

# **Costa Mesa restaurants once again top the 75 Best Places to Eat in Orange County**

Costa Mesa once again proves that when it comes to the best restaurants in Orange County, we are the leaders of the pack.

The Orange County Register just published its annual 75 Best Places to Eat by food critic Brad A. Johnson and the top four restaurants are also Costa Mesa eateries.

Topping the list at No. 1, again, is Taco Maria located in the SoCo center. South Coast Plaza's Vaca is No. 2 followed by Hana re and Arc at Nos. 3 and 4.

The 75 Best includes 10 more Costa Mesa restaurants, including Mastro's Steakhouse, Restaurant Marin, The Capital Grille, Shunka Sushi, Water Grill, Din Tai Fung, Manpuku Tokyo BBQ, Filomena's Italian Kitchen and Rance's Chicago Pizza.

Congrats to all those winners and we know that those restaurants just scratch the surface of all the great places to eat in Costa Mesa.

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## **Endangered Riverside fairy shrimp discovered by city officials in Fairview Park**

Costa Mesa City officials conducting extensive surveys of vernal pools in Fairview Park this winter announced they have

discovered a new, endangered species of fairy shrimp.

As expected, city staffers found the endangered San Diego fairy shrimp in a number of vernal pools that emerged after the heavy rains in December and January, but what they didn't anticipate was the discovery of the Riverside fairy shrimp.

"It is likely that the Riverside fairy shrimp, which is a warm-water species, has been present but went undetected because of very low numbers and because they typically emerge after the San Diego fairy shrimp, which prefer the cold water of December and January, are finished for the season," said Tony Bomkamp, a biologist who consults with the city on Fairview Park.

The Riverside fairy shrimp was named for Riverside County where it was originally found and thought to occur in only a few pools there. Later it was found in San Diego County in many pools including on Camp Pendleton.

In the late 1990s, Riverside fairy shrimp were found in a number of pools in Orange County and a large vernal pool in Ventura County. Unlike the cold-water relatives of the San Diego fairy shrimp, which evolved in colder climates, the Riverside fairy shrimp's distant relatives derive from Africa.

Fairy shrimp have been around in the fossil record for over 300 million years making them one of the oldest crustaceans on the planet.

In addition, while San Diego fairy shrimp were found and confirmed in the expected vernal pools, the crustaceans were also discovered for the first time in what the city calls Vernal Pool C, which is located on the eastside of Placentia Avenue.

The unexpected heavy rains this winter provided an opportunity to conduct a census of the fairy shrimp in the vernal pools at Fairview Park.

The survey effort was the first formal surveys since San Diego fairy shrimp were first detected in Vernal Pool 5 in 1996 and Vernal Pool 1 in 1997. Other “one-time” surveys found San Diego fairy shrimp in Vernal Pools 4 and 6, but were not season-long surveys like those done this year.

The vernal pools and the respective watersheds are off limits to the general public to protect the habitats and have been temporarily delineated based on historical maps.

Additional delineation will be added to protect expanded areas of the vernal pool basins as soon as the ground is hard and dry.

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## **City Manager Hatch presents Leadership Award to Robindale Shepherd**

City Manager Tom Hatch presented Finance Department Accounting Specialist Robindale Shepherd with the March City Manager Leadership Award at the monthly employee Meet and Greet Thursday March 23.

“Robindale has served Costa Mesa for 25 years now and works tirelessly to improve our accounts payable operations and a variety of other Finance Department functions,” Hatch said. “Congratulations to her on this wonderful achievement.”

Shepherd joined the City of Costa Mesa in May of 1992 as an Accounting Specialist II. During that time, she has been responsible for multiple assignments, including payroll, payments of essential services and processing vendor

documentation.

She worked on several big projects including payments to the San Joaquin Transportation Corridor Agency and Newport Mesa Unified School District developer fees. She assisted with the development of a desk manual for Accounts Payable and improved the storage of Accounts Payable documents through a new labeling system.

Prior to working at Costa Mesa City Hall, Shepherd served the country in the U.S. Air Force. While she was stationed in Germany she met her husband of 31 years.

Shepherd has a Bachelor of Science degree from Vanguard University, and on an interesting side note, for three years from 2006 to 2009, she worked part-time at Starbucks as a barista while still employed with the City.

