

# Costa Mesa breaks ground on new Fire & Rescue Regional Training Center

**COSTA MESA, CA** – On Friday, Sept. 6, the Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue Department, along with City and State leaders, officially broke ground on a new training tower facility at Fire Station No. 4, marking a multi-year effort to remake the aging structure into a state-of-the-art Regional Training Center.

Participants at the groundbreaking event were Assembly Member Cottie Petrie-Norris, Mayor John Stephens, Mayor Pro-Tem Jeff Harlan, Council Members Andrea Marr and Manuel Chavez, City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison, Chief Dan Stefano and Public Works Director Raja Sethuraman. It was Petrie-Norris who secured \$2.5 million in state funding to get the project started to replace the nearly 60-year-old landmark tower on Placentia Avenue.

“The Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue Regional Training Center will be instrumental in equipping our firefighters and recruits to handle the myriad challenges they face during fire and rescue operations in our city,” said Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris (D-Irvine). “With its advanced training tower and realistic simulation capabilities, this center will enhance their readiness, ultimately saving lives and safeguarding property. I’m proud to have secured state budget funding for this vital project, ensuring our first responders have access to top-notch facilities and equipment to protect our community.”

In addition to the state funding, the Costa Mesa City Council approved \$2.2 million toward the project and Mayor Stephens is proud of that effort.

"I'm grateful for Assembly Member Petrie-Norris's efforts to secure funding, to my fellow Council Members, who joined me in approving the additional funds needed to complete this project, as well as the leadership of our City Manager, Fire Chief and Public Works Director," Mayor Stephens said. "We are also fortunate to have amazing and dedicated members of our fire service who are only going to get better with the training and resources this new facility will provide."

City Manager Farrell Harrison said she is looking forward to the completion of the new facility.

"Under the leadership of Chief Stefano and Public Works Director Sethuraman, I look forward to watching the transformation of Fire Station No. 4, that was built during Lyndon Johnson's presidency," Farrell Harrison said. "This new Regional Training Facility that will be used by neighboring cities and agencies and will improve the region's fire and emergency preparedness and response."

Chief Stefano highlighted the importance of the new facility.

"Today's groundbreaking ceremony provides us the valued opportunity to celebrate and share this historic moment in time with our community and for our community, with gratitude and thanks for everyone who played a part to help make our vision become a reality," Chief Stefano said. "Our new state of the art Fire & Rescue Regional Training Facility will be one of the most incredibly valuable, public safety infrastructure training assets not only for us here in Costa Mesa, but more importantly, for our entire region, providing our professional firefighters and fire service professionals with the highest quality of training resources and tools available to serve our community, our region, and our statewide interests at our absolute best."

The new building and training grounds will also be used by neighboring cities and agencies, hence improving the region's

preparedness to address fire emergencies and natural disasters while leading to a more resilient and collaborative fire service. The new facility bridges the gap between fire dynamics knowledge and the use of the training building and props for hands-on training.

Also in attendance Friday were Battalion Chief Chris Coates, the project liaison, Assistant Chiefs Jason Pyle and Jon Neal as well as Assistant City Manager Cecilia Gallardo-Daly, Deputy City Manager Alma Reyes, Finance Director Carol Molina, Parks & Community Services Director Brian Gruner and IT Director Steve Ely.

The project will use locally sourced and environmentally friendly products and materials.

One of the facets that will be incorporated includes water reclamation elements that will also be added to enhance the recovery of water that is utilized as part of training exercises. The reclamation elements will be utilized to significantly reduce water waste and provide a sustainable training option during times of drought and water conservation.

The building and training grounds will also include upgrades to the existing lighting to include energy-efficient fixtures (LEDs) and will include natural light levels. Future upgrades will incorporate elements of solar-powered backup energy to be used in case of a power outage. Additionally, low-flow faucets and other features will be installed to promote water efficiency and conservation and will include native and drought-resistant landscapes.

