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Sonoma County Launches Dumping Prevention Program -- Illegal Dumpers Targeted with Surveillance Cameras --

November 3, 2008 – Santa Rosa, CA -- A coalition of Sonoma County agencies has launched “Keep Sonoma Clean,” an illegal dumping prevention campaign that includes public education, garbage removal and enhanced enforcement. With almost 1,400 miles of county roads to maintain, Sonoma County spends an average of \$267,517 annually to address illegal dumping. County road crews respond to an average of 3–7 calls per day from residents reporting unsightly trash. Eight surveillance cameras have been installed by county road crews in rural sites where dumping is common. In a pending case, the new cameras filmed a man dumping household garbage along a roadside.



According to Walter Kruse, Director of Environmental Health at the county’s Department of Health Services, “We are pleased to see an immediate reduction of illegal dumping with the installation of cameras and appreciate the many Sonoma County residents that have come forward to help address this problem. We have had support from concerned residents, community groups, students and cyclists throughout the county.” Local cyclists founded ABC Rides, which hosts “Tour de Trash” bike rides throughout the county where volunteers locate dumping sites using GPS technology and then forward the information to county road crews for removal. Eighth grade students at The Healdsburg School did an extensive class project detailing the scope of the problem and offering solutions.

Some common reasons for illegal dumping include avoidance of disposal fees for both individuals and small business operators and a lack of knowledge about where to properly dispose of unwanted goods. Many individuals are unaware of the severity and consequences of illegal dumping. Homeowners, for example, may not be aware that they are legally responsible if their trash is dumped illegally by a contractor that they hire. Fines and consequences can be greater when toxics or tires are involved, or when trash is illegally disposed of near a waterway.

To report an illegal dump site, call 1-877-565-DUMP (3867) or submit information via www.KeepSonomaClean.org. Illegal dumping in progress should always be reported to

the public safety department responsible for that jurisdiction. For more information on Keep Sonoma Clean, visit www.KeepSonomaClean.org. In addition to the website, the county is posting signs, using radio advertisements, distributing information at community events, and using bus signs to promote public awareness and education.

Keep Sonoma Clean is a cooperative effort between the Sonoma County Department of Health Services, Environmental Health Division; the Sonoma County Department of Transportation and Public Works, and the Sonoma County Sheriff, and is funded by a grant from the California Integrated Waste Management Board's "Zero Waste-You Make it Happen!" program.