

## News

## Battling graffiti together

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By **CARRIE HADERLIE**  
Boomerang Staff Writer

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Several prominent Laramie organizations are banding together to clean up downtown graffiti, and hope taggers notice their efforts and slow down.

Laramie Main Street Director Kim Skidmore has organized a team of youth and adults who plan to work three days a week cleaning up graffiti downtown, including youth volunteers from the Laramie Youth Crisis Center, the Cathedral Home for Children and Laramie Peer Advocates.

"The (youth volunteers) are a really strong component of this," Sharon Weber, director of the Youth Crisis Center's community programs, said. "These teens have a desire to help make some changes ... and they thought that if teens were involved, other teenagers might be more respectful of what is happening. They're excited."

Though the first youth volunteer, Laurel Snider of Laramie Peer Advocates, helped remove graffiti near Altitude Chophouse and Brewery Thursday, Weber said the rest of the volunteers will train next week so they can begin cleaning as soon as possible.

"We plan on getting a group of about 10 adults and teens trained on how to use the supplies, and then" they will work from 9-11 a.m. Monday, from 3:30-5:30 p.m. Tuesday, and from noon-2 p.m. Friday at business owners' request, Weber said, though once school starts, the clean-up schedule may change.

Skidmore said business owners who notice graffiti should notify the Laramie Police Department, but once they have filed a report, they are free to contact Main Street to set up a clean up.

"We will actually do the real clean-up work," Skidmore said, adding that she got the idea for the clean-up team after noticing that the graffiti downtown was "out of control."

"A lot of the downtown business owners and building owners have been upset, and (graffiti) has been a issue for a couple of years now," Skidmore said.

Laramie Main Street Board Chairman Jerry Schmidt said he thinks the clean-up effort will spiff up Laramie's downtown and will show that residents care about their town.

"We want to promote pride in the downtown again," Schmidt said. "We want to promote the business owners and see that pride emphasized, and we want everybody to know we have that in our downtown."

The clean-up team has a starter-kit for graffiti clean up to begin the process, but will need donations once the supplies in the starter-kit are gone. To donate, to request clean-up or for more information about the team, contact Skidmore at 742-2212, in person at 313 N. Second, Suite B., or by e-mailing [mainstreet@laramiewy.org](mailto:mainstreet@laramiewy.org). The team will need rags, buckets, paintbrushes, gloves and eye protection and will accept monetary donations, Skidmore said. To volunteer, contact Weber at 742-5936.

"Donations are another way of showing pride in our community," Schmidt said.

Carrie Haderlie's e-mail address is [lbedit11@laramieboomerang.com](mailto:lbedit11@laramieboomerang.com)



Kim Skidmore, Laramie Main Street program executive director, right, uses a graffiti remover and a little elbow grease to clean up a dumpster Thursday in downtown Laramie. Jerry Schmidt, left, is chair of the Main Street Board. Andy Carpenean/Boomerang photographer