Climate change and the drought conditions continue to worsen, and extreme heat incidents become more frequent and severe. More than 40 percent of Orange County is designated as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone as assessed by CalFire. The City of Costa Mesa and Orange County would greatly benefit

from these upgraded facilities to manage increased demand and mitigate wildfire risk during these events.



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# Street sweeping is postponed this holiday week

Due to the observation of the Labor Day holiday, there will be no residential street sweeping Sept. 2 – Sept. 6 2024.

This coincides with the Costa Mesa Sanitary District, which also observes this holiday by pushing trash collection back

one day. This results in residential gutter lines being cluttered with trash cans making it impossible for street sweeper operators to do an efficient job. There should be no parking citations issued during this time.

Street sweeping will resume back to normal schedule the week of Sept. 9.

In lieu of street sweeping, the following is a list of tasks that clean streets operators will be conducting next week.

- Citywide alley street sweeping
- Sweeping of park parking lots and other city owned facilities
- Accident call outs and special request
- Night route sweeping on all arterial streets

For more information, residents can call the city's street sweeping hotline at (714) 327-7471, which has been updated with this information.

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## **CalOptima Health Launches street medicine program in Costa Mesa**

CalOptima Health, in partnership with the City of Costa Mesa and Celebrating Life Community Health Center, launched a street medicine program this month to deliver comprehensive health care to people experiencing homelessness.

Costa Mesa is the second city in Orange County to offer the CalOptima Health Street Medicine Program, which combines health and social services to address the unique needs of the vulnerable unhoused population. The program engages people experiencing homelessness where they are in the community,

which reduces barriers to care and increases direct access to ongoing medical services. Expanded benefits are also available through Medi-Cal's new community-oriented services that provide coordinated, whole-person care. The CalOptima Health Street Medicine Program relies on collaboration with city, county and community organizations with the goal of helping individuals achieve better health outcomes and ultimately gain secure housing.

"In the past six years, the County of Orange, City of Costa Mesa and our partners have stood up a system of care to support the whole continuum of needs by Orange County residents. One pervasive need by our unhoused neighbors is safe, reliable medical care," said Supervisor Katrina Foley, who represents the Fifth District on the Orange County Board of Supervisors. "By expanding street medicine into Costa Mesa, CalOptima Health and Celebrating Life Community Health Center will provide necessary medical services, as well as establish a vital trusted relationship with our homeless neighbors, so CalOptima Health can stabilize health from the root – housing."

"The CalOptima Health Street Medicine Program is focused on serving members experiencing homelessness, combining experienced health care providers with compassionate peer navigators, to help those in need on the streets," said Michael Hunn, CEO of CalOptima Health. "With the support of the City of Costa Mesa, the Mayor, City Council, Police and Fire, and our community-based partner provider, Celebrating Life Community Health Center, we will bring life-changing health care to those most in need."

Costa Mesa spans 16 square miles, and a customized vehicle that serves as a mobile exam room will cover this area to reach people in need. According to the 2024 Orange County Point in Time Count, there are approximately 300 individuals experiencing homelessness in Costa Mesa.

“The City of Costa Mesa is honored to be one of three Orange County cities chosen to implement CalOptima Health’s Street Medicine Program,” said John Stephens, Mayor of Costa Mesa. “This innovative approach to bringing medical care to those with the greatest need enhances the City’s comprehensive system of care. I am proud of the outstanding work of City and CalOptima Health staff to bring this project to fruition. Costa Mesa continues to be a model for effective, compassionate care in our region.”

In operation since 2018, Celebrating Life Community Health Center is a well-established provider in the community, operating a clinic at 700 West 19th Street in Costa Mesa. “Celebrating Life Community Health Center is honored to join forces with CalOptima Health and the City of Costa Mesa to establish this transformative Street Medicine Program,” said Sergey Sergeyev, CEO of Celebrating Life Community Health Center. “This initiative is a testament to our firm commitment to serve the most vulnerable members of our community. Our dedicated team is passionate about meeting people where they are – directly on the streets – to provide essential medical care and support.”

