



BERNALILLO COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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THE COMMUNICATOR

JULY 2020 NEWSLETTER

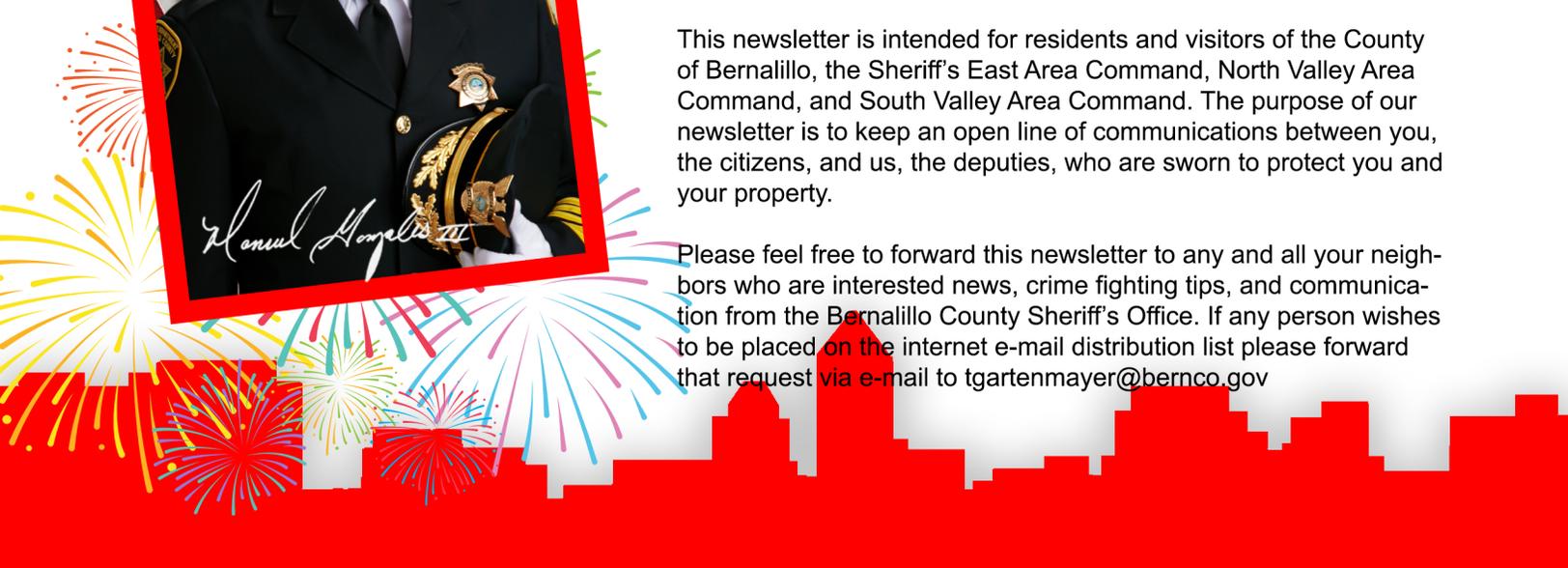


Hello residents and visitors to Bernalillo County. Please enjoy our July 2020 issue of the "communicator."

We continue our effort to work with you, our community and visitors of our county to continue to provide you with the superior service you have come to expect.

This newsletter is intended for residents and visitors of the County of Bernalillo, the Sheriff's East Area Command, North Valley Area Command, and South Valley Area Command. The purpose of our newsletter is to keep an open line of communications between you, the citizens, and us, the deputies, who are sworn to protect you and your property.

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to any and all your neighbors who are interested news, crime fighting tips, and communication from the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office. If any person wishes to be placed on the internet e-mail distribution list please forward that request via e-mail to tgartenmayer@bernco.gov



NEWS FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD

NEWS FROM THE EAST AREA COMMAND

Fire season is upon us and is in full swing. As our weather gets hotter and the winds kick up, the danger to our communities countywide continues to increase, particularly here in the East Mountain areas. Please take the time to ensure that you have made plans for evacuation during potential emergencies including food and water, medications and pet/livestock care. www.Ready.gov has good information on how to prepare for these events.

