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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City of Hobbs Enforces Weed Control Ordinance with Wildfire Concern

Weeds have overtaken our properties this year due to the incredible amount of rainfall in our area. The City of Hobbs Code Enforcement Division wishes to remind residents of the City of Hobbs Weed Control Ordinance and make them aware it is being enforced. The Code Enforcement Division has asked citizens to do their part by mowing their properties and controlling the weeds. The Code Enforcement Division will work with the community to educate them on this process and help them to reach better conditions on their property when needed.

Overgrown vegetation will eventually dry out and become a fuel source for potential wild grassfires which quickly spread to buildings and nearby properties. If vegetation growth is not maintained now, then it puts the safety of life and property at risk during the approaching dry months. Additionally, any drought will increase the chances of wildfires.

Controlling weed growth holds many benefits, including:

- reduced mosquito population
- reduced rodent population
- reduces the chance of fire spread to homes and businesses
- reduction in allergens
- an overall improvement in aesthetics

Weed control is the responsibility of property owners according to the City of Hobbs Municipal Weed Control Ordinance, which can be found in the Municipal Code Chapter 8.40. All City of Hobbs Ordinances are available on the City of Hobbs website at www.hobbsnm.org/files/municipal_code.pdf. This ordinance reads as follows:

8.40.40 Growth or accumulation – Occupied or unoccupied lots or tracts

It is unlawful for any owner, lessee or occupant having charge or control of any occupied or unoccupied lot or tract of land within the City to permit or maintain any growth of weeds to a greater height than twelve (12) inches, or any accumulation of weeds, on any such lot or tract of land, including any curb, gutter and sidewalks and the area located between the property line and the middle of the alley adjacent to any such lot or tract of land.

Lack of weed control could result in the following enforcement consequences for property owners:

1. A written warning will be posted at the property, requesting the property owner to voluntarily comply by cutting or destroying the vegetation within ten (10) days of the written notice.
2. The City of Hobbs may have the weeds cut and removed at the property owner's expense in addition to any other penalties or costs allowed by law. If a property owner fails to cooperate within the given time of ten (10) days of the written notice, the City will then issue a citation and the property owner will be required to appear in court. If convicted, the property owner may be subject to a fine not to exceed fifty dollars (\$50.00). The property owner will be given fifteen (15) days to submit payment in full.
3. Each day the violation continues may constitute a separate offense, resulting in additional fines.
4. If a property owner does not pay the cost associated with weed removal, a lien shall be placed upon the property from which the weeds were removed.

As the temperatures and wind speeds rise this season, here are some tips to trim the vegetation on your property and help prevent wildfires:

- Remove anything 30 feet around your house that could serve as a fuel source: Rake leaves, woodpiles, spare lumber, vehicles and boats, cut off dead limbs, cut grass regularly, clear bush and cedar (especially for those living in rural areas), and remove dead branches that extend over the roof, tending to your roof gutters as well. If it can catch fire, don't let it touch your house.
 - Grass should be cut short in this area as well. For homes that sit on a steep slope, the safety zone should be increased accordingly.
- Trim any shrubs or trees that come closer than 5 feet to the house and attachments, as well as any overhanging branches.
- Cover exterior attic vents with metal wire mesh no larger than 1/8 inch to prevent sparks from entering the home.
- When barbecuing, place ashes or burnt charcoal in a metal bucket and soak in water, checking back regularly to monitor. Keep a shovel, bucket of water, fire extinguisher, or other fire suppression tools on hand.
- No burnings of trash, leaves, or bush is permitted within Hobbs city limits without a burn permit. To burn such materials outside of city limits, a burn permit is required.
- Do not hesitate to call and report a possible fire. The quicker responders are notified, the better chance they will have to contain the fire.

Hobbs Police Department Captain Shane Blevins manages the Code Enforcement Division, and he stated, "As most are, we are grateful for the growth rainfall has provided us this year, but it has the potential to cause issues down the road. Our Staff are trying to be proactive about this obvious and visual issue, however, we need assistance and compliance from community members in order to keep our community safe. Staff are taking the initiative to advise and when needed cite residents. This is necessary to ensure the safety of life and property in Hobbs as well as surrounding rural areas. Our goal is to improve the appearance and cleanliness of our community while ensuring safety. We appreciate all the help we receive from the community and look forward to our city looking better than ever."

If you have questions about weed control or would like to report a property that isn't being maintained, please call Code Enforcement at (575)391-4178.

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