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## **ABOUT**

### **About CalOptima Health**

A county organized health system, CalOptima Health provides quality health care coverage for low-income children, adults, seniors and people with disabilities in Orange County, California. CalOptima Health’s mission is to serve member health with excellence and dignity, respecting the value and needs of each person. CalOptima Health serves more than 919,000 members with a network of 11,400 primary care doctors and specialists and 39 acute and rehab hospitals. CalOptima Health’s first Street Medicine Program launched in Garden

Grove in April 2023, and programs in Costa Mesa and Anaheim will begin in Summer 2024. Visit [www.caloptima.org](http://www.caloptima.org).

## **About Costa Mesa**

The City of Costa Mesa was incorporated in 1953 and encompasses 16 square miles with a population of about 112,000,

30 parks, two municipal golf courses, 20 public schools and three libraries. Orange Coast College, Coastline Community College and Vanguard University and the Orange County Fair and Event Center are within the city limits. The City's Network for Homeless Solutions offers a comprehensive system of care to residents experiencing or at risk of homelessness with a 100-bed Bridge Shelter that provides interim housing coupled with wraparound services to support guests on their journey to a permanent housing option. The 9.5-acre Costa Mesa Civic Center is located at 77 Fair Drive. Visit [www.costamesaca.gov](http://www.costamesaca.gov).

## **About Celebrating Life Community Health Center (CLCHC)**

CLCHC provides high-quality medical, dental, behavioral health and social services to underserved communities in Orange County. CLCHC goes beyond just health care to address the whole person with a wraparound, community-based support model that embraces customized patient care, including housing, food resources, childcare, job reintegration and more. CLCHC's multicultural team came together because of shared experiences of homelessness, food insecurity, poverty and discrimination, and in 2019, leaders embarked on a journey to become a community health care innovator. CLCHC has expanded to include clinics in Mission Viejo, Costa Mesa, Santa Ana and Irvine, and is now proud to partner with CalOptima Health to launch a Street Medicine Program in Costa Mesa serving unhoused children and adults. Visit [www.clchc.org](http://www.clchc.org).



## **MEDIA CONTACTS**

- **CalOptima Health:** Janis Rizzuto, Director, Communications, jrizzuto@caloptima.org, 714-984-3671
  - **City of Costa Mesa:** Tony Doderero, Public Information Officer, dodero@costamesaca.gov, 949-922-8726
  - **Celebrating Life Community Health Center:** Sergey Sergeev, CEO, ssergeev@clchc.org, 949-276-8233
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## **Finance's Elsa Barajas receives the City Manager Leadership Award for the month of August**

At the August Meet and Greet, Assistant City Manager Cecilia Gallardo-Daly teamed with Deputy City Manager Alma Reyes to present the Finance Department's Permit Processing Specialist Elsa Barajas with the City Manager Leadership Award.

"I truly appreciate Elsa's positive attitude and communication style which allows her to provide exceptional customer service," Gallardo-Daly said. "She has responded to thousands of inquiries in person, over the phone and via email in both in English and Spanish. She quickly identifies customer needs, problem-solves, and offers alternative solutions and her colleagues describe her as a team player, hardworking and

reliable. I am thrilled to present her this award.”

Barajas began her service with the City as temporary staff in April 2022 to assist the Treasury Division in reviewing and issuing Business Licenses. A few months later, Barajas was permanently hired as the new Permit Processing Specialist. She is the frontline staff member at the Finance front counter.

Barajas has been instrumental in implementing key projects with the Finance Department. Her many responsibilities include processing Business License requests, issuing Operator Permits (Food Trucks), Sidewalk Sale Permits, Sidewalk Vendor Permits, Firework Stand Permits, Seasonal Agricultural Permits, verifying State Contractor’s Licenses and ensuring businesses have a valid Sellers Permit in compliance with the City’s Municipal Code – which is key to the City receiving its Sales Tax revenue.

Barajas also serves as the Department’s subject matter expert for the implementation of TESSA. She’s embraced this role and used her experience at the City of El Segundo during their LMS implementation and worked diligently on questionnaires, user-testing, legacy data, training guides and finally a successful Go-Live.

