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CODE ENFORCEMENT DIVISION
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Billings, MT – Several local retailers have teamed up with the Code Enforcement Division to help families in Billings that have been hit hard by graffiti vandalism over the past few months. King's Ace Hardware, Columbia Paint, Billings Hardware and Home Depot have all agreed to provide discounts on paint and paint supplies to graffiti victims in the Billings area. King's Ace Hardware, Columbia Paint and Billings Hardware will provide a 15% discount and Home Depot will provide a 10% discount.

"We have seen an enormous increase in this type of property crime over the past year. The cost to clean up graffiti over and over can make this difficult situation even worse," said Cal Meyer, Code Enforcement Officer assigned to the North Park and West End neighborhoods. Commercial properties are also not immune from graffiti. "Commercial areas include alleys that are not well lit, and don't usually have people around after business hours. This provides a prime environment for graffiti vandals," said Nancy McCullough, Code Enforcement Officer assigned to commercial districts in Billings.

The Billings Police Department tracks the location & type of graffiti and works diligently to track down "taggers". The Code Enforcement Division also takes reports of graffiti vandalism where the resident has not removed the graffiti in a swift manner. City codes require the property owner – in this case the crime victim – to remove or paint over the graffiti within a short amount of time, usually 10 days. Removal or covering over graffiti right away tends to reduce and deter future graffiti vandalism in the same area.

Residents will need to bring a copy of the notification from the Code Enforcement Division to remove graffiti or a Police Department C & O number to the customer service counters at Ace Hardware, Billings Hardware or Home Depot. Columbia Paint does not require official correspondence from the city but will require registration at customer service to receive the 15% discount. "We hope families will take advantage of these retailer discounts and help clean up graffiti

in their neighborhoods,” said Don Vegge, Code Enforcement Officer assigned to the Heights and South Side neighborhoods.

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