

# Firefighters put lifesaving skills to work on return flight from fire engine inspection

Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue Division Chief Jason Pyle was settled into his plane seat high over the skies of Colorado and enjoying a movie with his headphones on when he heard what sounded like a call for medical assistance.

Pyle, Fire Engineer Steve Cathey and fleet maintenance supervisor Gant Corum were just returning from Appleton Wisconsin where they were doing the final inspections on two new fire engines.

He pulled off his headphones and again heard the flight attendant put out a call for medical emergency and asked that anyone with medical training come back to assist.

Pyle peered to the back of airplane and knew his services were needed.

“There’s a guy all balled up on the floor, and he was in respiratory distress,” he said as he quickly walked back toward the plane to assist the senior-aged man. “He was blue, and he didn’t look like he was breathing.”

Pyle and the flight attendants slid him over to a portion of the plane where they could work on him. He was later joined by a nurse, a cardiologist and Cathey who helped with the medical charting and got the man’s medical history from his daughter.

As they performed patient care and began treatment on him the man was initially unconscious but as they provided the first aid his condition stabilized.

Meanwhile, the team of responders were able to contact the plane's captain and advised him the flight needed to be diverted to Denver.

"That was like a roller coaster ride," Pyle said as the plane quickly descended to the Mile High City.

Once the landed, he and Cathey met Denver Fire at the door to provide them with the information about the man, who they learned was 90 years old. By that time, he was talking and conscious and his color came back.

"The most important thing was getting him into a stable condition and providing him appropriate medical care," Pyle said. "We got him in that window where he was in a savable moment."

Pyle gives lots of credit to the flight crew for saving the man's life.

"They are the ones who raised the concern and they are the ones who found him," he said. "Their fast action to look for help and alert others and their ability to recognize an emergency was key."

The other thing that assisted was the man's daughter was able to provide his medical history to Pyle and others helping him.

That helped provide a jump start on his medical care and Pyle recommends that residents carry a medical bracelet or necklace that identifies medical conditions in case they are ever in need.

And if saving a life wasn't enough, two family friends who were traveling with the man, stayed on the plane but didn't have a ride home. So Steve Cathey gave them a ride home to Los Alamitos. And those friends have since kept him up date on the man's condition.

"They sent me a couple letters saying that he is doing good,"

Cathey said.

For Pyle and Cathey, it was good knowing their training came in handy that day.

“It’s part of what we do,” Cathey said.

Pyle agreed.

“It’s good to know when you have ability to help, that you are able to help,” Pyle said. “It doesn’t matter if you are in the streets of Costa Mesa or flying over Colorado.”

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## Members of the Community get CERT Training

The Fire & Rescue staff has happily reported that 16 community members recently graduated from the CERT training hosted by Greenleaf Mobile Home Park.

Participants learned skills in preparedness, fire safety and utility control, disaster medical operations, light search and rescue techniques, homeland security awareness and disaster emotional first aid.

Members of the instructional team included Fire Capt. Fred McDowell and Costa Mesa Police Lt. Vic Bakkila as well as volunteer instructors, Georgette Quinn, Cindy Brenneman, Dee Chester and program manager Brenda Emrick.

The next CERT class will be offered in March.

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## **City Manager Hatch provides update to Mesa Verde Community Inc.**

On Tuesday Jan. 18, City Manager Tom Hatch gave a presentation to the Mesa Verde Community Inc. to update the group on several city initiatives.

Hatch brought them up to speed on the Fire Station No. 1 replacement efforts and noted that the groundbreaking for the new station will take place on March 11, 2017 with completion scheduled for the following spring of 2018.

He also told the group what was going on with the Lions Park improvements which includes a new library and community center. Hatch also gave updates on the new City Council, the Mesa Verde medians, city staffing, the homeless and the news that the Chargers are moving the team headquarters here.

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## **City offers resources to deal with fallen trees, downed power lines, flooding and more**

A powerful winter storm that whipped through Costa Mesa on

Friday knocked down at least two large trees and one tree took out some power lines.

