

# NEWS RELEASE



**Contact:** Carla Koop 415-485-3071

**For Immediate Release**

## **NO BUTTS ABOUT IT!**

San Rafael, CA – May 9, 2013 – [San Rafael Clean](#) (SRC), a coalition of local agencies and individual volunteers, is launching its newest and most creative strategy to help get litter off our streets—a cigarette butt litter display called the “Cigarette Eater Meter” to be installed downtown at the San Rafael City Plaza. A ribbon-cutting is scheduled for 6 pm on Thursday, May 30<sup>th</sup>, at the start of the Thursday evening Farmer’s Market.

From a distance, the large metal display, standing eight feet high, looks like an oversized parking meter. But instead of depositing change for parking, visitors deposit their cigarette butts in a slot. For every butt deposited, one cent goes to a local charity: the St. Vincent de Paul Society. And once the meter hits 100,000 butts, local businesses will contribute another \$1000 “matching” grant. Not only do contributors help reduce one of the most pervasive forms of trash in the city—over 10,000 butts are littered every three to four days in San Rafael alone—but in doing so, they support a good cause!

Close up, visitors learn the facts about cigarette butt litter through a series of educational vignettes. Not only are cigarette butts the most littered item in the city, but—a little known fact—they are made up of cellulose acetate, a type of plastic that never biodegrades.

It’s a serious message, but the whimsically designed “meter” by artists Ventana Amico and Enrique Goldenberg takes a lighthearted approach. The coalition wants to get the message across, not point fingers. Helping us all understand the problem is SRC mascot Oscar the Bulldog, who follows a trail of cigarette butt trash from street to storm drain to creek to the bay, all while pointing out the pitfalls of this persistent problem. Surely it would be hard for anyone to refuse his plea: park your butts here!

Some may recognize Oscar the Bulldog from a previous SRC campaign designed to raise awareness about proper disposal of cigarette butts. Last year, SRC distributed to local businesses 20,000 coasters emblazoned with Oscar’s mug, encouraging smokers to “put...cigarette butts in the can.” In addition, SRC volunteers initiated a unique “buyback” program funded by Bellam Self Storage and Boxes that invited diners at St. Vincent de Paul Society to contribute butts in exchange for cash. During the three-month program, participants received \$1 per ounce of butts collected, and amassed over 230,000 butts – all from the streets of San Rafael!

SRC wants there to be no butts about it: dispose of butts properly in the new Cigarette Eater Meter and let San Rafael streets be clean! For more information, visit [www.SanRafaelClean.org](http://www.SanRafaelClean.org). This project is being funded by MCSTOPPP and Bellam Self Storage and Boxes with additional funds from local businesses.

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