



Santa Monica Daily Press

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THE DREAMING OF STUFFING ISSUE

Federal grant to help police analyze DNA evidence

Editor's note: This story is part of an ongoing series that tracks the city's expenditures appearing on upcoming Santa Monica City Council consent agendas. Consent agenda items are routinely passed by the City Council with little or no discussion from elected officials or the public. However, many of the items have been part of public discussion in the past.

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL The Santa Monica Police Department is about to receive a big tip for its criminal investigations.

The City Council plans to award nearly \$20,000 toward the department's DNA/Advanced Forensic Evidence project at its meeting tonight as part of an estimated \$1.9 million spending package.

The money will come from the 2008 Justice Assistance Grant, which City Hall has received from the U.S. Department of Justice for each of the past three years. The funds have always been appropriated to the DNA project, which pays for the department's use of certified crime labs to analyze DNA and other evidence collected in major crimes.

"JAG grant funding has given the police department a potent investigative tool that is too costly to pay from the operating budget," the city staff report stated. "Among the crimes solved in 2006 through DNA analysis are five of Santa Monica's most troubling cold case homicides."

The other piece of the spending package will cover construction costs for the office and cafe spaces in the Civic Center Parking Structure.

The council is expected to approve the second phase of a design-build contract with TLD Construction, which was hired in July to remodel approximately 3,500 square feet in the garage to accommodate a cafe and the Transportation Management Division's permit sales counter.

The colorful 882-space structure, which opened in 2007, was designed to include a restaurant on the second floor, overlooking Olympic Drive. The space attracted minimal

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TURKEY TOSS

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After purchasing more than 300 turkeys Monday morning, Prince Frederic von Anhalt (center), husband of actress Zsa Zsa Gabor, tosses them into the back of a truck at the Albertsons at Lincoln and Ocean Park boulevards. The turkeys will be donated to the Vera Davis McClendon Youth & Family Center in Venice where Gabor did her community service after slapping a Beverly Hills cop 16 years ago.

District eyes background checks on volunteers

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

SMMUSD HDQTRS — School volunteers who come into contact with students could soon be subject to criminal background checks.

Following the lead of districts across the state, local public school officials are considering revising an administrative regulation that deals with volunteers, possibly requiring a Megan's Law check on all non-paid personnel to ensure they are not a registered sex offender.

The proposed changes would also mandate that a small subset of volunteers who are not under the direct supervision of a teacher — such as a drama coach working with students in the green room or a parent on an overnight trip — be fingerprinted.

"It would let us know if there was anything in their past that would prevent them from being (hired) as a volunteer and it would notify us if anything were to happen in the future," Mike Matthews, the assistant superintendent for human resources, said.

Matthews estimated that there are more than 2,000 volunteers in the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District. The existing policy only requires that volunteers be tested for tuberculosis.

The revised regulation could come before the Board of Education at its Dec. 11 meeting.

The proposed changes came from an ad hoc committee formed earlier this year to review and revise the district's child abuse and sexual harassment policies whose changes have since been adopted. The Ad Hoc Policy Review Committee was put together in response to circumstances concerning the May arrest of Thomas Arthur Beltran, a Lincoln Middle School teacher who has been charged with molesting his students.

Public outcry followed Beltran's arrest when it was discovered the teacher was investigated two years ago after a student told school administrators that she was uncom-

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