



Maricopa County

News Release

Environmental Services Department

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A Bite of Success!

Maricopa County has been recognized by the Arizona Public Health Association (AZPHA) with the Health Education Media Makers Yearly (HEMMY) award. The HEMMY award distinguishes organizations that target audiences and educate the public on health issues.

Maricopa County Environmental Services (MCESD) received first place in the HEMMY Award Grassroots category for the "Fight the Bite" West Nile Virus (WNV) campaign. The award was accepted September 7, 2005 in Sedona, AZ at the annual AZPHA conference.

The "Fight the Bite!" campaign is a County joint effort that includes the Maricopa County Department of Public Health and the Board of Supervisors' Office of Communications. The campaign's primary goal is to inform residents on the importance of personal protection against mosquito bites, and on how to eliminate mosquito breeding sites to reduce the risk of contracting WNV. A second objective is to encourage residents to take action and report to the County any mosquito-related problems in their neighborhoods.

As part of the County's campaign and efforts, MCESD assigned an Environmental Specialist to serve the public with technical information and special WNV presentations. These presentations are constantly being given to different groups and organizations throughout the County. In addition, an Inter-governmental Liaison was put in place to coordinate efforts with city and town agencies. The campaign's efforts have also prompted a significant number of businesses and organizations to offer and share their support against WNV.

"Fight the Bite!" has been designed to reach all Maricopa County residents, with particular interest on groups considered at higher risk, such as, seniors, and immune-compromised individuals. The campaign's message has been relayed primarily via media coverage (i.e. TV, print and radio), newsletters, print and TV ads, and collateral distributions at events and private/public sites. Also, a dedicated website and hotline have been made available for general West Nile virus information, assistance and requests, and for residents to submit their mosquito complaints.

"The number of resources and time dedicated to our WNV efforts reaffirm the County's commitment to protect public health," says Joy Rich, Maricopa County Assistant Manager. "We are very excited about this HEMMY recognition which reminds us of the importance of informing the public about this deadly disease, and the significance of personal protection and mosquito-breeding elimination."

For more information on West Nile virus, visit www.maricopa.gov/wnv or call:
(602) 506-0700.

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