



The Jacob Journal

A Newsletter from County Supervisor Dianne Jacob

February 2007

MINDING THE PUBLIC STORE

Serving the Cities of:
El Cajon
La Mesa
Lemon Grove
Poway
Santee

Serving the communities of:
Agua Caliente
Allied Gardens
Alpine
Barrett
Blossom Valley
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Boulevard
Campo
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Casa de Oro
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Cuyamaca
Dehesa
Del Cerro
Descanso
Dulzura
Eucalyptus Hills
Fernbrook
Flinn Springs
Granite Hills
Grantville
Guatay
Harbison Canyon
Jacumba
Jamul
Julian
Lake Morena
Lakeside
Mount Helix
Pine Hills
Pine Valley
Potrero
Ramona
Rancho San Diego
Rolando
San Carlos
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Vallecitos
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Serving the Indian Reservations of:
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Campo
Cosmit
Cuyapaipe
Inaja
Jamul
La Posta
Manzanita
Mesa Grande
Santa Ysabel
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Viejas

Keeping Thieves Out, Your Information Secure

When officials from Hamilton County, Ohio began posting traffic tickets online, they hoped the move would encourage residents to pay fines on time. Officials didn't consider, however, the sensitive personal information printed on the tickets or the netherworld of hackers and thieves eager to swipe the identities of others.

Once in the hands of identity thieves, the information on those Hamilton County traffic tickets— social security numbers, dates of birth, addresses, signatures— was used to forge checks, create fake identification cards, open credit card accounts, even traded for drugs.

Unknowingly, Hamilton County was fueling identity theft, a \$50 billion economic problem and the fastest growing white collar crime in the nation.

To those of us in the public service arena, the horrors of the Ohio case, and others like it, seem especially ironic. By failing to address identity theft proactively, government, which exists to protect people, is inadvertently doing citizens harm.

Consider that victims of identity theft spend an average of \$1,400 and about 330

maddening hours trying to restore their good names. By the time perpetrators are arrested, the damage to victims is already done. That's why battling identity theft begins with prevention and stronger institutional safeguards. Government must lead by example.

Unlike Hamilton County, San Diego County didn't wait for a security breach to tighten its defenses. We were tipped off to the tenaciousness of identity thieves by a seemingly unusual source: methamphetamine.

Last spring, local prosecutors with the Meth Strike Force warned that meth users were stealing personal information with alarming frequency. One investigator said that meth played a role in

at least 80 percent of identity crimes and described addicts staying awake for days at a time, hacking into computers, stealing mail and forging documents to acquire quick cash for meth.

Teaming up with Supervisor Greg Cox and District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis, I launched an ambitious project to gauge County government's level of protection against identity thieves with the ultimate goal of putting an end to vulnerabilities.

From birth certificates to marriage licenses, from property taxes to private health information, County departments collect and retain volumes of personal information. We knew we had a daunting task ahead.

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Identity Theft

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Every County department participated in the eight month assessment. It began with an evaluation tool developed, in part, by the District Attorney's Computer and Technology Crime High Tech Response Team (C.A.T.C.H.) and included trainings led by the Identity Theft Resource Center, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to stopping identity theft.

In the end, the County found and fixed weaknesses. Software needed upgrading, filing cabinets needed locks and departments are phasing out the use of social security numbers for identification purposes.

Other recommendations

included the use of cross cut paper shredders, moving fax machines to more secure areas, and using plexiglass cubicles to allow for observation in common areas. These and other measures are being implemented now and the search continues for \$300,000 needed to purchase additional security equipment.

Like a car chase, government will always be the vehicle behind the bad guys unless it chooses to narrow the gap by keeping up with crime trends.

San Diego County doesn't want to find itself an unwitting accomplice to crime. Constant training and periodic audits will help us stay ahead of the curve.

We are glad to share our



assessment tool with interested parties, particularly those in the public sector, so that government on the whole can maintain its mission: serving people, not thieves.

• *Learn more about identity theft at www.IDTheftCenter.org*

• *Get help for meth problems at 1-877-No2Meth.*

FAA Urged to Fast Track Upgrades to Air Traffic Alert Systems

Anniversary of La Mesa plane crash prompts County to call for stepped up changes

One year after an airplane crash killed three people in the skies above La Mesa, the County Board of Supervisors is calling on the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to expedite upgrades to the warning system used by controllers at all traffic facilities, including Gillespie Field and seven other County-owned airports.

At the request of Supervisor Jacob, the Board voted to support recommendations contained in a July 2006 letter from the National Traffic Safety Board (NTSB) to the FAA.

The NTSB is still investigating the February 8, 2006 collision that spread debris for more than a mile on the ground.

A recent newspaper investigation revealed that controllers failed to broadcast alerts not only in the La Mesa crash, but in a fatal crash on Julian's Volcan Mountain in 2004 and a Learjet crash on

Otay Mountain that same year.

The NTSB's recommendations included:

- A redesign of the current warning system in control towers
- A review and possible revision of computer software to minimize unwarranted warnings
- A review of air traffic facilities to verify that meaningful warnings are provided to relevant tower controllers
- A requirement that all air traffic controllers demonstrate an understanding of minimum-altitude flight rules and the local topography where they direct aircraft.

Air traffic control at County airports falls under the authority of the FAA.

County airports supported 1.3 million air operations last year including private, commercial and emergency flights.



Community Round Up

Brothers and Sluggers

When two of Granite Hills High School's finest student-athlete alumni paid a visit to their old stomping grounds last month, it was more than a homecoming, it was family reunion too.

Brian and Marcus Giles—brothers and San Diego Padres sluggers—grew up in El Cajon and charmed the hometown crowd at a winter warm up rally in advance of the 2007 baseball season.

The major league siblings signed autographs and posed for lots of photos. They took some time to visit with Supervisor Jacob and big time Padres fan Patrick Ellis.



Generating Safety in Campo

No one in Campo will forget the dark days of the 2003 Firestorms when much of the Backcountry was terrorized by a wall of flames baring down on many communities.

During that horrible time, Campo played an integral role in the region's disaster plan. Residents displaced by the fires looked to Campo—and especially its community center—for shelter. Some needed serious medical treatment.

Last month, the community christened a new back-up generator at the Mountain Empire Community Center. When disaster strikes, the generator will kick on and provide electricity in order to sustain basic services for people. Campo residents found out how well the machine works when the center's pipes froze days before the generator's debut!

The \$33,000 generator was purchased with federal disaster preparedness funds obtained by the County Health and Human Services Agency.

Western History on the Wall

Supervisor Jacob and friends of the Olaf Wieghorst Museum in El Cajon marveled at a new outdoor mural depicting one of the artist's most beloved paintings. Known for his portrayals of the American West, Olaf Wieghorst's work is a favorite of no fewer than four U.S. presidents. Now, his work is larger than life on the wall outside the museum. Worth a visit to 131 Rea Avenue!



Join Supervisor Jacob for Coffee and Conversation

Friday, March 23 at 9:30 AM
Julian Town Hall,
Main Street, Julian



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We hope to hear from you soon!

Feb. 07

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