do to get the stimulus payment is file a 2007 IRS Form 1040 or Form 1040A and report at least \$3,000 in qualifying income on the form. You can include the amount of your VA benefits and SSA benefits to qualify for the stimulus payment.

When will you receive payment? For those who file a 2007 tax return, the IRS will begin mailing checks in May.

For more information call Lisa Wilson at (480) 644-5831 or visit www.cityofmesa.org/humansvc/ for VITA information.

For tax questions call
1-800-829-1040 or visit www.irs.gov

Feather Night!

Help the Arizona Museum of Natural History welcome their newest exhibition: Feathered Dinosaurs and the Origin of Flight. Come dressed as your favorite feathered dinosaur. After your museum visit, go to Downtown Mesa for Friday Night Out on Friday, March 14 from 5:30-8 p.m., for food, fun, and festivities. Special Admission is \$3.00 for under 18 years and \$5.00 for everyone else, members are free!

Arizona Museum of Natural History, 53 N Macdonald St, Mesa (480) 644-2230

FREE Training...

This interactive two-day training is designed to bring you up-to-date on fair housing trends, regulations, and best practices. The cost of the training is **FREE** and open to: tenants/residents, landlords, housing authorities, nonprofit agencies, and property managers.

Training will take place on April 21 & 22, 2008 from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 pm. At the City of Mesa's South Center Street Campus, 200 South Center, Mesa.

Sponsored by the City of Mesa Housing & Revitalization Division and the Diversity Office, training provided by Nan McKay & Associates, Inc., an industry leader.

Registration will be taken by calling Jennifer Hedges at:
(480) 644-2387 or via email at
jennifer.hedges@cityofmesa.org

Wipes clog pipes

The next time you use a baby or cleaning wipe, throw it in the trash, not the toilet, to keep pipes in your home and those underground flowing freely.

Disposable does not always mean flushable. Since cleaning and baby wipes do not dissolve, they can get stuck in sewer pipes and sewer pumping equipment, and cause blockages during the treatment process at the water reclamation plant. Paying for a plumber to unclog your pipes can be costly for you, and repairs to our equipment are costly to the City.

In addition, kitchen grease, kitty litter, plastic and latex items, and needles can call clog pipes. Instead of flushing them, bag or contain them, and place them in the trash.

Please do your part to keep the pipes clog-free. Use the trash, not the toilet, to dispose of wipes.

City of Mesa Lobby Services Discontinues

The lobby services that the City of Mesa Building Safety Division provides at the East Mesa Service Center, 6935 E. Decatur Street, has been discontinued, effective February 29, 2008. This is a direct result of Building Safety Division's efforts to trim expenditures to avoid a projected budget deficit.

Building Safety customers needing construction permits, permit information or plan reviews will be able to get those services at the Mesa Municipal Building, 55 N. Center St. as the Building Safety Division will consolidate all operations at that facility. The Mesa Municipal Building is open weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information, call (480) 644-4BSD.

The City of Mesa Customer Service, Fire Department and Engineering Inspections operating at the East Mesa Service Center are unaffected by the change.

Safety Reminder from the Mesa Police Department

The Mesa Police Department wants to remind you to always keep your doors and windows closed and locked both at home and in your vehicle. Thieves are looking for crimes of opportunity including entering homes through unlocked doors, windows, and open garage doors. When garage doors are left open, criminals have access to your belongings, and may also find an easy way into your home. Garage door openers left visible in vehicles can easily be taken and used at a later time, so please take your garage door opener with you or hide it well within your vehicle. Here are some general safety tips to avoid becoming a victim of vehicle burglary:

- Never leave keys in your vehicle.
- Always lock doors, even when you are away from the vehicle for a short time. This includes running in to a store "just for a moment" while your car is running, or stopping to pick up your child from school, etc.
- Always roll up your windows when you leave your vehicle, even when it's parked in the driveway or garage.
- Place items out of sight before you reach your destination. If you are not planning on taking personal property with you (purses, expensive electronics, gym bags, cash, keys, shopping bags, wallets, etc.) please lock them in the trunk BEFORE you get to your destination. Nobody needs to see what you are placing in your trunk.
- Do not leave mail in your vehicle. These have your name, address, and may contain personal financial information.
- Use anti theft devices to further protect your vehicle.
- Do not leave tools or other accessories in truck beds. Lock up tools, equipment and other valuable items with a heavy duty lock.
- Memorize your license plate. In the event your vehicle is stolen, you will be able to assist police in identifying your vehicle.
- Keep your garage door shut at all times unless you are physically in view and can see if anyone enters the area.

Free paint available for beautification projects

Mesa residents looking for a way to spruce up their home's exterior are invited to take advantage of the City of Mesa's Paint Reuse Program. Buckets of paint are provided at no charge to Mesa residents and non-profit groups to help them with their exterior home and community improvement projects.

The paint provided through the program is collected from the City's Household Hazardous Waste Collection events where residents bring in their no longer needed, but still useable, cans of latex paint. The paint is then sorted, filtered, mixed, and repackaged into five-gallon containers and made available for exterior reuse.

Interested parties who would like to request paint may call the Paint Reuse Program Coordinator at (480) 644-2690.



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