

Public Services Director Ernesto Munoz leaves Costa Mesa for private sector

Public Services Director Ernesto Munoz has accepted an offer to become Director of General Services for a private asset management group, capping a 22-year career with the City of Costa Mesa that was highlighted by several major milestones including the restoration of wetlands at Fairview Park.

“Ernesto is one of the top engineers I have worked with in my 28-year career in government service,” City CEO Tom Hatch said. “His contributions to the Costa Mesa community are far reaching and we benefitted immensely from his vision and expertise. We are going to greatly miss him here at City Hall.”

Munoz was named public services director in 2012, overseeing a staff of 120-plus employees and managing a budget of more than \$22 million and a Capital Improvement Program budget of \$27 million. The city has more than \$500 million in assets that fall under public services purview.

“Since I took over my responsibilities as director in 2012, we have implemented a very aggressive Capital Improvement Program and constructed approximately \$100 million in infrastructure improvements,” Munoz said. “We continually improved the quality of services and at the same time achieved enhanced efficiency throughout the department.”

Under his leadership, public services also brought the City’s street system’s Pavement Condition Index from 77.6 to 86.3, which is well above the County’s average PCI of 77.

In addition to the Fairview Park wetlands project, Munoz oversaw City Hall’s seismic retrofit as well as the creation

of major recreation and sports venues, including the Volcom Skate Park, the Angels Tot Lot and the Jack R. Hammett Sports Complex.



One of the pools created by Costa Mesa Public Services to restore the Fairview Park wetlands.

He and his staff have completed multiple street, drainage and alley improvement projects, many with significant grant funding. Most recently, the city entered into a partnership with the OC Fair and Event Center to create a new bio-swale development that will improve walkways and help manage storm water runoff into the Back Bay.

“This has been a very emotional decision for me as I have a deep bond to this community through great relationships with residents and businesses alike,” Munoz said. “I have the best and brightest staff any director can hope for. I have received tremendous support, both from the Councils I have served as well as community members and CEO Hatch, and I don’t regret a minute of my 22 years with this great City.”

The ultimate sacrifice of those on the 'Honor Roll' will never be forgotten

By Robert N. Sharpnack
Chief of Police

For many Californians, the term "Honor Roll" conjures up images of academic excellence and the proud feelings associated with seeing your name included on a prestigious list.



For those of us in law enforcement, the "Honor Roll" is not a list on which we want to find our names. Although this list also gives rise to feelings of pride, it is the list of California peace officers killed in the line of duty.

So far in 2016, 33 names of officers who lost their lives throughout the United States were added to the national Honor Roll.

Each year, the California Peace Officers' Memorial Foundation

holds a ceremony to honor the men and women in law enforcement who have made the ultimate sacrifice and joined the list that year. The numbers vary from year to year, but since 2001, the names of 159 California Police Officers have been added to the Peace Officers' Memorial Monument in Capitol Park in Sacramento and are included in the Honor Roll on the Foundation's website.

Those names are also included in the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington DC and are joined by thousands of others. These brave men and women are honored each year in our nation's capital during National Police Week that runs from May 15 to Saturday May 21.

According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, on average, one law enforcement officer is killed in the line of duty somewhere in the United States every 61 hours. Since the first known line-of-duty death in 1791, more than 20,000 U.S. law enforcement officers have made the ultimate sacrifice.

In remembrance, we honor the sacrifice of two of our fallen family members: James D. "Dave" Ketchum and John W. "Mike" Libolt, who through noble commitment to duty, made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our community.

Both officers were killed on March 10, 1987 when their helicopter collided with a Newport Beach copter while pursuing a suspect in a stolen car. Ketchum and Libolt were both 15-year veterans and became the first Costa Mesa police officers killed in the line of duty in the department's history

The good work that we do day in and day out does not frequently end up in the paper. It is not considered news because it is what we chose to do – protect and serve our respective communities.

None of us wants to be included on the "Honor Roll" for our service, but recognize that the Honor Roll is there to remind

us that each year, there are those of us who will make the ultimate sacrifice in service to our communities.

The risk of this sacrifice keeps many from entering the law enforcement profession. Those of us who chose law enforcement start each day with a desire to serve and protect our communities by putting the safety of others before our own. We are husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, brothers and sisters. We are coaches, counselors, mediators and mentors.

We dedicate ourselves to fighting crime and drugs to create a safe community for those we serve. We help at-risk youth in schools, parents in crisis and connect the homeless and mentally ill with services. We show up when you call 911 to help you in a time need or an emergency.

We do these things with the understanding that it's part of our job and we proud to serve our community.

On a related note, we are proud of records specialist Tina Foster's brother, Niagara County Sheriff's Deputy Joe Tortorella, who received a Medal of Valor award this week from President Obama.

Below are links about the award and the actual incident. His heroic actions truly made the difference that day.

<http://www.wgrz.com/news/local/deputy-tortorella-receives-medal-of-valor-from-president-obama/196825976>

<http://www.buffalonews.com/city-region/wheatfield/acting-on-his-instincts-a-sheriffs-deputy-prevented-a-tragedy-20150504>

We are fortunate to work in a community where the overwhelming majority of our population trusts and supports what we do. This support is earned by your tireless efforts to protect our citizens, enforce our laws, and keep our community safe in accordance with the core values of Teamwork, Integrity,

Professionalism, and Service.