In January, Barajas was asked to fill-in for the City’s Cashier position, where she handles all cash register payments made to the City, manages transactions, generates daily reconciliation, and closes balance sheets.

Barajas is a graduate of El Rancho High School in Whittier and has attended Rio Hondo College.

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# Costa Mesa's free Independence Day Community Celebration is almost here!

The City of Costa Mesa is hosting a FREE Independence Day Community Celebration on Wednesday, July 3 from 5 p.m. to 11p.m. at the OC Fair & Event Center.

Bring your own picnic, lawn chairs and blanket and create a memorable day as we celebrate our nation's independence! Food and drinks will be available for purchase.

Highlights Include:

- 9:30 p.m. Fireworks Show
- Free Entry and Parking
- Exciting Contests
- Delicious Food & Drinks
- Fun Kids Activities
- Live Music by Tijuana Dogs and 80's All-Starz

Please Note:

- Glass containers and bottles are prohibited.
- No hard-sided coolers or outside alcohol permitted.
- Let's keep the celebration safe for everyone!

Don't miss out on this spectacular community event. See you there!

Location: OC Fair & Event Center, 88 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa – Lot A

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# **CMTV's Ron Dam takes the spotlight for June's City Manager Leadership Award**

City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison honored CMTV Multimedia Specialist and Videographer Ron Dam with the City Manager Leadership Award for the month of June.

"Ron is an extraordinarily talented camera operator, editor and video producer," Farrell Harrison said. "He and the CMTV team have successfully partnered on video projects with every department and every elected official in the city, making everyone and every department in the city consistently look good. Thanks for spotlighting our City and our employees. I'm thrilled to give him this award."

Dam is noted for being able to take not so exciting public service content and transform it into viewer-friendly informative and entertaining videos. His video handiwork has become a featured highlight at the City's annual Employee Service Awards, turning employees into "actors."

His many duties include broadcasting meetings, writing scripts, shooting and editing videos, creating animations and his artistic work can be found on many of our "public facing" communication platforms, including Channel 3, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Granicus.

His combination of expert production and storytelling skills have helped make CMTV a nationally recognized operation, resulting in dozens of regional and national governmental video awards.

Dam started in Costa Mesa as a part time video production specialist in April of 2013. He has a bachelor's degree from Cal State Long Beach, with a major in journalism and minor in Chinese.

When he's not creating videos, he spends time as a longtime member of a "Taiko," or "Japanese percussion instrument" drumming group, performing shows at community events throughout Southern California.

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## **Street sweeping cancelled during Memorial Day week**

Due to the observation of the Memorial Day holiday on Monday, May 27, there will be no residential street sweeping the entire week as Costa Mesa Sanitary District also observes this holiday pushing trash collection back one day.

This results in residential gutter lines being cluttered with trash cans making it difficult for street sweeper operators to do an efficient job. Street sweeping will resume back to normal schedule starting the week of June 3. No parking citations will be issued during this time.

The following are a list of tasks that Clean Street's operators will be conducting next week.

- City wide alley street sweeping
- Sweeping of park parking lots and other city-owned facilities
- Accident call outs and special requests
- Night route sweeping on all arterial streets

For more information, residents can call the city's street

sweeping hotline at (714) 327-7471, which has been updated with this information.

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# **Costa Mesa Resident Sought for Parks and Community Services Commission Seat**

The Costa Mesa City Council is currently seeking one resident to serve on the Parks and Community Services Commission.

The City is recruiting for one member (Appointment by Council Member Loren Gameros), for a term expiration of January 2025 for the Parks and Community Services Commission.

The Commission meets on the second Thursday of each month and serves as an advisory body to the City Council and works with various City departments on issues pertaining to parks, parkways, recreation, and community services. For further information, contact Laura Fautua at (714) 754-5009.

Application Process – Residents who are interested in getting involved in local government are encouraged to complete a Commission Application Form from the City Clerk's Office or from the City's website ([www.costamesaca.gov/apply](http://www.costamesaca.gov/apply)).

