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## C.A.U.S.E. Certification Day in Highland Village

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In an effort to promote safety within the home, Highland Village Mayor Dianne Costa declared Aug. 27, 2008 to be "Consumer Awareness of Unsafe Service Employment (C.A.U.S.E.) Certification Day" in the lakeside community. The declaration was made during the Aug. 12 Highland Village City Council meeting.

According to C.A.U.S.E. founder Lucia Bone, the non-profit group exists to spread awareness of the dangers of allowing service workers into the home without a background check. Later in the month, C.A.U.S.E. will launch a new certification program to ensure participating companies have performed criminal background checks on the workers they send into clients' homes. Costa said she urges all citizens to be aware of whom they are hiring to work in their home. "I think there's a false sense of security when someone comes and we assume that it's safe because they wear a uniform," she said. Costa said consumers need a program to protect them from strangers inside the house. "Just because you trust the company you hire, it doesn't mean the employees they send into your home are not convicted felons," Costa said. "Bonded and insured does not mean a criminal background check has been performed on the workers," she added.

Bone founded C.A.U.S.E. after her sister, Sue Weaver, was raped and murdered in her home by a service worker who was a sex offender with two prior convictions. Bone said her sister's murder could have been prevented if the company she hired had performed criminal background checks on their employees.

In other Highland Village news, the city council voted 5-1 to approve the site plan of a new IHOP restaurant located at The Marketplace at Highland Village. Before voting against the site plan, Councilman Austin Adams said, "This falls a little short of some of the other building structures that are in the very same development." Adams said he was disappointed with the architectural design of the building.

According to the council agenda, the proposed restaurant will be located on the easternmost lot of FM 407, adjacent to Tartan Square and the Inland Trail connection. The IHOP site plan reached the city council for approval after being endorsed by the city's Planning and Zoning Commission during its Aug. 5 meeting. The P&Z Commission voted 5-0 in favor of the site plan provided that the developer and architect amend their plans to accommodate the city's signage and elevation standards. The proposed IHOP is being developed by Opus West Corporation and designed by CPH engineering firm.



L to R: HV City Manager Michael Leavitt, councilman Austin Adams, and Mayor Pro Tem Scott McDearmont ask questions about the signage of the proposed IHOP.

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