Speaking on evacuations, I have been contacted by several members of the community regarding evacuations routes. Citizens have questions as to why there are not dedicated routes that are available to the public to let them know where they need to go in the event of an evacuation. While it would be nice to be able to pre-plan these routes, the nature of emergencies is too unpredictable to decide beforehand, exactly where you need to direct emergency traffic. The dynamics of a fire limit our ability to put evacuation routes in place before the fire breaks out. So, where does that leave you? First, during an emergency it is important for you to keep up to date on all of the necessary information regarding the event. There are a few ways to do this. First is television. This is probably the least up to date information, and hardest to access as you must be sitting in front of the TV to get it. Radio is another way to access emergency information, and is portable, but again you are at the mercy of the broadcast to get the bits of information you may need regarding evacuations.

Bernalillo County also uses Nixle, which sends emergency information to you directly through text messaging. Nixle gives you the opportunity to get real time information directly from the Emergency Operations Center as it becomes available, including important information regarding evacuations. We recommend that you take a moment to subscribe to Nixle to get access to this important information. Subscriptions can be completed at www.nixle.com.

Finally, during an evacuation event, BSCO deputies will work with the various Fire Departments to assist with community evacuations. When an area is determined to be in danger, deputies will attempt to contact residents in that area through a combination of face-to-face and PA announcements, advising residents to evacuate the area. These evacuation announcements are highly recommended. BCSO cannot force you to leave your home, but if you choose to stay in an area that has been deemed to be in danger, your safety cannot be guaranteed after evacuation announcements have been given. In addition, your choice to stay in an evacuated area may severely hinder the firefighting effort in that air support may not be authorized due to you being in the flight path. This can make the fire much harder to combat and control.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the East Area Command Center at 468-7220.

NEWS FROM THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

The Homicide and Violent Crimes Unit continues to stay busy as summer approaches. Cases and callouts are occurring almost daily and detectives are working long hours with terrific results. Two of our detectives, Detective Lopez and Detective Limon have been commended recently for stellar investigations leading to Federal prosecutions and Federal warrants issued by AUSA's on two separate cases.

The detailed and diligent work accomplished by these two investigators will lead to dangerous offenders facing federal charges and possibly federal incarceration. The Violent Crimes/Homicide Unit prides itself ensuring criminals are not only investigated and appropriately charged, but also ensuring those found guilty are sentenced and locked up, away from our community.



NEWS FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD

NEWS FROM THE SOUTH AREA COMMAND

The Illegal Dumping Partnership (IDP) is a multi-agency task force established to help combat illegal dumping throughout Bernalillo County. The Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office is one of many partners throughout the metro area who work together to minimize illegal dumping through various activities to include patrolling, education, and outreach. The mission of the IDP is to minimize illegal dumping by: tracking pollution & benchmarking progress, engaging and educating the community, changing behaviors, and utilizing resources. The IDP's vision is to provide a clean, safe healthy environment and prosperous community free of litter, polluting debris, and harmful materials.

The Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office patrols several open space areas throughout our South Area Command where illegal dumping regularly occurs. The Pajarito and Amole Mesa areas, as well as the Rio Grande river trails have been a target area for individuals illegally dumping their trash and vehicles.

Through the partnership with the IDP, BCSO attends monthly meetings to discuss enforcement activities, as well as ways to mitigate illegal dumping within the county open space areas. Beginning in July, 2020 the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office will deploy the Mobile Community Action Team (M-CAT), a full-time open space patrol and community policing initiative for Bernalillo County. This team will be an integral part of the Illegal Dumping Partnership and we look forward to working closely with our partners to reduce the trash and pollution experienced by our community.

