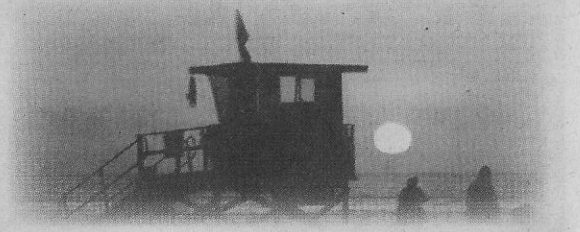
Hermosa Beach



Eric Stitt can be reached at estitt@tbrnews.com

Fiesta returns to downtown

Fiesta Hermosa returns this Labor Day weekend to downtown. The event begins Saturday, Sept. 3, and runs through Monday, Sept. 5, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. More than 270 artists will be featured along with live music and food vendors.

(photo by Chris Miller)

City makes going green easier

by Eric Michael Stitt

Hermosa Beach is making it easier for community members to go green.

Mayor Howard Fishman announced this week that new cost savings will be available to residents and businesses beginning Thursday, Sept. 1. According to Fishman, people supporting green technology will be able to benefit from new incentives as part of Hermosa Beach's continuing commitment to lower its carbon footprint, maintain a healthy community and help people save money.

Those who choose to become eco-friendly will be able to spend even less money on building and planning permit fees through the incentive program. Fishman said as part of a new fee structure, a resident can save $3,025 when installing a wind installation system, for example.

"We recognize that adopting the latest in green technology can be expensive, and we hope that these incentives make it a more affordable proposition for the community and ultimately save them money," Fishman said in a statement. "As a city, we have made a commitment to protect our environment, and we are constantly looking for ways to fulfill that mission. We hope that these incentives encourage folks to go green next time they build or upgrade their home or car."

According to the city, the new green building and energy vehicle incentives are a 50 percent rebate on building permit fees for Energy Upgrade California qualifying improvements and a 50 percent reduction in building permit fees for city-approved energy efficiency upgrades or buildings obtaining LEED or Build-It-Green certification.

Also, building permit fees will be waived for solar panels, small-wind energy systems and the installation of fueling/recharging stations for 100 percent alternative fuel vehicles.

Preferential parking district permit fees will be waived for 100 percent electric or compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles. And silver parking meter fees will be waived for 100 percent electric or CNG vehicles.

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Detectives nab international con artist

by Eric Michael Stitt

Hermosa Beach police detectives have nabbed an international con artist who scammed thousands of dollars

Gaglia said.

"When presented with all the information, he started talking and confessed to everything," Gaglia said. "Dahl confessed that he had used fraudulent checking accounts

$2.1 million. Gaglia said detectives are still collecting information about Dahl's criminal activity. Police Chief Greg Savelli said Dahl served six months for

H.B. environmental incentives

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cent electric or CNG vehicles.

According to the city, residents and businesses are eligible through August 2012 for all incentives. The wind energy waiver will remain valid through August 2013. These rebates offered are in addition to state and county programs.

In addition to these green incentives, the City Council recently agreed to place three electric vehicle charging stations along Pier Avenue and one at City Hall. Hermosa Beach is the first South Bay city to install charging stations for public use.

Along with providing the rebates, Hermosa Beach continues to make a name for itself in the environmental world. It was named "Southern California's Greenest City" for Earth Month by the Wyland Foundation for having the most residents pledge to conserve water. Also within the last year, it was honored with awards by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for its innovative Strand Infiltration Trench project that captures stormwater runoff before it can pollute the ocean. And the trench work was named project of the year in 2010 by the American Public Works' Southern California Chapter. According to the city, Heal the Bay also gave Hermosa Beach "top grades for ocean water quality in all categories for the organization's 2010-11 Annual Beach Report Card."

Fishman said all the environmental groundwork being laid out by the city gives all its residents and business owners plenty of opportunities to go green.

"We hope that these ongoing conservation efforts will help residents and businesses find ways, both large and small, that they can live, play and work a little more green," Fishman said. "We look forward to continuing to work with the community to protect the environment that we all enjoy so much."

For more information, visit www.hermosabch.org/residents/green.

H.B. international con artist

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community, word traveled fast about this subject, and they quickly brought it to our attention. Our detectives responded quickly and we immediately put resources to work to find the suspect before he left the area."

Dahl is charged with nine felony counts, and is being held on $20,000 bail, Gaglia said. The suspect could face jail time in the United States or Immigration could send him back to Norway, Gaglia said. People with information about Dahl or anyone who has been victimized by him or S & D Development are asked to contact Sergeant Salana at (310) 318-0351 or rsaldana@hermosapolice.org.

H.B. dispute resolution center

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for a maximum of 72 cases and Torrance spends $16,500 for 70. Manhattan Beach is charged $11,000 for 52, Widman said. And if the center doesn't hit the maximum caseload, it doesn't get paid in full. If it exceeds the limit, they work for free, Widman said.

"We try to get situations resolved," Widman said. "Police don't have the time … we help satisfy the residents."

Widman primarily works the cases, but does bring in other mediators when needed, he said.

Burrell said the SBCDR is an advantageous organization for the city. He said non-emergency issues that would clog police service are almost always successfully dealt with through the center's services.

"It's very important and a very effective program. They're very responsive," Burrell said. "They get (issues) resolved."

Police Chief Greg Savelli said they refer people to the SBCDR very often because officers don't have time to provide this type of service.

"It's a valuable option to have available," Savelli said. "Conflict resolution services are valuable to our community because we live so close to each other. (There is) very little space between homes, yards and driveways. Conflicts arise sometimes over the smallest matters, and this service helps put all involved back into the perspective of wanting to be good neighbors to each other."

When conflicts can't be fixed with a compromise, Widman forwards his report to the city prosecutor. Then, if any violations are taking place, the city will take legal action. But most of the time, he's successful in orchestrating handshakes between feuding neighbors. And he has a lifetime of stories regarding disputes that are anything from hilarious to mean, disrespectful and absolutely shocking.

Widman said, "Where do I start?" when flipping through his memory of mediating. Out of a few that came to mind was one man's complaint about his neighbor's overgrown juniper bushes.

He said when the scrub owner was away on vacation, the upset neighbor grabbed a chainsaw and completely cut down the junipers. Then he stacked all the fire-log-sized wood against their wall.

Without a witness, police were unable to charge the man. But Widman was able to get the person to confess and he eventually helped pay to replace the vegetation.

Another story involved wind chimes that were apparently being heard from three blocks away. The owner loved the sound, but a neighbor dreaded it enough to sneak over and glue the wind chimes into "five pounds of twisting bronze," Widman said.

Widman said each case is unique and seems like the most important thing to those involved. So he respects their issue and will always strive to fix it.

"I'm the last line of defense. Nine out of 10 times it works," Widman said. "I calm them down and focus on what (they) want to see."

For more information about the South Bay Center for Dispute Resolution, visit www.sbcdr.net.