

Public Works to Host Open House

The City of Brentwood's Public Works Department — the men and women who keep your neighborhoods from flooding by clearing blocked storm drains, haul away your garbage and fill the potholes — is holding an open house in May.

From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, May 20, at the City Corporation Yard, 2201 Elkins Way, volunteer staff members from the department will give tours, demonstrate and explain what they do and show how some of the City's equipment work.

The department also is sponsoring a coloring contest at the City's elementary schools as part of National Public Works Week, May 21-27. Winners of the contest will have their work on

display at the open house. This year's theme is "The Heart of Every Community."

National Public Works Week celebrates the tens of thousands of men and women in North America who provide and maintain the infrastructure and services collectively known as public works.

Brentwood employs in its Public Works Department about 70 people who do everything from sweeping streets to collecting garbage, coordinating recycling activities, street and sewer line maintenance and treating and maintaining the City's water supplies.

National Public Works Week is intended to increase awareness of public works issues and employees.

Don't Dump Fats, Grease Down the Drain

Dumping grease down the sink could clog the sewage line, damaging property and possibly netting you a fine.

Grease from cooking fatty foods is liquid while hot, but as it goes down the drain it eventually cools and hardens, clogging sewer pipes. Eventually, the pipes back up, bringing sewage back into households, says Brentwood Wastewater Operations Manager David Stoops.

Overflowing sewage is harmful to the environment and public health.

"Any sewage overflowing from your home or business and entering the City's storm water system is a violation of the City code," Stoops says.

The only remedy for the blocked pipes is to have them reamed out, he says.

Sources of grease include meat fat, lard, cooking oil, shortening, butter, margarine, food scraps, baking goods, sauces and dairy products.

Stoops urges residents to avoid dumping grease in their sinks. He suggests mixing used cooking oil with an absorbent substance and putting it in a sealed container (such as an old coffee can with a lid) and disposing of it in the trash.

"Pour off liquefied fats and grease in a container (vegetable can or resealable bag), let it cool and harden, then place it in the trash," he adds.

Rebates for Switch from Gasoline to Electric Mowers

Brentwood residents may take advantage of a special lawn mower rebate and help keep the air clean at the same time through a program being offered at Home Depot in Pittsburg.

Two electric-powered Black & Decker mowers, models MM 875 and CMM 1000, will be discounted by rebates of up to \$150, while supplies last, to residents

exchanging older mowers. Mowers being exchanged must be empty of oil and gas.

The event, sponsored in part by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, runs from 8 a.m. until noon May 20, at the Home Depot, 2300 North Park Blvd., Pittsburg.

The MM875 comes with a 100-foot power cord. The CMM 1000 is cordless.

Recycle, Don't Trash Household Batteries

Don't toss those dead AA, AAA, C, D and 9-volt batteries in the trash.

The same applies to thermometers and fluorescent bulbs. They are considered toxic "universal waste," says the state Environmental Protection Agency of materials containing mercury or heavy metals.

Brentwood residents can drop off batteries, fluorescent lights and thermometers at the Delta Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility at 2550 Pittsburg-Antioch Highway in Antioch. Call (925) 756-1990 for hours.

For more information call the City's Solid Waste Division at (925) 516-6090 or visit www.ci.brentwood.ca.us, click on "Solid Waste" then any of the two links to "Universal Waste."

A statewide ban on disposing of universal waste in household or office trash went into effect Feb. 9.

Free Composting Classes Scheduled

Free composting workshops will be held through Nov. 8 at a variety of locations in East and Central Contra Costa.

The address for each site within the sponsoring community will be determined by the size of each session's enrollment.

Call (925) 516-6090 to enroll in the Brentwood class or go to the City website at www.ci.brentwood.ca.us, click on "Solid Waste" then "Compost Workshops."

For classes in Antioch, call (925) 779-7097; Pittsburg, (925) 252-4114; Pleasant Hill (925) 671-5265; at county-sponsored sites, (925) 335-1224.

- Brentwood's is 9-11 a.m. May 20.
- Antioch's are 7-9 p.m. June 20 and Oct. 4, 1-3 p.m. Aug. 5 and 9-11 a.m. Sept. 16.
- Pittsburg's are 9-11 a.m. June 17, Aug. 5, Oct. 21.
- Pleasant Hill's are 7-9 p.m. Oct. 18, Nov. 8.
- The county's are 1-3 p.m. May 27, 9-11 a.m. June 24, Nov. 4, and 7-9 p.m. Sept. 13.