

Toxic substances found at illegal grow sites

Burn piles with evidence of toxic waste were found at a majority of the illegal marijuana grow sites shut down by law enforcement last month, the Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office reported.

The California Department of Toxic Substances Control's Office of Criminal Investigation found elevated levels of lead and zinc in several burn piles discovered in a multi-agency counter drug raid on July 16 and 17 at 64 sites in the county, SCSO said.

Illegal cannabis cultivation can produce "multiple streams of waste," the DTSC reported, including gasoline, butane, pesticides, fertilizers, electronic waste, and household hazardous waste.

Investigators and scientists used x-ray fluorescence technology to scan the ash of the burn piles to determine if there were quantities of lead, zinc, copper and other metals of concern above the regulatory threshold for hazardous waste, SCSO said.

Some of the burn piles with confirmed elevated levels were discovered in seasonal stream beds, SCSO added. Investigators took samples of the ash, which will be analyzed further by the DTSC's Environmental Chemistry Lab.

"These samples could be used as evidence of illegal treatment, storage and incineration of hazardous waste," SCSO reported.

Ten separate agencies and about 80 personnel took part in the operation, which was planned for months with many agencies traveling to Siskiyou County from other parts of California.

More than 8,500 illegal marijuana plants were seized during the operation and 963 pounds of processed marijuana confiscated, the SCSO said, as well as eight grams of methamphetamine.

A "BHO lab," or Butane Hash Oil operation used to concentrate the THC found naturally in marijuana was also shut down and 10 ounces of concentrated cannabis was seized.

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Free lunch program fed hundreds of kids over summer

By Shareen Strauss

As schools are getting ready for the upcoming year, Great Northern Services is winding down their Free Summer Lunch Program. Friday was the last day that children in the South County received free, nutritious lunches.

The program started a week after summer break began in June. Every week day, a white van showed up at various locations in south county, carrying coolers filled with lunches for any child under the age of 18. Income did not matter – any child could have a free lunch.

The program is in its third year and is funded by grants, the government, private donations and volunteers. The program is compliant with the government school lunch programs; each lunch contains protein, vegetables, fruits, as well as grain and dairy. They are low in sodium and sugar.

"We try to make new fun menus for the kids," said Jeremy Porteous, one of the two drivers who helps prepare the food and deliver it to the south Siskiyou County communities of Dunsmuir, McCloud, Montague, Mount Shasta, and Weed.

"Today is taco salad," he said. "We have had some good pasta dishes... We make about 250 to 300 lunches each morning. There are a lot of hungry kids in the summer."

In McCloud, Porteous shows up at 12:30 p.m. and meets with Anne Mero at McCloud Elementary School. Mero is one of five volunteers that helped with the McCloud program. They had an average of 15 children each day that came for lunch.

"It has been a successful program. I wish more people would take advantage of it," Mero said.

Last Thursday afternoon, 7 year old Brian Lensing showed up to eat. He is new to the area, having recently moved from Portland.

"This is better than the lunches at my old school," he said.

Greta Jones showed up with six children just as the lunches were being distributed. "It's... healthy food and there is plenty of it," she said.

Areas that don't have access to free lunch at school and areas that have 51% low income eligibility are targeted by the program.

During the school year, Great Northern has a



Carmen Jauregui, Scarlet Stalings and Brian Lensing enjoy a healthy lunch at McCloud Elementary School last week. Over the summer, hundreds of lunches were distributed to children in south Siskiyou County, regardless of family income.

PHOTO BY SHAREEN STRAUSS

School Pantry Program for children that are without food or missing meals. There is also the Holiday Snack Bag Program where the schools send a bag of groceries home with children over the holidays. Great Northern is planning on expanding these programs throughout Siskiyou county.

For more information, contact Great Northern Community Services Manager Heather Solus at (530) 938-4115 ext. 128 or on the web at hso-lus@gnservices.org.



N95 masks 'crazy' at local hardware

By Skye Kinkade

N95 masks meant to protect people from wildfire smoke blanketing Siskiyou County are

"We used to sell them very slowly," said Ron McCloud, owner of McCloud Hardware, "but now we're having a hard time keeping them in stock."

At Solano's Do It Best in Medford, the masks are "selling like crazy," said employee David Solano, who is restocking the shelves each day.

Ramshaw's Ace Hardware in Medford also has N95 masks available, as well as N100s, which filter out microscopic particles. The California Department of Public Health is recommending the use of N95 masks.

Weed City Council compares marijuana cultivation to

By Giovanni Lamanna

Weed City Council reviewed a report on marijuana cultivation within the city limits by City Attorney Robert Winston and Ron Stock – during a special meeting, which was attended by the meeting, and all members were in attendance.

According to Mayor Ken Palen, the report was broad and general, written by Stock, is specific. "Ron's is a little tighter and more detailed," Palen said. "The other draft by Winston was more general." So we need to pick one to move forward with.

Stock stated an opinion on changes: "One of the mistakes, in my opinion, was the Planning Commission to make recommendations that are not within their skill level."