



**NOVEMBER 2008**

## **QUARTERLY COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER**

### **FRAUDULENT HEALTH AND MEDICAL PRODUCTS**

A recent quarter page advertisement in a local newspaper touted a new product that “contains a powerful dosage of ingredients from around the world.” This product (in capsule form), the article said, would “stimulate your blood flow”. It further promised it would give the user “unlimited energy” and would “help increase stamina and performance”. WOW! All this plus a “FREE Guide” are available for \$29.95. Can you go to a drug or grocery store to purchase the product? NO! It can only be ordered by calling a 1-800- phone number (and providing your debit/credit card number) or by writing to an address in Ohio (and enclosing your personal check).

About the same time, Lisa received a letter in her U.S. Mail telling her about a product that would improve her general health and vitality. Lisa had been feeling a bit below par, so she thought – “Why not give it a try?” So she placed her personal check in the envelope provided in the mailer (addressed to a P.O. Box somewhere in Canada—she can’t remember where). All she received back was her cancelled check. When she tried to telephone the number the mailer provided, no one ever answered the phone. When she telephoned us for help, the best advice we could offer her was to get a new checking account number. Fraud opportunities received through the U.S. Mail should be reported to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service Support Group, 222 S. Riverside Plaza, Ste 1250, Chicago, ILL 60606-6100 or [postalinspectors.uspis.gov](http://postalinspectors.uspis.gov).

Frank is diabetic and was feeling really miserable when he happened to read an advertisement in a magazine. It was a very colorful 2-page ad that really caught his interest. The ad pictured a half dozen smiling men and women all testifying they were diabetic. They all raved about the great experience they had received from the liquid

product that was featured in the ad. Impressed by their fine and positive words, Frank ordered the product from a Florida address. What Frank didn't know, and learned later, was the Federal Drug Administration was investigating the product. What he learned later was the small vial he had purchased for \$39— was Atlantic Ocean water.

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Ailing citizens all over the country are special targets of the quacks, con men and scam artists who are out to sell worthless “medical” products or to get your money. Their claims are highly deceptive and usually promise miracles.

The gadgets, gimmicks, pills, lotions, and devices they offer hardly ever have been properly tested or proven medically effective. Some are even dangerous to your health. Some do not even exist.

Some of the ineffective or dangerous products are sold by unsophisticated people. Some are sold by professional con men (or women) who will use every trick to get you to buy their product. Some have no product at all. They just want your money, your checking account number or debit/credit card numbers for I.D. theft.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

To avoid being taken in by worthless or quack cures being offered to you, we recommend:

A. Ask yourself-----

1. Should you trust your health to a salesperson or should you consult a doctor or a pharmacist?
2. Why is the product only available through an 800 telephone number or by mail? Or why is it only available from a foreign country? If it's really that good, why isn't it being advertised and sold everywhere?
3. Are you really willing to place a product with unknown ingredients in your body? Can you trust a manufacturer you do not know or have never heard about before? What if you happen to be allergic to the ingredients? What if the ingredients counteract the good medicines you are already taking? Is it worth the risk?
4. Are you willing to give an absolute stranger, someone you have never heard about before, who offers you a far away address or a post office box and/or an 800 telephone number your credit card or account numbers? Are you ready for Identity Theft?
5. Is it worth putting your health—or your life—on the line for a \$29 promise?

B. Don't believe:

1. Claims that a product, available only by mail or from an "exclusive" supplier, contains a "special", "secret", "foreign", or "ancient" formula that will provide the cure or the relief you seek.
2. Claims that a "miracle" drug or product will effectively treat a wide variety of illnesses or ailments.
3. "Testimonials" or case histories from "satisfied customers" as the only evidence that the product actually works.
4. Claims the medical establishment overlooked or suppressed a "scientific breakthrough" the promoter is trying to sell you.

If you have doubts about a product someone is trying to sell you which promises to relieve your problems—we recommend—first discuss it with your family doctor and/or other informed health professionals.

For more information, contact:

- U.S. Postal Inspection Service.  
See address above.
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Rockville, MD 20857-000  
1-888-463-6332  
[www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)

## CREDIT REPAIR SCAMS

Chris phoned our office a few weeks ago. He was a little bit tempted by an offer made to him—but he also was a little bit leery of it.

Chris had gotten himself into financial difficulty due to a medical problem. Then he received a letter asking him to call a certain number if he needed help. When he called, Chris was told for an up front fee of \$800, they would begin the program to get him out of debt. Fortunately, Chris told them "no". He did not have the \$800. About four hours later they called him. They told him they had reviewed his files again and decided they could start the program for only \$500 up front. That's when Chris called us.

### WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Bad economic times can be a boom time for scammers. According to Frank Dorman, spokesman for the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), "What we have historically seen is that predators go after people when they are desperate. It's when people can't pay their bills and when they don't know where to turn."

