



# THE LAKEWOOD OBSERVER

Proud Member Of The Observer Media Family Of Community Owned Newspapers & Websites

Volume 6, Issue 7, April 6, 2010

## City Proposal Would Give Reward Money For Tips On Catching Taggers

by Allison Wood

Along with being expensive to clean up for businesses, graffiti on visible surfaces can lead to damaging a city's

reputation as a safe and pleasant place to live. As a way to encourage citizen reporting on graffiti taggers, Lakewood city officials are proposing creating

a \$5,000 reward fund to help police efforts on tracking and arresting alleged offenders.

The proposal is being brought to City Council by Ward 2 City Councilman, Tom Bullock, who worked with city Building Inspector Jeffrey Ashby on its creation. If passed, the program would last for one year as a pilot program, Bullock said in a memo to council members in March. "These efforts have met with significant success, but more must be done, since the crime of graffiti is especially damaging because it frequently places the burden

PLEASE RETURN YOUR CENSUS FORM  
If You Are Having Problems

Contact the Census Bureau at (216) 820-4080  
**LAKWOOD NEEDS YOUR CENSUS RETURNED!  
LAKWOOD'S FUTURE  
DEPENDS ON YOU BEING COUNTED!**

*This space was originally a photo of some tagging to illustrate the story. But the Lakewood Observer will not publish in print or online tagging or graffiti that was placed illegally. Better use of this space is to remind you to GET YOUR CENSUS IN NOW!*

and expense of remediation on the victims, rather than the perpetrators, of the crime," stated Bullock.

The Building Department is responsible for photographing graffiti damage and sending out enforcement

letters to businesses who have not cleaned up graffiti in a timely matter. Businesses who do not clean up graffiti damage within a period of several days are sent letters by the city's Building Department to **continued on page 4**

## Reward Money For Tips On Catching Taggers

**continued from page 1**  
paint over it.

"It's annoying and it's costly," Bullock said, who has heard some businesses have had problems cleaning up graffiti because they are either not local or do not have the money to clean up after being hit several times. He compares the effect of graffiti in a neighborhood to one where there are several visibly vacant homes because both can encourage criminal incidents. "People who do it (tagging) don't know

the damage to the city, you don't mess the bed you sleep in," Bullock said. The proposal must go through council committee before being approved as a resolution in a regular City Council meeting, he said.

It will be considered an emergency resolution, so members have the option of starting the program immediately after passage. Along with the creation of a reward fund, Bullock said he would like to see some outreach to businesses about the best way to clean up graffiti

damage. "It's best to clean the stuff up before it sets in," he said, which is why it is important to spot the damage as soon as possible.

Throughout January and February, Lakewood Police arrested around 10 juvenile males and young men after allegedly being observed spray painting buildings on the city's central and west sides. Most of the males were Lakewood residents, police reported, and all were charged with criminal damaging in Lakewood Municipal