Crews from Southern California Edison responded and assisted with the power lines.

There were more than 30 calls for service related to issues with smaller trees and two metal plates in the road near Sunflower and Main fell into the hole they were covering as part of some road construction work, forcing the city to close two lanes of traffic.

### **Who to call?**

With another storm coming possibly on Sunday and Monday, residents in need of assistance are encouraged to call the city's non-emergency line at 714-754-5252.

As always, in the case of emergencies, downed power lines or other life threatening issues, please dial 9-1-1.

Click [here to see how to contact Southern California Edison](#) or call 1-800-611-1911 to report power outages.

### **Sandbags available**

Residents are also encouraged to obtain sandbags to deal with potential or real flooding problems.

The city offers a self serve process at the Southeast corner of the parking lot at City Hall located at 77 Fair Drive where residents can get up to 15 sandbags.

There are signs on Fair Drive that will direct you to the location.

Please visit City Hall as our primary location for sandbags, or if we are out of sand, you can obtain sandbags at Fire Station No. 4 located at 2300 Placentia Ave.

Click [here for information on how to prepare sand bags](#).

## 211 OC

Furthermore, the agency "211 OC" is also poised to help coordinate assistance. 211 OC has an around the clock phone line to help with all types of emergencies and provides regional connection to resources for disasters victims, the homeless, and others needing health and human services.

Information about 211 OC can be found at [www.2110C.org](http://www.2110C.org) or by simply calling 2-1-1.

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## Mayor Foley and Council Member Stephens deliver new coats to Boys and Girls Club

Mayor Katrina Foley, Council Member John Stephens and members of the police and fire departments paid a visit to the Westside Boys and Girls Club on Wednesday to deliver 100 donated new coats to the children there.

This is Mayor Foley's eighth year of holding a coat drive for the city's low-income community. In addition to the new coats, about about 50 gently used coats and sweatshirts were donated as well as \$1,884 raised for the Fire Association charity drive and approximately 40 toys for the OCBA Spark of Love Toy Drive.

Foley and Stephens took questions from the kids in the after school program as did members of police and fire. Emergency coordinator Brenda Emrick urged the children to take a safety pledge and take proper precautions during the holiday season.

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## Costa Mesa Fire Chief Earns State's Top Distinction

Fire Chief Dan Stefano received a distinguished career honor this week, as he became the 32nd Certified Fire Chief in California.

Stefano was presented the award at the Dec. 6 City Council Meeting by Chief Mike Richwine, California's Acting State Fire Marshal, which also included receiving a set of Certified Fire Chief collar brass.

Candidates are thoroughly vetted through the Office of the State Fire Marshal and must successfully pass a rigorous set of comprehensive performance and professional standards evaluations by a Peer Assessment Committee. The final phase includes an extensive, half-day interactive assessment and interview by a panel of professionals including an elected official, a Certified Fire Chief, and the State Fire Marshal.

Among the qualifications required to merit the award, candidates must demonstrate significant leadership and Chief Officer experience, technical and operational expertise, higher education and advanced training, community involvement, professional organization affiliations and recommendations from other fire chiefs and non-fire service professionals.

To learn more about [this award click here](#).

“I am truly honored and humbled to become the 32nd Certified Fire Chief in California,” Chief Stefano said. “This recognition is just a small example of much greater things that the men and women of the Costa Mesa Fire and Rescue Department are accomplishing and demonstrating everyday in professionally serving the community through our core values of respect, integrity, and compassion.”

The Fire Chief certification was established by the State Board of Fire Services in the 1990’s as the capstone for the State’s professional certification and qualification system. Today, there are over 900 fire departments in the state with fire chiefs eligible to complete the process.

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## **Chinese city leaders visit Costa Mesa to learn more about CERT**

City and Fire Department leaders were pleased this week to host a contingent of Chinese government leaders from the city of Chengdu, who visited Costa Mesa as part of a multi-week, fact-finding mission on the best practices of Community Emergency Response Teams or CERT.