The men and women of our Department care deeply for Costa Mesa and demonstrate that care through various community engagement efforts – many of which are done on our own time.

We also strive to decrease crime and ensure a high quality of life through proactive and intelligence based policing strategies. We are grateful to serve a community that supports its Police Department and to not have to struggle with the challenges that plague many other cities.

I encourage members of the community to show that support during National Police Week by shining a blue light to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their community and to show our local heroes how much they are supported by those they serve.

Mayor joins former HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros and others at Baker Block naming ceremony

CityView, a premier investment management and development firm focused on urban multifamily real estate in the Western United States, and Red Oak Investments, an urban redevelopment company active in Los Angeles and Orange County, held a naming ceremony Thursday for Baker Block, their new apartment community located at the corner of Baker and Pullman Streets.

The ceremony for Baker Block featured speeches by Mayor Steve Mensinger, Sean Burton, CEO of CityView, Henry Cisneros, Founder and Chairman of CityView and the former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Joe Flanagan, Principal and Co-founder of Red Oak Investments.

The attendees were also treated to lunch by the Lime Truck, a popular food truck service.

When completed in mid-2017, Baker Block is expected to feature 240 residential apartments and a six-story above ground parking structure. Planned amenities include a rooftop deck, a fitness center with yoga room, a conference room, a Wi-Fi lounge, a dog park, a dog wash station, a club room with a kitchen, a bike storage and maintenance area, and multiple outdoor spaces with a resort-style pool, BBQ grills and fire pits.



“This is really a cruise ship,” Mayor Mensinger said of the development and its extensive amenities. “But it also means jobs and it means housing and this is where the next generation of Costa Mesa lives. And hopefully they will stay here for life.”

Secretary Cisneros complimented the Costa Mesa city staff and leadership for their hard work in getting this development done.

“We need to keep up with housing of all types,” Cisneros said. “It is immensely foresighted of the leaders of Costa Mesa that they recognize that balance.”

CityView is creating the project along with its development partner, Red Oak Investments. The project sits on a 4.17-acre site previously occupied by an office building. The project is the first of significant scale to be re-zoned for residential use in the area adjacent to the South Bristol Entertainment & Cultural Arts (SoBECA) District, which is commonly known for its low-density office buildings and light manufacturing facilities.

Burton said his company is glad to be in Costa Mesa.

“Orange County is an important market for CityView as it is now entering the redevelopment phase, where obsolete structures are being converted into housing,” said Burton. “These urban infill projects are typically complex, so they are often overlooked by other investors. We are able to overcome these challenges by working with local partners who know the local market better than anyone else. The Red Oak Investments team has been instrumental in bringing Baker Block to fruition, and I thank them for all of their hard work.”

Construction for Baker Block is being led by Johnstone Moyer, Inc., one of the top-10 multifamily builders in California. The building was designed by Architects Orange.

Moorlach slated to speak as part of discussion on sober living homes in Orange County

Costa Mesa's State Sen. John Moorlach will be part of a Town Hall discussion on Sober Living Homes tonight from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Laguna Hills Community Center.

Moorlach will be joined by state Sen. Pat Bates and Assembly Members William Brough and Matthew Harper as they discuss the laws governing residential recovery facilities as well as what cities like Costa Mesa have done to address the issue.

Also presenting tonight will be Costa Mesa's Assistant City Attorney Tarquin Preziosi, who has played a key role in the enactment and enforcement of the city's single family and multi-family ordinances.

The Association of California Cities Orange County chapter as well as the Orange County Association of Realtors are partner sponsors of the event.

[Click here to see the entire agenda.](#)

The Community Center is located at 25555 Alicia Parkway in Laguna Hills.

Costa Mesa Fire and Rescue adds two fire engineers

Costa Mesa Fire and Rescue Chief Dan Stefano announced that Travis Johnson and Justin Horner, two firefighter/paramedics, were both promoted to the position of fire engineer, a personnel move that has not taken place in the department in over eight years.

“Travis and Justin represent the best of our organization and each has respectively contributed in a variety of areas, while serving the community with extraordinary passion, pride, and professionalism,” Chief Stefano said.

Johnson brings over 10 years of fire service related experience to his new role, inclusive of his most recent nine years split between his current assignment here with us at the City of Costa Mesa and his previous assignment with the City of Escondido, serving as a firefighter/paramedic.



His mechanical savvy, positive attitude, and ability to adapt well in challenging circumstances are characteristics that will serve him well in his new role and will add to the extraordinary strength of the entire Engineer group.

Horner has been a member of the Costa Mesa team since 2005, preceded by service to the Garden Grove and Alhambra Fire Departments as a firefighter/paramedic.



Horner's contributions to the organization, in particular as it relates to EMS, have been instrumental in helping the department move forward and his professionalism is to be commended. He earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from California State University, Fullerton as well as an associate degree from Orange Coast College and was awarded the CEO's Leadership Award in 2014.

