

CODE CONNECTION

City of Casper Code Enforcement Division — a Division of the Community Development Dept.

Spring—2019

What the heck is Code Enforcement up to you ask?

Well, we're here to tell you! This is our first, quarterly newsletter, which we hope will be informative and interesting. Off we go.....

Spring means it's time to have THE talk.....about weeds.

In Wyoming, we all look forward to this time of year, after long months of cold, snow and wind. Everything turns a beautiful emerald green, flowers are blooming, and unfortunately, weeds and dandelions are running rampant because of ideal growing conditions. This is Code Enforcement's busiest time of the year. So, here's what you need to know:

Q: How must yards be maintained?

A: Lawns and weeds must be kept less than eight inches in height.

Q: Are dandelions regulated?

A: Absolutely. Property owners must keep their property free of dandelions, considered a noxious weed, to prevent them from spreading to neighboring properties.

Q: Does the City really enforce these rules?

A: You bet. From May 1st to June 11th of this year, Code Enforcement has already sent out almost **400 Notices of Violation**, just for weeds and long grass alone.

"I made a formal complaint about my neighbor's weeds/grass, and nothing has happened yet, why?"

We are required to provide written notice to the property owner of the violation, and they have 10 days to fix the issue. After 10 days, plus 3 days of mail transit time, a re-inspection occurs, and if the violation hasn't been taken care of, a citation can be issued, or the property can be referred to the City's contractor for mowing. The cost of mowing is then billed to the property owner. Average time to obtain compliance—18 days.



North Platte River at Sunset

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Previously Unregulated "Small" Utility Trailer

Campers and Boats and Trailers... Oh My

Most of us who live in Wyoming slog through the long, dark winter on nothing more than the thoughts of the (much too short) nice weather to come, the chance to get outdoors, and the opportunity to do the things we all love to do.....camping, gardening, fishing, boating, etc. At the first sign of nice weather, we all pull our toys out of storage, and many end up along the curbs across the community.

Although Code Enforcement tries to take an understanding approach, many times campers, boats and trailers cause sight distance obstructions that can't be ignored.

New this summer, small trailers will fall under the same restrictions as larger trailers, campers and boats. No trailer is permitted to be parked on a City street for more than five days in any 30 day period. We ask for understanding, because none of us wants to see a child or anyone else injured or worse because a driver couldn't see them before they ran into the street.

On-street parking permits are available.

Although it is possible to obtain a permit to park trailers, campers and boats on the street, we encourage everyone to take a hard look at the location, and to do what is in the best interest of safety, not convenience. Permits cost \$50 the 1st year, \$25 every year thereafter, and are available in the Finance Department Office, 1st floor of City Hall.

Don't forget, trailers, boats, and campers must be licensed to be on the street.

Stay safe, and enjoy your time in our great outdoors.

Graffiti on the rise

Graffiti is costly, and unsightly. It negatively impacts the entire neighborhood, and costs property owners thousands of dollars every year. It is a difficult issue to combat; however, there are several strategies to available to tackle the problem.

One of the most effective weapons against graffiti is quick removal. The longer it stays up, the better the chance the "artists" will return.

Code Enforcement, in cooperation with the Police Department, have instituted an abatement program to assist property owners with the cost of removing graffiti quickly. A one page Graffiti Abatement Waiver is completed by the property owner, and they have the choice of having the City remove it, or alternatively, they are given a coupon that entitles them to a Graffiti Removal Kit, consisting of paintbrush, roller, roller pan, and 1 gallon of exterior paint in the color of their choosing. Costs for the program are paid by the Keep Casper Beautiful program.

Recently tagged structure in Casper



Fire-Damaged Home to be demolished

A home located at 1129 East C Street was severely damaged by a fire last July. Since that time, the property has been an attractive nuisance in the neighborhood, and was frequently being entered and occupied illegally by vagrants.

Code Enforcement has kept in constant contact with the out-of-town property owner, who has been trying to work through her property insurance claim. Until the insurance pays out, the property owner is unable to abate the dangerous building financially.

In order to assist the property owner, and to remove the hazardous condition in the neighborhood, Code Enforcement initiated a forced demolition of the structure, per the procedures of the City's adopted building codes.

A request for bids was issued to local demolition contractors. The lowest bid was accepted, and the structure is slated to be demolished this month. The cost of the demolition will ultimately be paid by the property owner, who has expressed appreciation for the City's assistance.



Abandoned Mobile Home left on Church Property without permission

16'x80' Mobile Home Abandoned in North Casper

How does somebody just walk away from a huge mobile home? That would never happen, right? Well, never say never. The Imitate The Image Baptist Church in North Casper awoke one morning to find that someone had left them a present on their lot. During an un-permitted, middle-of-the-night attempted move of the mobile home, things went wrong. Very wrong. When it became apparent to the owner that success was not in the cards, the mobile home was "parked" on the empty lot, never to be reclaimed.

It seems like an easy problem to solve, just get it hauled off, right? Well, not exactly. First, we had to find the owner, no easy task, as he was in and out of jail fairly regularly. And, once found, what leverage did Code Enforcement have to get him to move it? He had no money, and putting him in jail wouldn't solve the problem. Hiring a company to move the trailer costs thousands of dollars, which of course, the church couldn't pay.