Brenda Emrick, the city’s CERT manager who has visited Chengdu several times last year for training purposes, said the group was in the United States on a study tour sponsored by [The Asia Foundation.](#)

Welcoming the group to Costa Mesa along with Emrick was Mayor Steve Mensinger, CEO Tom Hatch, Police Chief Rob Sharpnack and CERT leaders from the State of California and the cities of



Huntington Beach, Long Beach, Downey and Irvine as well as members of The Asia Foundation.

Chen Liuting, who represented The Asia Foundation, said the visitors from Chengdu were all emergency managers who had prior training from the Federal Emergency Management Association. She said the city of Chengdu in the Sichuan Province of China has a population of 13 million people.

“It is a big city with lots of responsibilities,” she said. “That’s why there are here to learn more about CERT.”

The past two weeks the group has been studying at the University of Maryland, before winding up in Costa Mesa on Tuesday and Wednesday. During their visit to Costa Mesa, the group got a tour of the city’s Emergency Operations Center as well as a visit to Orange Coast College to learn about campus-based CERT.

The trip also included workplace seminar as well as a visit to South Coast Plaza for lunch at Lawry’s and dinner at Maggiano’s.

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**Fire Station No. 1**

## Reconstruction project going out for bids

The Fire Station Reconstruction Project has been advertised for construction bids. The bid opening is scheduled for Monday, Oct. 24. The Public Services Department has been working closely with the Fire Department and WLC Architects for more than a year to develop construction documents for this reconstruction.

The scope of work includes demolition of the existing station, and construction of a new, 12,000-square-foot station equipped with a three-bay and double-deep apparatus room, dorm rooms, administrative offices, kitchen, dining room, day room, physical training room, EMS training room, mechanic shop area, and emergency medical supply room. Additional site features include an emergency generator, fuel station, hose drying tower, and a City emergency supply storage unit.

Construction will commence shortly after the holidays in the first quarter of 2017.

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## Costa Mesa public safety staff honored at annual chamber barbecue lunch

Costa Mesa's public safety employees were treated to a free lunchtime barbecue at the [OC Fair & Event Center](#) care of the [Costa Mesa Chamber of Commerce](#) that included live music and performances from the Orange Coast College cheerleaders.

About 200 people attended this year's Public Safety Recognition Barbecue on Thursday Oct. 8, including 90 police, fire and dispatch personnel.

Guests were served up dishes of chicken, tri-tip steak, mashed potatoes, vegetables and salad.

The community and civic leaders in attendance which included City Council Members Katrina Foley and Sandy Genis, OC Fair & Event Center CEO Kathy Kramer, Orange Coast College President Dennis Harkins, Costa Mesa Police Chief Rob Sharpnack and Fire Chief Dan Stefano.

"It was an honor to attend today's Public Safety Recognition Barbecue," Chief Sharpnack said. "On behalf of the CMPD staff, I want to thank the Chamber of Commerce for their generosity and others in attendance for their support of public safety personnel. We are proud to serve the Chamber of Commerce membership and look forward to collaborating in the future to make Costa Mesa an even greater city in which to live, work, and visit."

Chamber of Commerce CEO Eileen Benjamin said the chamber is proud to honor the city's protectors.

"The men and women of our Fire, Police and Communications departments keep our community safe and are willing to put their lives at risk for us every workday," said Benjamin, who emceed the event along with Chamber President Tom Johnson. "This event is a small way to demonstrate our appreciation. It is wonderful to see many supporters joining together to show gratitude to these fine guardians. The people of Costa Mesa are inspiring in so many ways."

In addition to the OC Fair & Event Center donating the venue, the Orange County Marketplace donated the catering and other

supporters were Care Ambulance, Harbor Center and ICI Development, Metro Pro Towing and The Triangle. Longtime Chamber Board of Director member Patty Mason was also instrumental in supporting this event, and the music was provided by the Mike Donahue band.

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## **The Community Emergency Response Team Program Celebrates 30 Years of Service to Local Area**

This year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Community Emergency Response Team program and to celebrate, the Federal Emergency Management Agency partnered with California Volunteers, NBC Universal, and other CERT partners across nation to host a National CERT conference in Universal City earlier this month.