In addition to honoring Shepherd, City Manager Hatch welcomed several new employees including Tammy Arrington, a new Office Specialist in the City Clerk's office, Jasmine Vega, the Finance Department's new Accounting Specialist II, Aracelli Guillen, the Parks & Community Services Department new Recreation Leader II and Nuvia Sandoval-Nava a new Recreation Leader III in the Parks & Community Services Department

He also congratulated Mike Fuentes on his promotion to Buyer for the Finance Department.

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## **Mayor's Award goes to SOS founder Jean Forbath**

Costa Mesa Mayor Katrina Foley presented Jean Forbath, a

longtime charity leader and advocate for Costa Mesa's low-income communities, with the Mayor's Award at the Tuesday March 21 City Council meeting.

"It's caring people like Jean who are willing to sacrifice and share their selves that make our community so much stronger," Mayor Foley said. "For your tireless dedication in service to others, and for the amazing impact you have had on the lives of so many here in Costa Mesa, it is my honor and privilege to present you with the Mayor's Award."

In 1970, Forbath and her husband Frank founded Share Our Selves to care for those living in poverty in Orange County. SOS has since grown to become a model nonprofit organization providing the highest quality safety net services to the homeless and low-income populations in Orange County.

Forbath was also a founding board member of Save our Youth, or SOY and served as executive director and treasurer during her 22 years on the board.

"The time I have spent with SOS and Costa Mesa has been very rewarding," Forbath said. "Without the help of the city, it would be difficult to do what we do. I very thankful and honored to get this award."

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**Costa Mesa's Jack Hammett Sports Complex will be new home to Chargers Summer**

# Training Camp

The Costa Mesa City Council gave unanimous approval Tuesday night March, 21 to enter into a 10-year use agreement with the Los Angeles Chargers to practice at the Jack Hammett Sports Complex during the NFL team's training camp this summer.

"We are pleased to have reached an agreement that will benefit both the Chargers and the Costa Mesa community at large while addressing the concerns of the neighbors," Mayor Pro tem Sandra Genis said. "Along with other fans, I'm looking forward to watching the Chargers in action on our fields."

The Chargers announced in January that the team is moving from San Diego to Los Angeles and also announced that it was moving its headquarters into the Hive office complex in Costa Mesa.

Chargers owner Dean Spanos spoke to the City Council and thanked City Manager Tom Hatch and the Costa Mesa staff for working hard to make this agreement happen. Spanos invited the community to come to the camp to meet the football players.

"We are very proud and very honored to be a part of Costa Mesa and call this our home," Spanos said. "This camp is an opportunity for everyone in Costa Mesa to come out and see what it's all about. I hope the whole city comes out."

Because the Jack Hammett Sports Complex fields are refurbished during the summer months, no youth sports teams will be displaced during the time the team will use the fields. Starting around mid-July, the team will hold its camp on fields No. 3 and 4 and bring the turf on those fields up to NFL standards. Training camp will take place from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and will finish about mid August.

As part of this training camp agreement, the team will provide Costa Mesa with \$150,000 a year to use the site for a

potential \$1.5 million over 10 years.

In addition, the Chargers will give the city \$50,000 to be used for a recently approved Mobile Recreation Program. Also, because field refurbishments need to happen as early as April, the Chargers have agreed to give the AYSO soccer organization a one-time payment of \$10,000 to assist with finding field space.

The city and the Chargers plan to work closely together to ensure there are minimal disruptions to the nearby homes and neighborhoods. Because the training camp will coincide with the annual OC Fair, the city and the team will also develop a comprehensive plan for managing parking and traffic in the area.

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## **OCTA official gives update on 405 expansion project**

Nicollete La Piana, a Community Relations Specialist from OCTA, discussed the details of the upcoming Interstate 405 Improvement Project at the Costa Mesa Chamber of Commerce's monthly Breakfast Boost on Thursday March 16.

[Click here to see her presentation.](#)

Of particular interest to Costa Mesa residents is the reconstruction of the Fairview Road overcrossing at the 405 Freeway, which will take place mid to late 2018. That work will result in the closure of some lanes in both directions as well as closures to freeway onramps. Costa Mesa Public

Services will be working closely with OCTA to address those issues.

OCTA in cooperation with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is widening the San Diego Freeway (I-405) between State Route 73 (SR-73) and Interstate 605 (I-605). The project will improve 16 miles of I-405 between the SR-73 freeway in Costa Mesa and I-605 near the L.A. County line.