NEWS FROM THE NORTH AREA COMMAND

The Bernalillo County Sheriff's Department North Area Command has their MedReturn drug drop box installed. Please stay tuned for our reopening once the governor authorizes phase 2. At that time, we will begin accepting outdated, unused or unwanted prescriptions.



4 STEPS TO STOP ILLEGAL DUMPING IN BERNALILLO COUNTY

1. Call the county Health Protection office at (505) 314-0310.
2. Have available the address of the location where the trash is or dumping is occurring.
3. Be able to assess what type of trash or substance is on the property.
4. Be prepared to give your name and phone number in case property cannot be located.

NEWS FROM THE **ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT BUREAU**

Citizens of Bernalillo County have raised multiple questions regarding the impact COVID-19 has had on the Civil Process. The Civil Process Department of the Sheriff's Department is open and conducting business on a limited schedule.

Our business office hours are Monday through Friday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm excluding county holidays. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, once you arrive at our office located at 400 Roma NW, you will need to call 505-468-7140.

If you reach our voicemail, leave a message as our techs may be working with another customer. We are able to process two customers at a time, so you may experience longer wait times than normal. As a reminder we take cash, check and credit card.

In addition, there has been some confusion on if we are still processing evictions. The Federal Government has suspended evictions on residents who currently have a FHA Loan due to non-payment. This is only for FHA loans.

The state has also adopted a policy that allows the court to delay evictions for non-payment if it can be proven the non-payment of rent is directly related to COVID-19. The following information is provided by the courts for some of the more frequently asked questions:

NEW MEXICO COVID-19 & EVICTION FAQ

WHAT HAS THE SUPREME COURT DONE TO ADDRESS EVICTIONS IN LIGHT OF THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY?

The Supreme Court issued two orders, one on March 24, 2020 (No. 20-8500-007) and one on March 26, 2020 (No. 0-8500-008), which address eviction for non-payment of rent cases. These orders require judges to stay (put a hold on) evictions in cases where the tenant has shown the court that they are unable to pay rent.

DO TENANTS STILL HAVE TO GO TO COURT?

Yes, if a landlord has filed a court case claiming a tenant has not paid rent, the tenant must still prove that they are unable to pay rent at the court hearing before an eviction can be stayed.

HOW CAN COURT HEARINGS HAPPEN SAFELY WITH COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS?

Courts are holding hearings by telephone and video. Information about how to appear by phone or video will be given on hearing notices. If a person is not able to appear by telephone or video, they should let the court where their case is happening know as soon as possible.

DO THESE ORDERS STOP EVICTIONS FOR THINGS OTHER THAN NOT PAYING RENT?

No, evictions can still happen for other reasons, such as a tenant violating the lease agreement in a way that is not about paying rent, a tenant committing a crime on the property, and tenants who do not move out once their lease is up.

DO THESE ORDERS MEAN THAT A PERSON CAN NEVER BE EVICTED OR WILL NEVER HAVE TO PAY BACK RENT?

No, the Supreme Court orders only put a hold on evictions and payment of back rent until the COVID-19 emergency is over.

DO THESE ORDERS APPLY TO MOBILE HOME PARK EVICTIONS?

Yes. Judges must also stay (stop) orders removing a mobile home from a mobile home park or foreclosing on a mobile home. The tenant in these cases must also prove that they are unable to pay rent.

I WANT TO APPEAL A WRIT OF RESTITUTION (EVICTION ORDER) THAT WAS STAYED. WHEN DO I HAVE TO DO THIS BY?

If a writ of restitution is stayed, the timelines for the appeal are also stayed.

IS THERE AN EFFECTIVE DATE FOR EVICTIONS BEING STAYED?

Yes, these orders only apply to writs of restitution (a court order about eviction) issued on or after March 24, 2020.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE STAYED WRITS OF RESTITUTION ONCE THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY IS OVER?

This will be up to individual courts to decide. Some courts are developing mediation programs to help tenants and landlords address ways in which a tenant might be able to stay in the property once the public health emergency is over. You should contact the individual court in which a case is filed for more guidance.

