

## News Release – October 15, 2012

### Citizen Group Sets Graffiti Reduction Goals

The Graffiti Action Forum, a citizen based effort to attack graffiti from all angles, met Saturday October 13 in Tucson to receive updates on progress being made in Tucson's fight against graffiti and to set goals for the group.

Meeting at the Ward 6 office, the group heard updates on citizen reporting methods, use of pictures by police to support prosecution of taggers, financial participation of governments and utilities in covering cleanup costs, support for volunteer cleanups, tightening up prosecution policies, how restitution costs are assessed, court sentencing and publicity given to the graffiti problem.

One of the organizers of the Forum meetings, Donald Ijams of the Neighborhood Support Network, said there were several central messages coming out of the whole effort:

Rapid and effective cleaning of graffiti remains a major goal. Making new graffiti disappear as soon as possible removes notoriety for taggers and restores the beauty of the community.

The group's message to owners of any property that can be defaced (including private, government and utility): If you own it, you clean it or you pay to have it cleaned and you support volunteers who help you keep it clean.

Regarding the justice system, the goal is to stop the behavior now and keep it stopped, especially for chronic taggers.

Regarding graffiti vandals, from the community's perspective: We all have bad habits; tagging is a bad habit that trashes the community and is illegal. Find another outlet for your artistic urges; the community will help you. We want you or your parents to pay for the damage you caused.

Regarding tagging supplies, from the community's perspective: Part of businesses being good neighbors is playing your part. Rethink and reinforce controls of tagging supplies. Look into 'Responsible Retailing.' Keep reminding your employees of what's at stake.

Regarding tagging targets, from the community's perspective: Help neighbors thwart tagging at graffiti prone locations, maybe through Adopt a Hotspot efforts. Neighbors must be persistent in assuring that graffiti prone locations are dealt with by location owners.

The Forum meeting concluded by adopting eight areas for focusing future efforts:

- Supporting current programs that make rapid cleaning of graffiti a priority
- Improving the citizen graffiti reporting system
- Establishing a justice watch program, like court watch but broader in coverage
- Refining and widely distributing graffiti information to citizens
- Identifying graffiti prone areas for special attention
- Improving property owner response to graffiti
- Maintaining publicity on graffiti reduction efforts
- Supporting community arts and other projects as diversions

More information about the Graffiti Action Forum, including how to participate, can be obtained by contacting Ronni Kotwica, Palo Verde Neighborhood Association, at [paloverdena@gmail.com](mailto:paloverdena@gmail.com) or Donald Ijams at [dsijams@gmail.com](mailto:dsijams@gmail.com). Reference: <http://nsn.soaz.info/>

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