The project includes adding one regular lane in each direction from Euclid Street to I-605 and making improvements to freeway entrances, exits, and bridges. It also will construct 405 Express Lanes, two lanes in each direction from SR-73 to I-605.

The new express lanes – incorporating the existing carpool lanes and connectors that opened in 2014 – will give solo drives the choice to speed up their commute for a toll, and carpoolers may ride in the lanes for free. Transportation improvements to freeways keep commuters and goods moving within Orange County and to destinations beyond.

With Orange County's population projected to increase dramatically by 2040, change is needed today to ensure tomorrow's mobility. Currently, the **405 Improvement Project** is one of OCTA's premiere projects.

As a part of the project, OCTA is conducting a robust community outreach program which includes sending email alerts, offering civic and community presentations and posting information on our website and social media platforms.

The OCTA team has also developed an extensive business outreach program.

As the project moves into the construction phase in late 2017, OCTA wants to partner with businesses and employers within the project corridor.



The agency is continuously looking for opportunities to expand its efforts to those who are interested in receiving project updates.

OCTA offers one-on-one or brown-bag briefings/presentations, and can tailor materials for internal newsletters or other useful communication mediums.

The OCTA team does whatever it can to minimize the impacts to residents, businesses, as well as motorists. Please contact OCTA if you have any questions or special requests by emailing [405project@octa.net](mailto:405project@octa.net) or calling 888.400.8994.

Website: [www.octa.net/405Improvement](http://www.octa.net/405Improvement)

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## **Parks and Recreation Commissioners get an update on master plan for open space in city**

On Wednesday March 15, the Costa Mesa Parks and Recreation Commission was given an update on the city's proposed Open Space Master Plan of Parks and Recreation.

The plan considers the following:

- Purpose and Process
- Existing Recreation Resources

- Needs Assessment
- Facility Recommendations
- Core Services and Pricing

To see the full report, [click here](#) for the presentation.

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## **Volunteers sought for new city committees and vacant spot on Senior Commission**

The Costa Mesa City Council is currently seeking citizens to serve on the following committees and the Senior commission:

**Access Building, Fire and Housing Board of Appeal:** This committee advises on matters pertaining to building construction. The board meets and hears appeals on an as-needed basis. It has five regular member vacancies and two alternate member vacancies, all for four-year terms.

Minimum qualifications should include: Civil engineers, structural engineers, fire protection engineers, electrical/mechanical engineers, architects, Certified Access Specialists (CAsp), and related state or federal licensed professionals, such as fire marshals. Residents or individuals that conduct business within the City are encouraged to apply. For further information, please contact Interim Building Official Ron Beehler at (714) 754-5604.

**Finance and Pension Advisory Committee:** This newly merged committee, will meet monthly and provide advice to the City Council regarding events and issues which may affect the

financial status of the City. It will also evaluate annual and long-term pension and financial impacts from changes in CalPERS contribution rates and/or actuarial schedule changes.

It has 11 members with staggered terms: six two-year terms and five one-year terms. Four of the members shall have pension knowledge. The other members shall be residents or individuals that conduct business within the City and have a background that includes experience in securities trading, financial planning, banking, auditing, accounting, or a closely related and relevant field. For further information, please contact Executive Secretary Kathy Ulrich at (714) 754-5243.

**Senior Commission:** This Commission, which meets every other month, serves as an advisory body to the City Council in matters related to the operation of the Costa Mesa Senior Center. Currently, there is one vacancy with a term expiration of February 2019. Applicants must live in Costa Mesa. For further information, please contact Recreation Manager Justin Martin at (714) 754-5065.

**Application Process** – Citizens who are interested in getting involved in local government are encouraged to complete a Committee/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; faxed to (714) 754-4942; 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., Wednesday, March 22, 2017**. Appointments are tentatively scheduled for the April 4, 2017 City Council meeting.

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# SCR's Paula Tomei presented with Mayor's Award

Mayor Katrina Foley relaunched the city's Mayor's Award on Tuesday March 7 and presented the honor to Paul Tomei, Managing Director of Costa Mesa's renown South Coast Repertory theater.

Foley announced that the award will be presented quarterly with two in the month that the quarter falls in.

For the first awards, she is honoring women leaders as March is Women's History Month.

