

# 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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