Ag Commissioner Puts School Pesticide Safety Online

A pilot project to improve safety at local schools located near agricultural operations has culminated in the launch of a new website.

The website http://farmingsafelynearschools.com/ was more than a year in the making. It is part of a pilot program in Monterey County to enhance protections when pesticides are used near schools.
The Monterey County Pesticide Notification Pilot Project (PNP) began in 2016. The first step was providing a five-day notice before fumigants were applied near three schools participating in the program. You can read more about the background of the program here.

The website, which is the second step in the project, and adds on to the original notification process. It gives families the opportunity to sign up for electronic notifications of scheduled fumigations within a quarter of a mile from the three participating schools which are all in the Pajaro Valley Unified School District: Hall District Elementary, Ohlone Elementary and Pajaro Middle Schools.

“I am hopeful that parents, teachers, school administrators and others will visit the website which provides a level of transparency that is unprecedented,” says Agricultural Commissioner Henry Gonzales. “As a grandparent with six grandchildren attending local schools, I am committed to their safety and the safety of all children at our schools.”

The site provides information in English and Spanish to parents, teachers and staff on farm pesticide use, application and regulations, health facts, even how to find out what agriculture operations are near the pilot schools.

This project is the result of a collaborative agreement between the Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner, the Monterey Bay Central Labor Council, the Pajaro Valley Unified School District, the Grower-Shipper Association and the State Department of Pesticide Regulation, which provided grant funds to build the website. A variety of stakeholders from agricultural, environmental and educational groups contributed to the project as well.

Those spearheading the project are already looking ahead. Next steps include exploring expansion of the project into the North Monterey County Unified School District.
Elder Abuse on the Rise in Monterey County, Awareness Needed

Today, June 15th, marks World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and the month of June is Elder Justice Month with activities to call attention to the issue.

Did you know that elder and dependent adult abuse is on the rise in Monterey County and calls to Adult Protective Services (APS) have risen by 35% between 2015 and 2017?

This increase tells us we all should be better informed about the issue. You can start by reviewing the "Don't Miss the Signs" graphic at right. If you see one or more of these signs, APS is here to assist and is available by phone at 831-755-4466.

This year, the Area Agency on Aging is sponsoring the Monterey County's Elder Justice Summit 2018. The topic of this year’s summit is "Money Matters: Protecting Assets, Preventing Fraud." The event is on June 29th from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Monterey Moose Lodge and is free for both professionals and the public. You can register here.

"A large aspect of the identification and prevention of elder/dependent adult abuse is to nurture communities where our most vulnerable are not isolated," says Allison Yant, Acting Program Manager II with the Department of Social Services Aging and Adult Services.

Check out this calendar, which showcases resources and has ideas on how to be better connected with elder issues.
Denise Hancock Takes On New Challenge

For Denise Hancock, a long-time member of the County’s Clerk of the Board staff, life is imitating art: she is taking out a blank canvas and starting new work.

Her new and important work will take her out of the area completely. Denise is leaving Monterey County and moving to the Central Valley to care for her mother.

Denise has spent the last 13 years with Monterey County, first as a temp for three years then joining the Clerk of the Board’s staff ten years ago.

She says (with a smile) that while she will miss her many friends and colleagues at the County, one thing she is looking forward to is seeing the sun during the day as there are no windows in the Clerk of the Board’s Office.

While Thursday, June 14th was Denise’s last official day ‘on the job,’ she will be back on Tuesday, June 19th when she will be honored for her years of services by the Board of Supervisors. She will be able to experience a board meeting as a member of the public instead of near the dais.

Denise takes with her artwork you may have seen in the Clerk’s office. She is an accomplished artist who works primarily with acrylic paint.

“I started painting when I was 11 years old, set it aside, then began painting again between the ages of 19-21,” explains Denise describing her life as a painter. “After another long period away from painting, I picked up brushes again in my forties when I was working with terminally ill patients and found painting to have that calming, ‘take-me-away’ feeling.”

Goodbye Denise, and may the arts be with you!