



THE FOUNTAIN HILLS TIMES

Your Award-Winning Hometown Weekly Newspaper

Drop off your drugs

People with outdated or unused prescription drugs they want to dispose of can drop them off this Saturday at Fountain Hills Town Hall.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) in cooperation with the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office will be having a day for people to turn

in prescription medications this Saturday, Sept. 29.

People will find deputies available to take possession of the drugs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Town Hall parking lot, 16705 Avenue of the Fountains, at La Montana Drive.

Wednesday, September 26, 2012

\$1.00

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Homecoming parade today

Homecoming week is here and, today, the celebration continues with the annual parade.

The big event is set to kick off on the Avenue of the Fountains at 5:30 p.m., featuring the high school marching band, local clubs, organizations and elected officials, class floats and sports teams.

Everyone is invited to come out, line the Avenue and take part in the spirited celebration.

The homecoming game is scheduled for

7 p.m. at Falcon Field Friday, Sept. 28, with a tailgate party prior to the opening kickoff at Golden Eagle Park.

The Falcons' opponents for the evening will be Coronado.

After a long week of festivities, high school students will have a night to unwind as the homecoming dance, themed "Arabian Nights," will take place Saturday evening, Sept. 29, in the high school gym from 7 to 11 p.m.



Yellow tape stirs Avenue questions

By Bob Burns
Times Reporter

Town staff used yellow caution tape to mark off certain trees in the Avenue of the Fountains median last week, creating some controversy and confusion.

While an arborist has recommended that 16 trees be cut for safety and other reasons, another 15 of the 45 existing trees could be cut if certain improvements are done on the Avenue.

The Town Council appears to be leaning toward spending nearly \$2 million from its downtown fund to finance a major facelift for the Avenue median.

A councilmember had asked for the tape to be temporarily put on the trees as a visual demonstration of the project's possible impact.

As news leaked out, it drew some protests.

In an email letter to council members she forwarded to *The Times*, former Mayor Sharon Morgan and Chamber of Commerce special events coordinator expressed disbelief to see the trees marked in such a way.

"What a sad commentary that the citizens of this town do not know what those 'yellow ribbons' around the trees in the median on the



Times photo by Bob Burns

This group of trees marked with yellow tape along the Avenue of the Fountains would be removed if the plan that replaces the water feature is adopted by the Town Council.

Avenue really mean," Morgan said.

"All my life 'yellow' ribbons around trees meant hope and happiness -- but now in Fountain Hills it means 'death to trees.' It will also mean death to the lighting of the Avenue for the holidays as we have known for many years."

Karen Goodwin sent a similar letter lamenting the proposal to remove the trees.

"As I drove down our charming Avenue of the Fountains, I noticed a great many trees had yellow tape

around them, Goodwin said. "Out of curiosity, I asked around only to be told that these are the trees designated to be cut down in their entirety in the near future."

"What are you folks thinking? Is the Avenue, in addition to the Fountain, not a focal point for Fountain Hills?"

Plan B

There are, in fact, 31 trees marked with the tape as a way to visually present to the public what would need to be removed should

Plan B for improvements be implemented.

Originally, an arborist working for J2 Engineering, a consultant for the town on the proposed Avenue improvement project, indicated there were 16 of 45 trees that should be removed based on health and other potential hazards they posed.

Town Development Services Director Paul Mood explained that more than the original 16 trees were marked because the infor-

(cont. on page 8A)

*Text-A-Tip extended for another year

By Michael Scharnow
Times Editor

An anonymous law enforcement tool, Text-A-Tip, will continue for another year here, the Fountain Hills Coalition announced.

The program was launched a year ago in cooperation with the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, and officials say it has proven popular and successful.

Some 53 arrests directly attributable to Text-A-Tip have been made in the past year, most of them related to underage drinking and drug tips.

Several teen drinking parties have been busted due to Text-A-Tip, and one middle school student was cited last school year for having vodka on campus in a water bottle.

"The point of law enforcement, when word gets out about this, is it decreases the availability of alcohol," said Carole Groux, the coalition's executive director.

"And that's one more way to change the norm of teens drinking."

Sheriff's Capt. Joe Rodriguez, local commander for MCSO in Fountain Hills, said the Text-A-Tip program is working.

"The highest number of tips are related to coalition

concerns," Rodriguez said last week during a coalition sector meeting.

"We even saw a Facebook post that the kids are trying to keep (the partying) more low key because the word is out about Text-A-Tip."

"Some tips have also led to early intervention regarding bullying and other issues."

The program allows texters to directly key in anonymous tips to MCSO officers on duty. Since the texts are routed through Canada, law enforcement has no way of tracking the sources of texts.

