



The Sparkler* *

Promoting a cleaner and friendlier downtown San Jose
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Call 287-1520 for service

State of the PBID

Clad in the familiar green Groundwerx uniform shirt, board president Chuck Hammers recited statistics and anecdotes at the Property-Based Improvement District (PBID) annual meeting Oct. 10.

Hammers reported on cleaning of downtown sidewalks, which are maintained daily by trash removal, power scrubbing and pressure-washing.

From July 1, 2008, to June 30, 2009, Groundwerx spent 5,433 hours scrubbing sidewalks and 5,224 hours pressure-washing the district roughly bordered by Fourth Street, Julian Street, Guadalupe River Park and Reed Street.

Further, the Green Machine sweeper was deployed for 4,330 hours and pan-and-broom cleaners provided 10,968 hours of service covering 8,483 block faces, Hammers said. "The most astonishing statistic is the 14,644 graffiti tags," Hammers said, "meaning on average, cleaners remove 1,220 tags per month or 40 tags a day."

Groundwerx ambassadors provided 1,239 pedestrian assists, such as providing information to visitors, escorting pedestrians and distributing promotional and event materials. Pedestrians also received directions to various parts of downtown 44,862 times.

Hammers reported the number of tons of trash from litter containers was about equal to the tons of trash removed from sidewalks, then wondered aloud what downtown would look like without Groundwerx services.

Back on the downtown beat

Richard Mongarro, started as program director on October 28. Mongarro returns to the downtown area he once

patrolled as a member of the San Jose Police Department.

Mongarro will manage 28 Groundwerx cleaners and ambassadors and their equipment, making sure the PBID is maintained at a consistently high level.

The biggest challenge for Groundwerx is adjusting to the constantly changing environment, Mongarro observed:

- Windy days mean it's "all hands on deck" to remove the leaves as quickly as possible;
- Hot summer days mean more spills from pedestrians;
- And large events mean that Groundwerx must be positioned for heavy litter pickup.

Attention to this type of detail is important to Groundwerx's overall service and operations to the district, Mongarro added.

A retired sergeant, Mongarro was part of the Metro Special Operations Team, which dealt with quality-of-

life issues. Regarded by his police peers as a gifted leader, Mongarro regularly put veteran and rookie police officers through training and team-building paces.



Program Director Richard Mongarro

Connecting South First beautification efforts

The 2009 PBID beautification project, now in full swing, connects the first beautification project of 2008 – South First Street and Post Street between Santa Clara and San Fernando streets – with the SoFA improvements made earlier this year south of San Carlos Street by 1stACT Silicon Valley and the San Jose Redevelopment Agency.

Kathy Finley of Finley Landscape Design, whose has major projects at Santana Row and in Mountain View, has created a fresh look that is consistent with elements of the other South First projects but are unique to the long San



Bob Martins removes a downtown tag.

(Continued)

Fernando-San Carlos Street block. Planters with matching design and complementary colors will enhance the architecture on this block. Nineteen custom planters will dress up the middle of the block in the space between the



South First Street and San Fernando St.

VTA lightrail tracks and the curb. The stark cement parking lot walls on both ends of the block will be activated with mounted planter boxes, adding color to the street,

Finley said.

Hanging flower baskets will be installed on both sides of First Street at the Paseo de San Antonio. New LED tree lights will replace the burned out strands currently on the sycamores that line the street. A vine bed will be planted along the parking lot corner of South First and San Carlos.

The total budget for the beautification project is \$300,000, about one-sixth of the Groundwerx budget, which mostly goes to daily sidewalk cleanup and ambassador services.

Perfect piece for downtown puzzle

A key section of South First Street received an aesthetic boost in October from the Property-Based Improvement District (PBID), 1stAct Silicon Valley and artist Jet Martinez, who painted a street-level mural on the wall at the Robert F. Peckman Federal Building.

The 135-foot-long, 10-foot high mural titled “Robles” depicts the Diablo Range in dry season, with golden hill-sides and green oaks. “I have a strong interest in nature and pattern,” said



Muralist Jet Martinez at work.

Martinez, a San Francisco-based painter who has public murals in Mexico, Brazil, Switzerland and the United States.

“The grid-like system creates an illusion of light and depth. Passersby can appreciate this piece from afar.”

As the previous story explains, more PBID beautification improvements are in the works between San Fernando and San Carlos streets. Jason Hunt, deputy property manager at the federal building, helped the PBID gain approval for the mural.

Former tagger sees error of her ways

What goes around has certainly come around for Jared Pulido, a Groundwerx clean team employee since May 2009. Pulido, who admits to spreading graffiti tags as a youth, has removed hundreds of downtown tags this summer while working for Groundwerx.



Jared Pulido of Groundwerx

Pulido has a new understanding and appreciation for how much time, effort and resources go into removing graffiti. She now views graffiti as unsightly and obnoxious and regrets the hardships she caused business and property owners, she said.

She atones for her deeds with her dedication and hard work. “Jared is a rock star,” said Gina Cuneo, assistant program manager. “She has quickly worked her way up from a pan-and-broom cleaner to machine operator.”

Hailing from Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico, Pulido moved to California with her family when she was 5 years old. She grew up in Salinas and moved to San Jose in 2005 to attend school. While working for the Conservation Corps, Jared earned a scholarship to the Fire Academy, which she hopes to start in the near future.

When not busy keeping downtown clean, Pulido often brings her family downtown to show them where she works and what she does. Pulido and her family frequent many downtown restaurants. “I can’t say which one is my favorite because I like them all,” she said. “My family and I really enjoy spending time downtown and are especially looking forward to the upcoming holiday season.”

Call 287-1520 for service. Contact Eric Hon at 590-0241 or ehon@sjdowntown.com with suggestions.

Edited by Rick Jensen