The FTC and other investigative agencies have put out warnings about money scams often aimed at people who suddenly find themselves in economic turmoil. One of these scams is credit repair offers.

If your once pristine credit status becomes tarnished because you fall behind on paying your bills there will be plenty of people who will offer to help cleanse your credit report. Approach with great care.

Officials at the FTC, who has taken action against about 70 companies that promised credit repair, say they have yet to come across a legitimate business that can quickly eliminate problems on a credit report.

One sure-fire indication of a scam is a request for up front fees or deposits.

Under the California Credit Service Act, any credit service company has to first put in writing exactly what they will accomplish for you. **AND**, it cannot collect any money until it has fully performed the agreed service.

## **THE REST OF THE STORY**

It's always important to know what's going on around you. Knowing what's happening with your friends and family can lead to participation in events and celebrations that can add significantly to the quality of your life. Knowing what is happening in your neighborhood and your town can lead to opportunities and procedures that can add significantly to your safety and security. But--- sometimes, there is more to the story or incident than is reported. Sometimes the rest of the story could lead to revealing circumstances that could ultimately save your life or the lives of those you love.

Two incidents happened in our town recently that were investigated by our Hemet Police Department (HPD) officers are classic examples of the rest of the story. They reveal information not covered by news releases that should be a vital concern to us all.

### **The First Story**

One morning, a woman (we'll call her Gayle) came home from an errand, parked her vehicle in her garage and entered her home. Once in her living room, Gayle was surprised to see a young man standing near a broken window at the far end of the room. The man raced toward her with a knife in his hand and knocked Gayle to the floor. Gayle hurt her head when she fell, but she was able to scramble to her feet and yell for help as she escaped from her home.

Neighbors heard Gayle's screams. One called 9-1-1. Another gave chase as the burglar ran, but he lost sight of him. Within minutes, 20 HPD officers set up a perimeter and began a house to house search. The California Highway Patrol sent a helicopter and an airplane to assist in the search.

Tips from the residents about which way the suspect ran led our officers to focus on one street. Soon they spotted a young man, matching the description of the suspect, jumping over a fence. The man was arrested on suspicion of home invasion robbery, assault with a deadly weapon and burglary. While searching the backpack the man carried, the officers found Gayle's cell phone and jewelry inside.

### **The rest of the story**

After the capture was concluded, the officers covered the neighborhood and took detailed reports from Gayle and the other residents. Gayle told them she had seen the young man earlier in the day. He had been walking back and forth on the street—just looking around. It made her feel uncomfortable. She knew he did not live nearby, so she watched him. Other neighbors reported the same thing. After a bit, he began walking down a nearby street. Still feeling uneasy, Gayle got into her vehicle to see if she could find him. She could not. So she drove home. About an hour later Gayle left her home for her errand. When she came home—the man was in her living room.

Could this incident have been avoided? Yes, in all likelihood it could. If Gayle and/or her neighbors had followed through on their instincts and called HPD to report a suspicious person prowling about their street, officers would have responded. They could have found the young man, talked with him and determined what to do. If they decided he was simply lost, they would have sent him on his way or they would have scared off a burglar. The burglar would know the neighbors were alert and aware and this was no place for him.

Always listen to your instincts. If you feel something is wrong, it probably is. If you cannot decide for yourself and you think you might need help, ask for it. The officers won't mind if they are called to investigate a situation that was misinterpreted. It's better to be safe than sorry.

### **The Second Story**

This story involves a 93 year old woman we'll name Shirley. Shirley was in her bedroom when she heard a noise coming from her hallway. When she heard the noise, Shirley looked up and saw an intruder—possibly two—approaching her bedroom. Without hesitation, Shirley picked up her handgun and fired it at the intruders. Then she called 9-1-1.

### **The rest of the story**

When the officers arrived, they found no evidence that the intruders had been hit by the bullets. But a witness reported he had seen two males, one on foot and another on a bike, running east bound from the location.

How did the intruders get into the house? The officers found the intruders had simply pulled open the home's garage doors from the outside and entered the home through the door leading into the residence from the attached garage.

The messages here are very clear. Shirley had closed her garage door which was a step in the right direction; however, additional steps would have been wiser. Following are prevention tips that will add security to closed garage doors.

1. Add an auxiliary lock or latch to supplement the existing one. This might be a padlock and hasp or a sliding bolt.
2. For garage doors that roll up or slide overhead on a track, consider drilling a hole in the track the door moves on. While the door is in a closed position, install a pin or padlock into the hole. This will prevent the door from moving along the track. If a pin is used, it should be sturdy enough to withstand considerable pressure.
3. Garage doors that are opened by remote control can often be opened by anyone possessing a remote control. These controls can be changed to different frequencies by turning small dials inside the control until your frequency is found and your garage door opens. Use a pin in the track to stop the door from moving or add an auxiliary lock. Or consider pulling the electrical plug that sends the power to your electrical equipment. This might be especially practical if you will be away from home for a long period of time.