The completed application may be submitted online; mailed to Costa Mesa City Clerk at Post Office Box 1200, Costa Mesa, California, 92628-1200; emailed to [cityclerk@costamesaca.gov](mailto:cityclerk@costamesaca.gov); or hand-delivered to the City Clerk's Office at City Hall, 77 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa. The deadline is 5 p.m., Monday, June 3, 2024. The appointment is tentatively scheduled for the June 18, 2024 City Council meeting.

## **MEDIA CONTACT**

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# **Code Enforcement Chief Macias named as May's City Manager Leadership Award recipient**

City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison awarded the City Manager Leadership Award for May to Chief of Code Enforcement Rene Macias.

"Rene is always willing to step in and help out staff and the community, and has been an exceptional employee and leader for his division," Farrell Harrison said. "While Rene can bring humor and joy to his job, he is also a great problem solver. For example, it was through his leadership and the work of his Code Enforcement team, that we were able to get illegal street vending under control before it became a larger issue. I appreciate him and am so glad to give him this award."

Rene began his career with the City of Costa Mesa in 2005 as a Rec Leader Field Ambassador. He began his journey with the City's Community Improvement Division in December of 2012 as a Code Enforcement Officer.

This is his second City Manager Leadership Award as he received the award in 2015.

He was promoted to Senior Code Enforcement Officer in November 2016 and then promoted to Chief Code Enforcement Officer in

September 2023.

Prior to becoming a Code Officer in Costa Mesa, Rene worked as a part time Code Officer and a Police Service Officer for the City of Placentia.

Rene grew up in Santa Ana California. He graduated from Santa Ana High School. He also graduated from Santa Ana College with an Associate's Degree and obtained a bachelor's degree from Chapman University.

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## **Costa Mesa to Consider Hosting Raiders for 2024 Summer Training Camp**

The City of Costa Mesa is currently engaged in discussions with the Las Vegas Raiders, who have expressed interest in using the Jack Hammett Sports Complex for their 2024 Summer Training Camp.

The City Council will discuss a potential one-year agreement at the Tuesday, May 7 meeting.

“Costa Mesa is proud to be one of only two cities in the country to host an NFL team’s summer training camp in a publicly owned facility,” City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison said. “Jack Hammett is a treasure and we are excited to potentially have a new NFL team training here.”

Mayor John Stephens agreed.

“I’m pleased to welcome the Las Vegas Raiders and their loyal fans, ‘Raider Nation’ to the great city of Costa Mesa for



training camp this summer,” Mayor Stephens said. “The Raiders and Costa Mesa share a commitment to excellence, and our partnership will greatly benefit the community. Many thanks to Newport-Mesa School District, especially Costa Mesa High School, for collaborating with us in this endeavor. To quote Al Davis, ‘Just win, baby!’”

As part of the proposed agreement, the Raiders would pay \$165,000 in rent to the City along with other significant community contributions that include:

- \$600,000 in improvements to the fields at the complex
- Team Junior Training Camp for kids ages 6 to 12
- 100 tickets for local students to attend an NFL game in Southern California
- Donation of outdoor weight training equipment to Costa Mesa High School
- A New Mobile Recreation Van for programs in underserved areas, and
- A \$10,000 donation to a local youth sports team

The Jack Hammett Sports Complex’s fields typically undergo renovation during the summer months, ensuring no disruption to regular youth sports teams utilizing the facilities.

Starting in mid-July, the team will use the fields at the Complex for its training camp and will bring fields No. 3 and 4 up to current NFL standards. Additionally, the team has committed to hosting public practices, providing fans with an opportunity to witness their favorite players up close.

The City and the Raiders plan to work closely together to ensure there are minimal disruptions to the community and neighborhoods around Jack Hammett Sports Complex.

Given that the training camp will coincide with the annual OC Fair, the City and the team will collaborate on a comprehensive plan for managing parking and traffic in the area.

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# Fairview Park steward Kelly Dalton is given the City Manager Leadership Award for April

Assistant City Manager Cecelia Gallardo-Daly and Deputy City Manager Alma Reyes together presented the City Manager Leadership Award for April to Fairview Park Administrator Kelly Dalton.