Certain codes are used to delineate the circumstances of the tips, such as "FHMS" for the middle school, "FHHS" for the high school and "FH" for the community at-large.

The program averages 20 tips per month.

"We've even changed our strategy on how to approach drinking parties because of all this," Rodriguez said. "The kids are getting smarter. We've even had problems with parents who are hosting drinking parties."

Mayor Linda Kavanagh asked the coalition to consider expanding Text-A-Tip marketing so that commu-

(cont. on page 8A)

Oktoberfest this weekend

A portion of Fountain Park will be transformed into a German-themed festival as the annual Oktoberfest is held this weekend.

Beer, brats, polka music, a laser light show and plenty of other activities will highlight the festival Friday and Saturday evening, Sept. 28-29, from 5 to 10 p.m.

Weather permitting, a laser show will brighten the skies at 8, 9 and 10 p.m. each evening.

To help cover expenses, Oktoberfest for the first time will be charging a \$5 admission fee for adults (free for kids under 12 and anyone dressed in Oktoberfest attire - dirndl or lederhosen).

Once inside the fence, kids will be able to enjoy free inflatables while there

will be games and contests for the adults along with authentic German polka music, food and beer.

The food will include foot-long bratwursts, homemade sauerkraut and German potato salad, turkey legs, apple strudel, hot dogs and chips for the kids, popcorn, cotton candy and large pickles.

Besides the Southwest German Society, other groups participating are Fountain Hills Elks Lodge No. 2846, AMVETS Post No. 7, Fountain Hills Sister Cities, Four Peaks Rotary Club and the Noon Kiwanis Club.

The German Society and Spike's Treats are teaming up to organizing a dachshund

race at 5:30 p.m. Saturday.

Cost is \$25 per dog (\$10 extra for each extra dachshund per household); race fees include entry into race, T-shirt and one ticket into Oktoberfest free of charge.

Pre-registration is available at Spike's in Plaza

(cont. on page 8A)

*Coalition (cont. from page 1A)

nity residents better understand they can text in tips related to vandalism and other issues.

Major "live" incidents should still be called into 911 or Sheriff's dispatch.

The coalition will be manning a booth at upcoming community events and football games to promote Text-A-Tip along with its Safe Homes Network.

That network encourages parents to "call and confirm" with other parents before their teens go out for the evening to someone's house, for example.

A new and upgraded phone app for smartphones is now available as part of Safe Homes Network.

"We want parents to confirm, and to start this at an early age," Groux said. "This could save a kid's life."

"We're about prevention. We want to eliminate those teen parties."

In other coalition news: *The "Above That" club continues at the middle school, which encourages young teens to participate in positive activities and stay above the peer pressure to drink, bully, etc.

*The coalition is working with school and MSCO officials to help make Homecoming weekend safer for teens and to discourage "rite of passage" drinking at this time of year.

*Planning efforts are well underway for the Oct. 11 "Red Ribbon Day" at FHMS, allowing law enforcement agencies to display their equipment and capabilities.

*"Early Action Kits" remain available in the community for parents to use to drug screen their children. The kits include a free drug screen and helpful information; more than 60 kits have already been distributed in town this past year.

*Lisa Tucker has been hired by the coalition on a part-time basis to coordinate the Safe Homes Network and help with other coalition efforts.

PALS

Support for parents of addicts

A support group for parents and others who have loved ones addicted to illegal substances is featuring a special video presentation today, Sept. 26.

The Fountain Hills PALS group meets Wednesdays at 7 p.m. at Fountain Hills Christian Center, corner of Fountain Hills Blvd. and Ironwood Drive.

PALS stands for Parents (partners & friends) of Addicted Loved Ones.

The main message of

PALS is "You are not alone."

Program founder Mike Speakman will be at the meeting to show "Pleasure Unwoven."

The video presents Dr. McCauley discussing why addiction is a disease.

The PALS group meets weekly to provide education and support, at no charge, for parents who are trying to save a son or daughter from addiction.

PALS also helps spouses who may feel they are

having to "parent" their addicted partner.

The group is especially helpful for parents and spouses, however, all other family members and friends are also welcome.

By attending, one will learn proven ways to help a loved one recover from addiction.

The program typically rotates through eight weekly topics, so parents and others can join the group at any time.

All attendees are required to maintain confidentiality; there is no cost to attend.

Some of the major topics include emotional growth, recovery, healthy helping, family roles, addiction lessons, enabling checklist, after care and others.

Information: Speakman at (480) 284-1411 or visit www.pal-group.org.