Contact information for specific courts can be found at: <https://www.nmcourts.gov/state-courts.aspx>

NEWS FROM BERNALILLO COUNTY

BERNCO COMMISSION VOTES TO BAN OPEN BURNING & APPROVES FIREWORKS RESTRICTIONS IN UNINCORPORATED BERNALILLO COUNTY

Current extreme drought conditions create need for ban.

Bernalillo County – The Bernalillo County Commission voted Tuesday night to ban the use of open fires, campfires, and smoking in the unincorporated areas of Bernalillo County. In a second resolution, the Bernalillo County Commissioners voted to restrict fireworks in the unincorporated areas of the county, outside the city limits of Albuquerque.

The fire danger across Bernalillo County is expected to be very high to extreme this fire season, due to current extreme drought conditions, above normal temperatures, below normal precipitation and the snow pack is well below normal.

The National Weather Service predicts this drought will persist through August 2020.

“The open burning ban and the fireworks restrictions are necessary to reduce the risk of wildland fires, which pose a threat to humans, wildlife, timber, vegetation, and property,” says Bernalillo County Fire Marshal Keith Clark. “The county may issue extensions to these resolutions if extreme or severe drought conditions continue and make those extensions necessary.”

The open burn ban goes into effect immediately and will be in effect for 180 days.

In the second resolution, commissioners voted to ban the sale and use of aerial fireworks in the unincorporated areas of Bernalillo County and banned the sale and use of all fireworks in all of the wildlands in the unincorporated areas of Bernalillo County. The wildlands include unincorporated areas East of Louisiana Boulevard to the west face of the Sandia Mountains and from San Antonio north to the Pueblo of Sandia; all the East Mountain areas, north, south and east to the county line and portions of the unincorporated areas to include the Rio Grande Bosque and wildland areas extending 1,000 feet from the outer edge of the Rio Grande Bosque.

The restrictions limit the use of **ground and hand-held sparkling and smoke device type fireworks** that are limited to areas that are paved or barren. There should also be a readily accessible source of water (a bucket of water or a hose) for use to extinguish the fireworks.

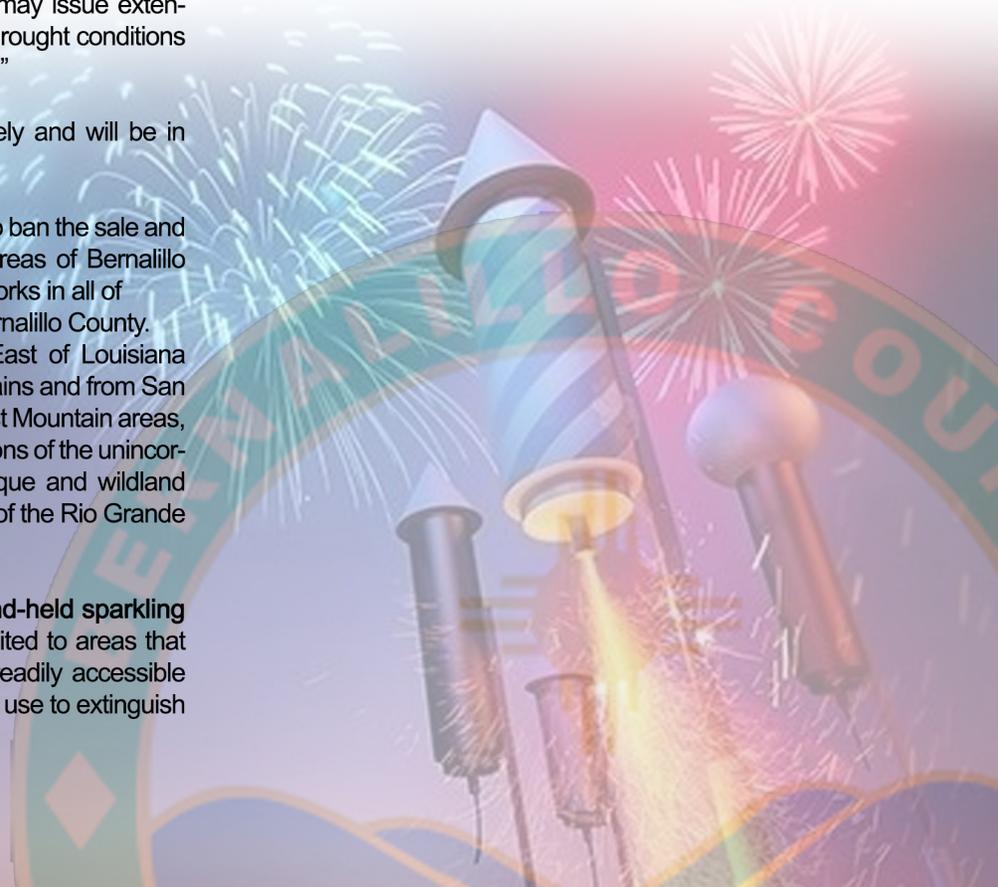
The restriction bans the sale or use of display fireworks.

