Grilling for Good: Probation Honors Student Crafters

The annual Little Hat Barbeque is always a great lunch, but this year, the real story behind the celebration is how relationships between Deputy Probation Officers and students resulted in a new grill for the event…and so much more.

The newly-built, trailer-sized barbeque grill wasn’t just for show at the lunch this past Wednesday. Chefs put it to work right away, loading on 405 pounds of tri-tip to sizzle, smoke and cook to perfection.
With Sheriff Bernal serenading the crowd, Chief Probation Officer Marcia Parsons opened the festivities with surprise awards for the young grill builders who had been invited to attend its inaugural use. Parsons recognized them in front of packed tables of attendees who were thoroughly enjoying the fruits of their labor: a delicious tri-tip luncheon on a warm and sunny day with lots of friends.

Parsons told the crowd that while the camaraderie of the Little Hat lunch is what brings people back year after year, this year, the Department is especially excited to recognize the creative and hardworking students from a welding class at King City High School who built a new grill for the annual event. The students were joined by the Superintendent of the South Monterey County Unified School District and the Principal and Dean of King City High.

“These young men built a fabulous, industrial-size mobile barbeque that will be put to use for many years to come,” explains Parsons. “The project was a collaboration spearheaded by Deputy Probation Officer Omar Ramirez, who is assigned to the King City High School campus; the Monterey County Probation Association which purchased the barbeque and the King City High school welding class whose students built it. We are very proud of these talented young men and wanted to publicly recognize their work with some personalized plaques. Well done Mustangs!”

After the students were honored, it was down to eating! This lunchtime social is very popular as the numbers show. Volunteers served up 491 meals, 397 of them on site and the rest to take-out orders.
Emergency Communications Ups its Game for US Open

You have likely heard a lot about the recent US Open, mostly about managing the massive traffic issues. But there were many county staff behind the scenes, working to keep event goers safe.

Among them, staff from Emergency Communications who created and staffed a remote dispatching center as part of the event’s Joint Operations Center.

“The US Open allowed the Emergency Communications Department to fully test the capabilities of our 9-1-1 phone and radio systems and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD),” explains Emergency Communications Director Lee Ann Magoski. “The Joint Operations Center allowed us to coordinate quickly with the other agencies. It was a team effort that was successfully executed thanks to the work of Don Clark and other dedicated Emergency Communications personnel.”

Monterey County Emergency Communications Telecommunications Systems Coordinator Don Clark worked tirelessly for months prior to the event, planning for the installation of three 9-1-1 consoles, an exact duplicate of the 9-1-1 phone system, CAD and Harris radio system equipment located in 25 miles away in the 9-1-1 Center. Don prepared a plan, coordinated activities with County Information Technology and executed the plan with successful results.

“USGA representatives told us ours was the most technologically advanced Joint Operations Center that they had seen,” says Magoski

Two 9-1-1 Center staff manned the remote dispatch center 24 hours a day during the event, coordinating responses with agencies.
such as CHP, Monterey County Sheriff, CalFire, FBI, Homeland Security, CalTrans, American Medical Response, Bomb and SWAT Teams, Police Explorer groups, US Coast Guard, National Guard and the US Postal Inspection Service.

Magoski says staff will take what they’ve learned from this event to improve remote dispatching for other upcoming planned events as well as the department’s back up facilities.

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**Elections Honors Students for Civics Competition**

The core of Monterey County’s Election Department’s mission is to empower communities through civic engagement, particularly through voter registration and election participation.

One of the Department’s most successful programs that truly embodies this mission is the High School Voter Registration Competition. The program, launched in 2017, positions local youth as leaders in registering and pre-registering their peers.

It’s a competition where the entire community wins as more youth take their first steps into this important progress; but it’s also a friendly competition among schools and it’s all about the numbers! This year, the North Salinas High School Associated Student Body was recognized for taking first place in the competition with over 100 completed voter registration forms.

*Registrar of Voters Claudio Valenzuela and Supervisor Luis Alejo congratulate North Salinas High School ASB representatives.*
Soledad High School and Everett Alvarez High School tied for second place.

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors, Supervisor Luis Alejo presented the first-place award to the Associated Student Body representatives and encouraged them to continue staying civically engaged.

This year, Monterey County Elections also recognized the YMCA Youth & Government Program, its leader teacher Lori Caldeira and retiring teacher Philip Moore for promoting voter registration and participation at Salinas High School.

Because the YMCA program events occur outside the regular contest time period, the YMCA Youth & Government program has not been recognized before, but this group really has made an impact! To give you an idea of the magnitude of their contribution, nearly 58% of all high school registrations and pre-registrations over the past three years are the result of their efforts.

The group was given special recognition during a Salinas Union High School District Board of Trustees meeting and were presented with certificates by Registrar Claudio Valenzuela.