CERT Program Coordinators from Costa Mesa (Brenda Emrick), Newport Beach (Matt Brisbois), Huntington Beach (Brevyn Mettler) and Laguna Beach (Jordan Villwock) were an integral part of the National CERT Conference and have all played key roles in the success of CERT.

The recent CERT conference provided an opportunity to pay tribute to the contributions of the extraordinary community volunteers locally and across the globe, as well as an opportunity to recognize the leaders of the CERT programs they serve locally, and at the state and national levels.

“Brenda, Matt, Brevyn, and Jordan have individually and collectively gone well above and beyond to represent our respective agencies and the communities we serve in an exemplary manner,” Costa Mesa Fire Chief Dan Stefano said. “We are extremely fortunate to have this talented foursome working together to train and develop our CERT volunteers to assist our first responders in making our communities and the entire region more actively prepared for any emergency or disaster.”

CERT program partners from throughout Orange County in fire and law enforcement have supported and taken part in state-sponsored instructor training courses and are assets in the development of citizen preparedness drills and exercises to improve and enhance the resiliency of the people in Orange County.

There are more than 28 Orange County city-sponsored CERT programs including Teen, Campus and Workplace programs registered on the National CERT website. Orange County CERT programs have been recognized nationally by FEMA for their training, best practices activities, and program organization. For additional information on a CERT program near you, please contact your local fire department or law enforcement agency.

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**Residents urged to Sign up  
for Alert0C to get critical  
information during**

# emergencies

Because September marks National Preparedness Month, public safety officials are urging residents and businesses to prepare for the many hazards that threaten our daily lives and sense of normalcy – most often occurring in Southern California with little to no warning.

Whether it's wildfires due to the state's extended drought, mudslides, floods or massive earthquakes, disasters occur rapidly, forcing evacuations and road closures to neighborhoods.

[AlertOC](#), the County's mass notification system, is a critical link for residents to immediately learn of any required actions, such as evacuating their homes during an imminent fire.

On Thursday Sept. 22, more than two million Orange County residents will receive a call to test [AlertOC](#).

The drill will replicate a large scale, multi-jurisdictional emergency requiring thousands of numbers to be called simultaneously across Orange County's entire region.

This is the seventh annual regional test of the system and will include 26 participating cities as well as the County's unincorporated areas.

The distinctive feature of AlertOC is the ability for individuals to register multiple contact methods and addresses.

Registrations of cell phone and alternate numbers dramatically increase the ability to reach the greatest number of community members within minutes.

This enables landlines, cell phones and e-mail addresses to be incorporated into a single notification system.

Residents can do their part to prepare for emergencies by registering for AlertOC.

The time is now to self-register cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses to be a part of the regional test.

For more information or to register alternate phone numbers or e-mail addresses, visit [AlertOC.com](http://AlertOC.com).

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## [Chiefs Take Part in Motor Home Madness Demolition Derby at the Fair](#)

On Thursday Aug. 11, Costa Mesa Fire Chief Dan Stefano and Chief Rob Sharpnack participated in the Motor Home Madness Demolition Derby at the 2016 Orange County Fair.

The pair were also joined by Newport Beach Police Chief Jon Lewis. The money raised at the event goes to fund breast cancer awareness.

The first to enter the race was Chief Sharpnack.

Just after 8 p.m. Sharpnack, No. 44 (our department's designated number) entered the arena in a painted black and white RV, with the words police and SWAT painted on the sides and with police lights mounted on the top.

As the crowd cheered and began to get excited No. 51 Chief Stefano entered. Making his way around the arena, Stefano entered in a red and gold RV with flashing lights making a few

laps round before parking on the opposite side of Sharpnack.

Before the event began all participants exited their RV's and ran around the arena waving their arms and getting the crowd pumped up. Stefano ran around with two fire extinguishers, which set the crowd off.

Unfortunately, Sharpnack and Stefano got knocked out the first half, but it was an exciting event that offered a fun and light-hearted vibe drew in thousands of spectators.