

# Police Chief Ron Lawrence Announces retirement after 35-year career in law enforcement

After a successful 35-year career serving California as a police professional, with over a third of that time as the leader of a department, Chief of Police Ronald A. Lawrence has announced that he intends to retire this summer.

Chief Lawrence began his career in 1989 and promoted up the ranks with different law enforcement agencies in California, including serving as police chief in the cities of Citrus Heights and Rocklin before his appointment as police chief in Costa Mesa on Sept. 7, 2021.

While in Costa Mesa, he is credited with introducing innovative police technologies to assist crime fighting efforts, building trust throughout the community, developing police personnel for future leadership positions, and reducing crime in what was already a safe city.

Mayor John Stephens applauded Chief Lawrence's commitment to Costa Mesa.

"During his time as the top leader of our police department, Chief Lawrence led the organization through a staffing transition as a result of key retirements, and he has brought the organization to a whole new level," Mayor Stephens said, adding, "He introduced a responsive culture which is highly regarded in the law enforcement profession, and became a trusted and respected professional and neighbor in our community."

City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison also expressed her

sincere appreciation for Chief Lawrence.

“It is with mixed emotions that I accept Chief Lawrence’s intent to retire at the end of June after an amazing and successful 35-year career dedicating his life to the service of others,” City Manager Farrell Harrison said. “He led our remarkable police department, filled with dedicated professionals, who have built and earned the trust of our community. Chief Lawrence will be missed, and I thank him for transitioning the police department to an even higher level of performance.”

Reflecting on his time as police chief, Lawrence shared, “When I was hired for this position, I was asked to transition the organization for the future, build a professionally diverse police department, and maintain the already positive reputation of the Costa Mesa PD,” Lawrence said. “I could not be more pleased with what we have accomplished together, and I have full confidence that our police staff is well positioned to guide the department well into the future.”

Lawrence thanked the City Manager, Mayor, City Council, City staff and the police department for their support.

“I have profound gratefulness for City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison, who trusted me and gave me the autonomy to lead the police department. I appreciate her leadership. I also have tremendous gratitude for our Mayor John Stephens and the entire City Council for their faith and belief in me to lead the police department. Our City Manager and City Council have done, and continue to do, remarkable work to maintain Costa Mesa as a great place to live and work, and I know each one of them has a servant’s heart which makes our community better in more ways than one. Costa Mesa is fortunate to have such quality leadership, including my colleagues in other City Departments, who pour their dedication into our community. I am truly fortunate to have worked with such outstanding professionals.”

Chief Lawrence lauded public safety in Costa Mesa, giving high praise to the infrastructure and leadership put in place by the City Manager, City Council, and Fire Chief Dan Stefano.

“Public safety in Costa Mesa continues to evolve into a really great place, thanks to Lori Ann Farrell-Harrison, Fire Chief Stefano and his staff, our Costa Mesa police professionals, and our City Council. Thanks to the emphasis on public safety and the continued support from our City Council, the safety and well-being of our public remains a top priority in Costa Mesa,” Chief Lawrence said.

In addition to his years as a police chief, Lawrence has served on many statewide boards and commissions, including the Western States Information Network (WISN), the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), and the California Police Chiefs Association (CPCA) – elected as CPCA President in 2019 representing all 335 municipal police chiefs in California as the liaison to the Governor, State Attorney General and legislators at the Capitol.

Lawrence said he made his decision to retire to spend more time with his wife Jennifer, and to allow new police leadership to grow.

“It is difficult to leave a profession I love, but I look forward to spending more time with my best friend and supportive wife Jennifer, and our family, who are always there for me,” Lawrence said. “I know I leave the City on great terms, and after building upon a strong and diverse team I recognize that it’s time to allow future leaders to push the organization to even greater heights. I am so proud of Deputy Chief LaPointe, our Executive Staff, and our entire PD team for what we have accomplished together.”

Chief Lawrence and his wife Jennifer will still call Costa Mesa home, choosing to continue to live in our community because they consider Costa Mesa safe, vibrant, and friendly.

The decision to select a new chief of police to succeed Chief Lawrence will be made by City Manager Farrell Harrison in the coming months. Chief Lawrence will remain as the police chief for the next three months, announcing that his last day with Costa Mesa will be Friday, June 27, 2025.