



**RITCH WHEELER
COMMISSIONER, PRECINCT 3
MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 9, 2026**

Precinct 3 Takes Action to Clean Up Community Property

Precinct 3 crews on Wednesday morning cleaned up a community eyesore that had raised concerns and provoked the ire of area residents.

Members of Commissioner Ritch Wheeler's Road & Bridge and Sign teams removed graffiti from an abandoned, neglected gas station along the Sawdust Road retail and restaurant corridor. Previously, Precinct 3 had no authority to enter the property until Montgomery County Commissioners recently passed an order that provides the legal ability to enter private property and eliminate such nuisances.

The Precinct 3 Commissioner's Office collaborated with the Montgomery County Attorney's Office and Montgomery County Environmental Health Services to draft the countywide order based on state law that reads "Under Texas Local Government Code 250.006, a county is authorized to issue an order that requires property owners to remove graffiti from private property upon official notice from the county. However, a county must first offer to clean it for free." In this case, the owner accepted.

Larger counties and municipalities in Texas have complementary graffiti removal programs and task forces, as the major cities fall within those large counties. With more than 80 percent of Montgomery County unincorporated, future graffiti challenges will fall predominantly on county government.

Precinct 3 crews already regularly remove graffiti from bridges and drainage channels. "Unaddressed graffiti not only is a blight on our community, but it can burden economic growth, devalue property and trigger community safety concerns," Commissioner Wheeler said. "Our office is committed to providing the safest, cleanest precinct for our residents – and that involves such nuisance abatement efforts as the one we completed today." Residents are reminded the graffiti, in many forms, is a crime under the Texas Penal Code with varying degrees of charges depending on the level of offense.

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