Code Enforcement stepped up, and decided to facilitate the move. Easy right? Not exactly. Legally, the mobile home couldn't be moved without 1) a title and 2) a place to take it for disposal, and we had neither. With some old-school negotiation, Code Enforcement was able to convince the owner to sign the title over to the City, in exchange for dropping legal action against him. With a freshly inked title in hand, all we had to do was find somebody willing to take it now. Easier said than done.

After multiple dead ends, the Regional Balefill facility stepped up, and agreed to take it FREE OF CHARGE, although they did say that they had never accepted anything that large before. Their only condition—have all the appliances and hazardous materials removed. One quick call to the City's on-call contractor, and done!

The mobile home was full of all the previous owner's belongings. In order to reduce the tonnage of waste, and hopefully, make the best of a bad situation, Code Enforcement packed up all items of any value, and donated everything to the Rescued Treasures Thrift Store, who was more than happy to take most everything.

Moving day had finally arrived. With traffic control provided by Casper Police Department, the lumbering load made its way to the balefill on a broken down trailer, and flat tires that somehow, unbelievably, stayed on the rims. Thanks to all involved, All Around Towing Company, The Casper Police Department, City Attorney's Office, Solid Waste, and of course, the Imitate the Image Church, for their extreme patience! It was truly a team effort.....

Safe Kids of Central Wyoming

So what does a Code Enforcement Officer do in their off hours? After dealing with grouchy people all week, you'd think that they would hole up in their house and avoid human interaction at all costs. Well, maybe sometimes, but on Saturday, May 4th, Code Enforcement could be found volunteering at the Safe Kids Event, along with fellow City employees from Metro Animal Services and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

What is Safe Kids?

Safe Kids Central Wyoming is led by the Wyoming Medical Center Foundation, with the goal of keeping kids safe by performing car-seat checkups, safety workshops, and sports clinics that help parents and caregivers prevent childhood injuries.

This year the event was held at the Boys and Girls Club, and was attended by approximately 2000 community members. It was a pleasure to be part of such a valuable community program.



Contact Us

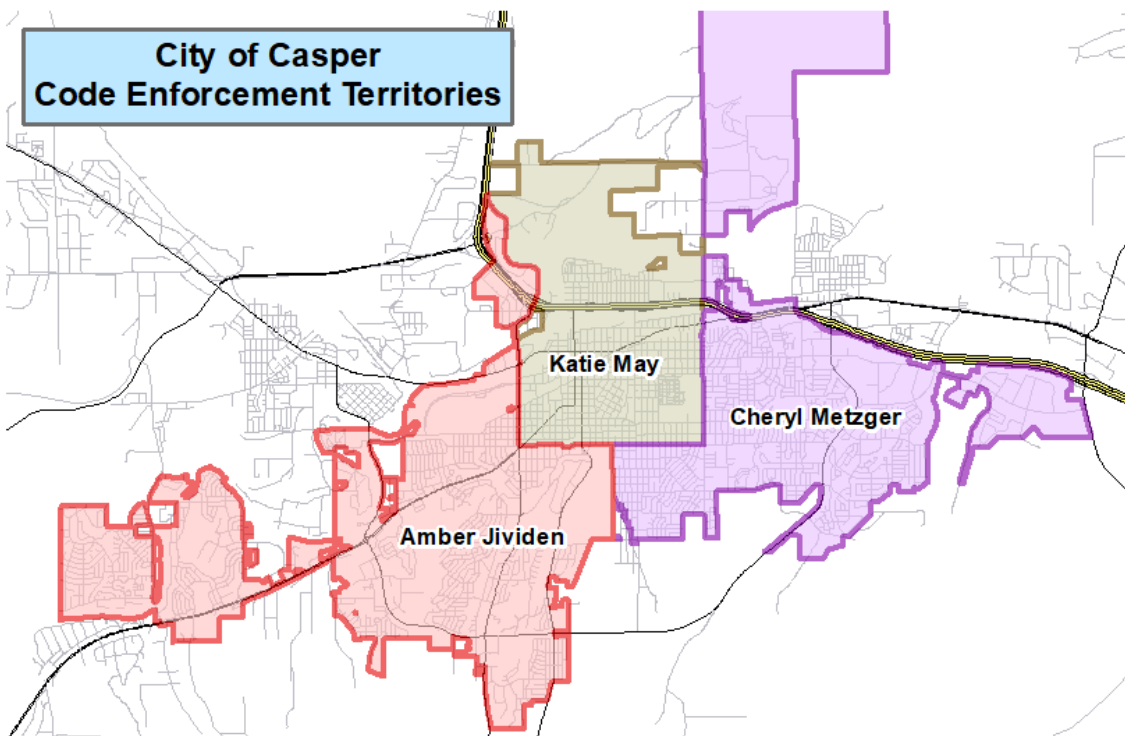
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To Speak to a Code Enforcement Officer — Please call (307)-235-8254

or

Complaints can also be submitted on the City's website — Casperwy.gov