“Kelly’s combination of education and experience in environmental and regulatory compliance, ecology, and project management has been instrumental in managing the diverse resources of Fairview Park, which is so important to our City and residents,” Gallardo-Daly said. “We are lucky to have someone with his skills and I am happy to present him with this award.”

Dalton was first hired by the City’s Public Works Department in 2015 as the Public Right of Way Coordinator, and since then had promoted through the ranks to the level of Associate Engineer.

Dalton has over 10 years of interdisciplinary experience in the fields of environmental compliance, stormwater management, and civil and environmental engineering.

During his tenure with the Engineering Division, he administered the City’s stormwater compliance program in addition to supporting the City’s capital improvement program and various special projects, which included assisting with Fairview Park projects.

This experience led Dalton to be selected as the Fairview Park Administrator in the Parks and Community Services Department in November 2021.

Since his time in the department, Dalton has taken on the lead of multiple restoration initiatives including major grant funded projects, the Fairview Park Master Plan update and community-based partnerships which includes serving as the staff liaison to the Fairview Park Steering Committee.

Additionally, Dalton has been instrumental in developing working relationships with regulatory agencies, and maintaining partnerships with various community groups, including Coastal Corridor Alliance, Orange County Model Engineers, Fairview Park Alliance, Sea and Sage Audubon Society, and Harbor Soaring Society.

Prior to his tenure with the City, Dalton worked for the Environmental Resources Division of Orange County Public Works, where he led grant-funded projects and supported regulatory compliance programs for urban stormwater.

In addition, Dalton previously worked for a private firm that specialized in lake management and maintenance services, and as a plant research and laboratory assistant during his undergraduate tenure.

Dalton has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Natural Resources from Cornell University, a minor in Spanish, and a Master of Science in Land Resources and Environmental Sciences from Montana State University.

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# **Veteran Parks Leader Selected as new Parks & Community Services Department Director**

Costa Mesa City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison announced that Brian Gruner, a 24-year veteran of municipal government, has been appointed as the new Director of Parks & Community Services.

“After conducting a nationwide search, Brian quickly became our top candidate to lead our Parks & Community Services Department,” Farrell Harrison said. “I look forward to working with him as we continue to provide high-quality recreational services to the Costa Mesa Community.”

Gruner has worked in the field of Parks, Recreation and Community Services for over 24 years, starting as a part-time recreation leader and promoting through the supervisory ranks. He has extensive experience in the management of Parks, Recreation and Community Services, including the oversight of multimillion-dollar budgets, capital improvement projects, strategic planning, community outreach, partnership development and arts and cultural programs.

Mayor John Stephens welcomed Gruner to the City of Costa Mesa.

“Parks and Community Services is a vital function in Costa Mesa and our residents expect top-notch facilities and services,” Mayor Stephens said. “I’m confident Brian will be a great fit here and I look forward to working with him on our recreation initiatives.”

Prior to his arrival in Costa Mesa, Gruner served as the Parks and Recreation Superintendent for the City of Fairfield, where he managed the after school and pre-school programs, including a \$800,000 ASES Grant, oversight of activities, programs, and

events at the Adult Recreation Center and a \$3 million budget.

He has also worked for Laguna Woods Village as Recreation and Special Events Director and for the City of Mission Viejo as the Community Services Supervisor.

A graduate of Mission Viejo High School, he has lived in Orange County for 37 years and is happy to be returning to Southern California.

“I’m excited to be relocating back to Orange County and being part of the City of Costa Mesa team,” Gruner said. “Having grown up in Orange County, I have fond memories of Costa Mesa from competing in tennis tournaments at the Costa Mesa Tennis Center, enjoying the Orange County Fair and Swap Meets, shopping at South Coast Plaza, playing golf at the Costa Mesa Country Club and enjoying the natural beauty of Fairview Park.”

Gruner holds a Bachelor’s Degree from Cal State Fullerton in Business Management and a Master’s in Business Administration from the University of Phoenix.