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**COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S APPROVE FUNDING FOR
ANTI-GRAFFITI PROGRAM**
**Funds will allow the Probation Dept. to expand clean-up activities in
remote areas of the El Paso County**

El Paso County Attorney José R. Rodriguez announced today that Commissioner's Court has approved funding to expand graffiti clean-up efforts in the outlying areas of the County.

During a special budget meeting held on Tuesday September 23, 2008, Commissioner's Court approved \$83,000 for the "Graffiti Wipeout" Program managed by the West Texas Community Supervision and Corrections Department (Adult Probation). The funds will pay the salary of a new field manager, and include \$34,000 for the purchase of a new truck.

The "Graffiti Wipeout" Program operates under a very efficient, cost-effective system in which probationers perform the bulk of the work without compensation to meet their community service hours. During Fiscal Year 2007-2008 the "Graffiti Wipe-Out" Program has cleaned more than 4,600 sites throughout the El Paso County.

Restoring the County's funding of the program was one of the main goals identified by the Anti-Graffiti Task Force in its report issued on June 21, 2008.

The report is the blueprint for a new anti-graffiti initiative and contains more than 20 concrete proposals that can be implemented to reduce the incidence of graffiti in our neighborhoods, among them:

- Amend state law to enhance punishment for repeat offenders.
- Developing a first offender program for juveniles who commit graffiti.
- Propose city ordinance requiring property owners to consent to graffiti clean-up or else pay a fine and costs of clean up.

- Adopt ordinances to require business to lock up or place spray paint behind a counter.
- Implementation of a Graffiti Public Information Campaign.
- Promote “Campus Crime Stoppers” at all local schools.

El Paso County Attorney José R. Rodríguez, Chairman of the Anti-Graffiti Task Force said getting funding from Commissioner’s Court for the program is very important because it is very cost-effective.

“Ten years ago we had the same effort and the County began to fund the “Graffiti Wipe-Out” program. They were so successful in eradicating graffiti that, in 2004, the County cut its funding because anti-graffiti efforts were not considered a priority. As a result, the presence of graffiti has been increasing dramatically in the last few years,” Rodríguez explained.

Rodríguez also explained that the Anti-Graffiti Task Force will continue to work on implementing all of the recommendations included in the report.

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