And finally, it is always wise to have a dead bolt lock on the door leading from the garage to the home and to use it if you are in the house or out of it.

## **IN CASE OF EMERGENCY (I.C.E.)**

On January 1, 2009, the Hemet Fire Department (HFD) will implement a new tool that will add one more item to their procedure that could add immeasurably to our safety and security.

### **WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW**

This new tool is named I.C.E. It means—In Case of Emergency. The ICE program is not new. It was first launched in England in May 2005, based on an idea by Paramedic Bob Brotchie. Since its first introduction in our country, it has steadily moved across the United

States. The procedure is very simple. By programming numbers into your cell phone and saving them as ICE1 (and ICE2, ICE3), you could save your life.

It could work something like this example:

You are walking around your neighborhood to get a bit of exercise. You stub your toe, lose your balance, fall and hit your head on the pavement. You are unconscious. A citizen calls 9-1-1. Firemen rush to your aid. One of the first things they see on you is the cell phone you have clipped to your belt. One of the rescuers takes the phone, scrolls down your phone's telephone number menu to the "I's" and dials the number you have listed under ICE1. They talk to your spouse and learn your name, your medical conditions, about any medicines you are taking and any allergies you might have. Based on this information, they can begin treatments with confidence. They are doing the right things for you.

This is just one scenario—but it explains how ICE could be an effective tool for you and HFD.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO.

Following are some tips to setting up ICE on your cell phone.

1. Get permission from the person you will use as the ICE contact before programming your cell phone.
2. Provide your ICE contact with a list of people they should contact on your behalf if you are unable to do so.
3. Make sure you provide an ICE contact who is accessible at that number. It doesn't do any good to provide a home number for a person who is at work all day long.
4. Brief your ICE contact about any medical conditions or special instructions you might have about your care, your children, spouse or pets.
5. If you are a minor, the ICE contact should be your parent or guardian. This is the only person who is legally authorized to make decisions on your behalf.
6. If your ICE contact is already listed in your cell phone directory, here is what you should do: If you attempt to enter the same number twice, the phone won't know which name to display. To correct this situation, type a star (\*) after the phone number you want associated with the ICE contact. This will not affect the dialing.
7. If you have more than one person or number to contact, enter the contacts as ICE1, ICE2, ICE3.
8. If you have difficulty programming your phone, ask a teenager or contact your service provider.

## **Frequently Asked Questions About MEASURE “O”** **City of Hemet - Vital Needs**

### **Q: What’s at stake? What’s the issue?**

A: With state funding being cut due to a projected \$17 Billion state budget deficit, the slowdown in the economy, and significant budget cuts in each of the last two years, Hemet is simply running out of money to fund essential local services. Unless we are successful in identifying a local funding solution, the City will have no choice but to implement dramatic cuts to City services that will affect our safety and quality of life. These cuts could result in losing an additional 18 police officers, losing an additional 9 firefighters, closing at least one fire station, closing several City parks, and closing the library an additional day per week.

### **Q: What is Measure O?**

A: Measure O would place a 5% Utility Users’ Tax (UUT) on certain utility bills. Like many of our neighboring cities that already have UUTs in place, Hemet would use this funding to protect and maintain essential community services such as police, fire, park maintenance, and emergency services. Low-income seniors will be exempt from paying the UUT. The measure will be placed on the **November 4, 2008**, General Election ballot.

### **Q: How will Measure O be used to benefit the community?**

A: Measure O would provide funds to the City that would be used to continue providing the superior services City residents have come to expect such as:

Preventing the closure of local fire stations

- Shutting down crack houses and drug hotspots
- Retaining 911 emergency dispatch operators
- Maintaining the City’s ability to respond quickly and effectively to natural disasters such as a wildfire.
- General street maintenance and repair
- Keeping City parks open
- Restoring and maintaining Library hours and staffing
- Enhancing gang and drug prevention programs

### **Q: Can this money be taken by the state?**

A: No. All funds raised by Measure O are legally required to be spent in Hemet. Passing this measure will ensure local control of this revenue and provide a guaranteed source of funding for vital City services and cannot be taken by Sacramento.

### **Q: Can the City provide a full range of services without Measure O?**

A: No. State budget cuts to City programs and services means that there is NO help coming from Sacramento. In fact, Hemet’s share of funding from the state, like many other cities, has only decreased over time. Hemet has significantly cut expenses in the last 2 years by freezing or laying off 59 positions, many in public safety, and by closing

the Library on Mondays. Any additional cuts would mean cuts to vital services that affect our community's safety and quality of life. We need a stable, locally controlled funding source that we can depend on.

