



The Cocopah Indian Tribe

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Cocopah Tribe initiates Somerton's graffiti cleanup program on Reservation Tribe's annual donations since 2006 helped city to purchase necessary equipment

Cocopah Indian Tribe _ In another example of the ongoing collaboration between the Cocopah Indian Tribe and the City of Somerton, the city is offering the tribe its equipment and resources to help cut down graffiti presence on the reservation. The graffiti cleanup program is initiated through the Somerton Public Works Department and is expected to become a regular program implemented on the reservation.

"Graffiti has always been a common complaint and eyesore for the community," said Police Chief James Spurgeon. "We're happy to work with the City of Somerton to combat graffiti on the reservation."

According to Chief Spurgeon, the city's program will assist the police department's efforts to aggressively combat "tagging" on the reservation and will supplement the Investigative Division's ongoing investigations. With the creation of the department's Investigative Division nearly six months ago, the department has vigorously increased its graffiti-related investigations and apprehensions in the last several months.

"We've seen a dramatic drop-off in tagging activity due to our ongoing investigations and constant monitoring. This will allow us to take a fresh approach and ascertain any new graffiti," said Chief Spurgeon.

"The Somerton City Council considers graffiti a blight on the community and has directed staff to work closely with our neighbors in this clean up effort," said City Manager Cliff O'Neill.

The graffiti cleanup program will focus initially on the critical areas on the reservation and public areas near community housing. Once the graffiti is removed, the Somerton Public Works Department will regularly survey the critical areas and areas that had been repaired and report any new graffiti sightings to the police department for further investigation.

The tribe's annual donation in 2006 enabled the City of Somerton to purchase a commercial-size airless sprayer to paint over graffiti, and the city used a portion of the tribe's \$77,324 donation this year to purchase additional equipment necessary for graffiti cleanup, which included a sand blaster and compressor.

In compliance with the Arizona Gaming Compact, the tribe can voluntarily donate a percentage of its casino proceeds to a city, town or county of its choosing for services that "benefit the general public, including public safety, mitigation of impacts of gaming, or promotion of commerce and economic development," as stated in the Arizona Gaming Compact.