"Paula's love of the arts was fostered at a young age as a student of the Newport Mesa Unified School District and her career with SCR has been a dream come true," Mayor Foley said of Tomei, who is a graduate of Estancia High School. "Paula has been instrumental in ensuring South Coast Repertory's mission to advance the art of theatre in service of the community, and to extend that service through educational, intercultural, and community engagement programs."

Tomei was presented with the Mayor's Award as well as a Key to the City.

She thanked the mayor for what she called a "terrific honor" and credited her strong arts and education background at Estancia and UCI for her success.

"I am especially fortunate to have worked at SCR and in the City of Costa Mesa for almost 38 years," she said.

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# **Caltrans to close Harbor Boulevard Onramp to Northbound 405 Freeway until 2:30 today**

The California Department of Transportation will close the Harbor Boulevard onramp to Northbound I-405 on Thursday, March 2, 2017 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

The closure is necessary for crews to perform landscape work.

Caltrans appreciates the public's patience while it performs this work.

Detour signs will be posted to alert motorists of the closure.

For more information, you may contact the District 12 Public Information Office at (657) 328-6000 or log on to the Caltrans website at [www.dot.ca.gov/dist12](http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist12).

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# **February City Manager Leadership Award goes to police records veteran Sandra Lozano**

City Manager Tom Hatch presented Costa Mesa Police employee Sandra Lozano with this month's City Manager Leadership Award

at the Thursday Feb. 23 Meet and Greet event at City Hall.

“Sandra exemplifies our commitment to provide the highest levels of service to the residents of Costa Mesa,” Hatch said. “She is a leader and dedicated employee not only amongst her peers in the Police Department but for the entire city organization.”

A Police Records and Evidence Administrator, she oversees the Records and Evidence Bureau, consisting of both the Records and the Property and Evidence units. These are two major areas of responsibility, which are critical to the Police Department’s daily operations.

Lozano’s leadership style is based on communication, regular interaction with staff and mentoring. She is also part of the department’s Peer Support Program, where she is regularly sought by individuals for her approachability, input, guidance, or council, Hatch noted. Additionally, her commitment and efforts put into matters behind the scenes is unmeasurable, he said.

Out of her many accomplishments, one of the more notable ones is her work as the department’s SunGard Administrator, responsible for the City’s Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and Records Management System (RMS). Lozano has been involved with the system since 2013 and has been critical to the system’s implementation and development since then.

A 12-year Costa Mesa employee, Lozano previously worked for the Whittier Police Department, where she served over 14 years and achieved the rank of Records Supervisor. She graduated with honors from the University of La Verne, where she received a Bachelor of Science in Organizational Management. She has also been the recipient of the Costa Mesa Police Department’s Civilian of the Year Award for 2008 and Supervisor of the Year Award for 2015.

In addition to honoring Lozano, City Manager Hatch welcomed

several new employees and commended one for a promotion.

Joining the city in the Parks and Community Services Department is Jennifer Crisol – Recreation Leader II, Claude Garrett – Recreation Leader II, Sierra Grindstaff – Recreation Leader I, Tyler Hoang – Recreation Leader II, Gabriela Lopez – Recreation Leader II, Tyler Palmer – Recreation Leader II and Jodie Mccann the department's new Management Analyst

From the Police Department, Hatch welcomed new Officer Erik Nippert, a recent Sheriff Academy graduate as well as Isai Flores Barrera, a Public Services intern.

He also congratulated Kelly Dalton on his recent promotion to Engineering Technician III.

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## **Council Member Mansoor updates land use group on challenges facing Costa Mesa**

Council Member Allan Mansoor this Monday briefed Orange County Chapter members of the distinguished land economics society, Lambda Alpha International, on the numerous challenges that Costa Mesa leadership and city staff are grappling with.

His presentation at a recent chapter luncheon touched on recently passed Measure Y, which requires certain development projects to get voter approval and Measure X, which allows for distribution and manufacturing of medical marijuana in restricted areas of the city.



In addition, he spoke about the city' overlay zones as well as how the city is dealing with sober living homes.

Joining Council Member Mansoor at the luncheon were interim Director of Economic Development Jay Trevino, Deputy City Attorney Tarquin Preziosi and Zoning Administrator Willa Bouwens-Killeen.

Membership of Lambda Alpha International includes architects, engineers, real estate developers, planners, government officials, professors, bankers, attorneys, real estate consultants, and officials of organizations both national and international.