**Q: How will Measure O protect my property values and business?**

A: If the City is forced to cut basic services such as pothole repair, graffiti removal and park and open space maintenance, Hemet will become a less desirable place to live or for businesses to locate. By protecting and maintaining these basic community services, Measure O will protect property values and the local economy.

**Q: How do we know that funds will be spent responsibly?**

A. Measure O includes tough accountability provisions such as requiring review by an oversight committee, public expenditure reports and guaranteed annual independent audits. These fiscal safeguards will ensure funds are used efficiently, effectively and as promised.

If you have further questions, please call Hemet Police Captain Rob Webb at 951.765.2411 or [cwebb@cityofhemet.org](mailto:cwebb@cityofhemet.org)

Please also visit the City of Hemet website at [www.cityofhemet.org](http://www.cityofhemet.org) and click on the red "Measure O Update" in the upper right hand corner of the page for more information. Thank you for supporting public safety.

# HAPPY, SAFE HOLIDAYS

Before you know it, the holiday season will be here and we will be out and about, rushing, doing a thousand things to make our holiday season a happy time. Before all that begins, let's take a moment to review some tips that will help to make our holiday season not only happy, but safe and secure.

## OUT AND ABOUT

- Lock your vehicle and close the windows even if you are only going to be gone a few minutes. If you are carrying gifts and packages, keep them out of sight or locked in the trunk.
- Wait for public transportation or rides from friends in a well-lit, busy place.
- Teach your children to go to a store clerk and ask for help if you become separated while shopping. They should never go the parking lot or the car alone.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash. Pay for purchases with a check or credit/debit card when possible.
- Make sure your check book, debit or credit card is securely placed in your purse or wallet before you step away from the store's counter.
- Be extra careful with purses and wallets. They may become targets for crime in any crowded area.
- Avoid overloading yourself with packages. If you periodically take your purchases to be stored in your vehicle, move the vehicle to the other side of the parking lot before you resume your shopping. If anyone is watching you, they'll think you've gone home.

## AT HOME

- Be extra cautious about locking doors and windows when you leave the house, even for a few minutes. Leave lights, a radio or television on so the house looks occupied.
- Do not place large displays of holiday gifts in full view of your windows or doors.
- If you go away for the holidays, put lights and radios on timers. Have friends and/or a neighbor watch your house (or sign up for a Vacation Check at the P.D.). Stop your mail and your newspapers or have a friend pick them up for you.
- Immediately mark your new gifts with your driver's license number.
- Be sure your Christmas tree is mounted on a sturdy base, that your lights are in good working order and that you place water or wet sand at its base to keep it green.
- Never burn wrapping paper in your fireplace.

## When Hosting a Party

- Have non-alcoholic beverages available for party guests.
- Use a jigger when serving alcoholic beverages rather than pouring straight from the bottle.
- Find alternative transportation for intoxicated guests.

## When Going to a Party

- Have something to eat before consuming alcoholic beverages.
- Eat high protein foods (meat, cheese, eggs) that will stay in your stomach longer and will slow absorption of alcohol into your system.
- Remember, only time will eliminate alcohol from your system.
- Know your safe limit.

# **NEVER DRINK AND DRIVE**

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**The Hemet Police Department  
Officers, Staff, and Volunteers  
Wish You a Healthy, Happy, Safe  
Holiday Season**

**All names used in this publication are fictitious. They were changed to protect the innocent.**

### For Your Information

The Neighborhood Watch Program was established in Hemet in 1994 under the auspices of the Hemet Police Department (HPD) Volunteer Team. Originally, all the expenses of the programs (handouts and this newsletter) were paid from the HPD budget. About ten years ago, when the State of California experienced a huge financial problem, they cut every city's income. This impacted every City budget. Rather than lose the Neighborhood Watch Program, the HPD obtained a federal grant to support the program. This grant has been reviewed and renewed every year since then. In no way does this program (or its products) impact the HPD or the City of Hemet budget.

**If you wish to be removed from our mailing list, please call 765-2415.  
If leaving a message: Please speak slowly, spell your name and repeat your phone number.**

### **HEMET POLICE WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU**

#### **YOU HAVE A QUESTION? WE HAVE ANSWERS.**

Send your comments, suggestions, questions, or just interesting thoughts to the Hemet Police Department. We might even publish them in a future edition of the Quarterly Newsletter. Reach us at:

**Hemet Police Department**

**Neighborhood Watch, R. Moyer**

**450 East Latham Avenue**

**Hemet, CA 92543**

**Phone**

**(951) 765-2415**

**E-Mail**

**[rmoyer@cityofhemet.org](mailto:rmoyer@cityofhemet.org)**

**Fax**

**(951) 765-2412**