The fireworks restrictions are in effect for the next 30 days.

If an individual is caught with prohibited fireworks, a citation could be issued and the individual may have to appear in court. Violators could be fined up to \$1,000 and sentenced to less than one year in jail. If it is determined that the use of fireworks was the cause of a fire that damaged property, the responsible individual may be held liable for those damages.

To report someone using illegal fireworks, call 505-798-7000 or to report a fire call 9-1-1.

The resolutions each passed on a 5 to 0 vote.



CRIME REDUCTION AND SAFETY TIPS

INTERNET SAFETY

Internet use by all age groups of our society has increased exponentially since its creation and has further increased since the Covid-19 outbreak. Due to stay at home orders, telecommuting policies, and online course curriculum, our children have an increased risk of being exposed to nefarious actors and questionable internet content.

CYBER SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS:

Keep the computer in a common area, such as the family or living room. This helps you monitor your child's computer use. Spend time with your child online, and talk to them about their Internet use. Ask to see their profile page(s). Many children have more than one profile. Google your child's name.

Know your child's screen names and passwords. Have your child to add you as a "friend" on his/her profile page.

Limit the information allowed in online profiles and make sure profiles are set to private.

Control access to chat rooms and Instant Messaging. Monitor the sites they are visiting by clicking the internet browser's History button.

Teach children to avoid risky behavior, such as maintaining buddy lists that include strangers, flirting or discussing sex online with people they do not know in person, posting sexually suggestive material or being rude or mean to someone online. Teach children to Stop, Block, and Tell if they are bullied or made to feel uncomfortable online.

Set parameters about computer use, such as:
sites they are allowed to visit
length of time they can be online
basic safety rules

Below are some tips we'd like to share with you to help make your use of the internet safer for you and your children

CYBER SAFETY TIPS FOR KIDS:

Don't share your password - even with your best friend. Know who your friends are! Make sure you know someone in person before you add them to your "friends" list.

Don't post anything you wouldn't want your grandmother to see.

What you post online stays online—forever—so think before you post.

Pay attention to how you are communicating. Don't say anything online you wouldn't say in person. Don't be rude online.

Protect your privacy and your friends' privacy too...get their permission before posting something about them.

Check what your friends are posting or saying about you. Even if you are careful, they may be putting you at risk.

Don't take, keep, or send nude or partial nude pictures of yourself or others. There are laws against this and people can be prosecuted criminally if you possess or send nude or partial nude pictures of someone under the age of 18.

Tell a trusted adult if someone does or says something online that makes you feel uncomfortable.

And, unless you're prepared to attach your Facebook page to your college/job/internship/scholarship or sports team application, don't post it publicly!

Don't become an addict. The key to becoming the well-rounded and interesting person you want to be is to find a balance between your online experience and your social encounters.