



Graffiti Task Force

2008 Yearly Report



Graffiti Wipe Out Day— In May, 75 volunteers removed over 150 tags from the Avenue Scott wash and the wash near Central Park.

Outreach—Presentations increased by 50% throughout the school districts, including Newhall, Sulphur Springs, Saugus, William S. Hart Union, and Castaic.

Rio Vista Wash Project—Over 1,000 students removed graffiti and used 100 gallons of paint to cover graffiti in the wash located behind their school.

Nighttime Removal—The Sheriff's Department diverted traffic for removal staff, which resulted in the removal of over 100 tags from major thoroughfares (i.e., Sierra Highway and Soledad Canyon Road), which are difficult to access during the day.

Arrests— 292 juveniles and adults were arrested, a 46% increase from last year.

Restitution —To date, over \$43,000 has been awarded to the City in restitution.

Rewards—\$1,500 in rewards were given to three people who provided information that lead to the conviction of graffiti vandals.

New Equipment—A Gator with a pressure washer provided access to hard-to-reach spots (i.e., local washes and LMD areas).

Donation— \$1,000 was donated to the Graffiti Removal Program by a resident who was appreciative of the City's prompt removal.

"Tag You're It" DVD—Aired on Public Access during the summer months. The DVD showed the consequences of graffiti vandalism and first-hand testimony from two local taggers about their experience being arrested, convicted, and spending time in jail.

Database—New search components were added to the database, including date and time removed, arrest file number, and LMD location.

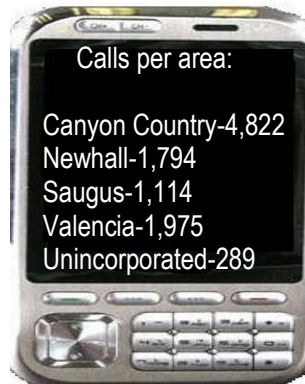


Hotline Calls

The Graffiti Hotline received 9,994 calls and 1,338 eService requests. Hot spots included Whites Canyon Road, Sierra Highway, Mint Canyon, Pleasantdale, Crossglade, and Northpark paseos.

Top five most frequent tagged surfaces:

- 1,861 - Walls
- 1,294 - Utility boxes
- 779 - Bridges
- 537 - Sidewalks
- 464 - Street Signs



Sheriff's Collaboration

Staff met regularly with Los Angeles County Sheriff Department's Graffiti Detective, COBRA (Gang and Juvenile Crime) Unit, and the Community Interaction Team, which resulted in:

- Nine surveillance operations conducted at the Santa Clara River, Canyon Country bike trail, Sierra Highway bridge, McBean Transfer Station, Valencia paseos, and Northbridge paseos.
- Deputies searched the residences of 14 taggers, which resulted in 12 arrests.
- Over 150 new taggers were identified by Detective Burrow and School Resource Deputies.
- Detective Burrow obtained valuable information on new tagging crews and trends by monitoring and inspecting the Transit buses.
- Detective Burrow and the Graffiti Removal Coordinator presented the City's three-prong approach (quick arrests, prompt removal, outreach) to Pico Rivera's Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Captain.

Graffiti Removal Projects

- Six hundred volunteers removed over 2,500 tags from local washes as part of Teens Against Graffiti (TAG) projects.
- Five hundred tags in local washes were removed by Community Court teens, as part of their sentencing.
- One hundred twenty containers of "Graffiti Wipes" were provided to residents to clean light poles, utility boxes, and smooth surfaces.
- One hundred tags were removed by the Executive Team from the wash under Whites Canyon Bridge in May as part of Pride Week.



Getting the Word Out

- Over 6,000 students from the Newhall Community Center and local schools, and 620 parents and administrators participated in graffiti awareness presentations in 2008.
- Over 7,000 residents viewed the graffiti webpage, with 1,000 residents specifically viewing the "Is Your Child a Tagger?" section.
- Over 200 flyers for the Graffiti Hotline and Rewards Program were disseminated during the Neighborhood Extreme Makeover event held in Canyon Country and Newhall.
- Over 300 students from various junior high schools received graffiti awareness information at the Youth Summit held in October.
- Five taggers from Castaic Middle School said they were "done with tagging" and turned in their graffiti-covered backpacks to staff after hearing the consequences of graffiti vandalism during a presentation held by staff.



Trends

Graffiti Removal staff saw an increase in:

- Graffiti found in the washes, bridges, and trails.
- "Slap tags" on light poles and utility boxes. "Slap tags" are stickers with the tagger's moniker.
- New tagging crews from the San Fernando Valley tagging throughout Santa Clarita.
- Graffiti crews using their crew name, and not their moniker, which makes apprehension more difficult.
- "Cross outs," where one crew crosses out another crew's tag.
- Use of letter decals, instead of spraying letters with a spray can.
- Use of numbers, instead of letters (i.e., 329 is the same as DAW).



Inter-Department Collaboration

- Graffiti Removal staff and Parks staff met monthly to discuss trends and hotspot locations. Graffiti Removal staff and Parks staff are now using the same color paint on washes and trails for uniformity.
- Graffiti Removal staff and Parks staff removed 150 tags from the trails and paseos in preparation for the marathon.
- Graffiti Removal staff and Environmental Services staff performed street cleaning in Newhall using the high-power pressure washers.
- Graffiti Removal staff and Technology Services staff demonstrated the City's database to representatives of the LAPD Operations Valley Gang Unit to assist them with their current graffiti tracking problems.



Private Property and Businesses

Thirty "Private Property Notices" were issued in Canyon Country and Newhall, with 100% compliance. Private property and business owners complied within seven calendar days from the date they received the written notice to abate.



Report Graffiti... Get Rewarded

A \$500 check was given to a young community member who witnessed a classmate tagging the elementary school he attends. Because of his courage in informing his teacher of what happened, the Sheriff's Department, along with the Graffiti Task Force, were able to determine that the vandals damaged \$1,500 worth of City property and seek restitution.



Agency Collaboration

The Graffiti Task Force collaborated with the following agencies:

- Los Angeles Department of Water and Power for graffiti removal from the Los Angeles Aqueduct.
- Los Angeles County to exchange graffiti trends and outreach methods. Los Angeles County responded to all requests for removal within their jurisdiction within 48 hours.
- College of the Canyons (COC) Campus Security is now able to access the graffiti database for graffiti tracking to help graffiti staff ascertain if tags around the campuses are also found on City property, help the Sheriff's Department in charging graffiti vandals with multiple offenses, and to provide COC with a mechanism for restitution and tracking.
- AT&T, Edison, and Time Warner for the removal of over 60 requests, and repainting several utility boxes at the City's request.



In 2009, the Graffiti Task Force will:

- Work on logistics for the Paint Matching Trailer. The Paint Matching Trailer will assist private property and business owners with prompt removal. The Paint Matching Trailer is being built and will be rolled out later this year.
- Create a PowerPoint presentation for students on the effects graffiti has on the environment, property, and the consequences of graffiti. The PowerPoint presentation will be used to enhance outreach presentations.
- Continue to develop relationships with schools and organizations throughout the community to work together in eradicating graffiti and increase tracking, using the e-Graffiti database.
- Advertise the Rewards Program on City buses, using a "Fight Graffiti...Get Rewarded" ad campaign.