Costa Mesa performing arts students and fans enjoy

sounds of newly donated piano

The sound of music in the Costa Mesa High School Performing Arts Center is now many octaves improved with the addition of a Yamaha C6 Grand Piano donated through the efforts of a prominent alumni, a local family and the school's foundation.

The piano was unveiled Tuesday night during a Costa Mesa High School Choir concert at the performing arts center.



Speaking to the concert crowd, Costa Mesa High School Foundation President and Councilmember Katrina Foley credited the school's music director Jon Lindfors for asking the foundation to purchase the piano that was sorely needed to enhance the school's musical performances.

"This year it is no surprise that the Costa Mesa High School Foundation awarded Mr. Lindfors with our first ever Visionary

Award,” Foley said. “It’s through his vision that Costa Mesa High School breeds an environment of innovation, culture and creativity.”

In addition to the foundation donation, the piano was made possible by a \$25,000 gift from Costa Mesa High class of 1992 alumnus Lane Merrifield and local residents Bob and Sue Denton.

Merrifield is notable for being the co-founder of Club Penguin, a hugely popular virtual online gaming site for children.

“My Costa Mesa High School music and drama experiences were so critical to me during my time there,” Merrifield told Lindfors in a written note. “I am confident that without the artistic outlet and foundation in my life that you and others provide, I would not have enjoyed the success I have today.”

Costa Mesa High Principal Jacob Haley thanked the donors for the gift to the school.

“A piano such as this is a once in-a-lifetime purchase and will serve students and audiences to come for many decades,” Haley said.

City looking for residents to take part in voter district

Meet the Expert meetings

As part of an agreement the city has reached with a voting rights advocate law firm, City Hall will be hosting three Meet the Expert meetings as it prepares for a voter district formation initiative headed for the November ballot.

The meetings to be held in Conference Room 1A are the first of many that will take place before the measure goes to vote.

The Meet the Expert meetings are designed to be small, face-to-face events with no more than two or three people at a time. Members of the public will meet with a technical consultant, David Ely of Compass Demographics, who will give community members the opportunity to use geographic information system tools to better understand how boundaries are developed.

In order to participate in the Meet the Expert sessions please call the City Clerk office at 714-754-5225 to schedule an appointment. The first meeting will be held this Friday, May 6, beginning at 10 a.m. The next two meetings are scheduled for Thursday May 12, beginning at 10 a.m. and Saturday May 14, from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

There will also be two rounds of community meetings in the month of June and those dates will be forthcoming.

Chick-Fil-A operator honored with Mayor's Award

On Tuesday May 3, Mayor Steve Mensinger presented the Mayor's

Award to Tammy Guadagno, the operator of the Chick-Fil-A restaurant on Harbor Boulevard, citing the organization's strong support for local schools and community groups.

"It's exciting to see Tammy's passion for our community and how she has ingrained that into her team of employees," Mayor Mensinger said. "We are grateful for Chick-Fil-A's investment in the Costa Mesa community and the positive impact they are having on the local economy."

Guadagno thanked Costa Mesa and said she gives back so much because the community takes care of her and her employees. In turn, she wants to return the favor and take care of Costa Mesa in any way she can.

"It is one of the best communities I've ever been involved in," she said. "I've lived in a lot of places and I'm not going anywhere. Costa Mesa is where I'm staying forever. It's an amazing city."

City files public nuisance complaint and asks court to take action against New Harbor Inn

The City of Costa Mesa filed a public nuisance complaint against the New Harbor Inn, a rare civil abatement move that, if successful, will bring the blighted and crime-infested motel on Harbor Boulevard under court control.

"As we saw with a recent stabbing at a local motel, these

establishments continue to be a detriment to our community and are havens for prostitutes, drug users and other criminal elements,” said Costa Mesa Mayor Steve Mensinger. “By taking this action against this public nuisance, the City Council is trying to eliminate the unlawful use of the property.”

Since 2010, the New Harbor Inn generated nearly 1,800 calls for service and it is a known locale for drug storage and sales and multiple narcotics arrests. The motel is the source for a disproportionate amount of police calls.

[Click here to see a copy of the complaint.](#)

In addition to the criminal activity, inspections at the New Harbor Inn have turned up multiple code violations over the years including substandard property maintenance and health, life and safety violations.

In March of 2014, 79 violations were found in 33 rooms and in August of 2012, the property received fire code violations after it was discovered that 30 rooms had no smoke detectors, there were improper exits, non-operational fire extinguishers and fire hazards caused by extension cords.

According to the complaint filed in Orange County Superior Court Central Division, the city is asking for myriad remedies enforceable by the court including but not limited to:

- Shutting down the hotel temporarily or permanently.
- Appointing a receiver or court officer to take over operations and assume management and control of the property.
- Requiring the property owner to comply with existing law and completely revamp its business procedures, hire armed security guards and improve lighting and other areas of concern.

Recently, the city and Costa Mesa law enforcement have had to increase enforcement efforts on motel operators whose

properties have multiple calls for service and are the venue for criminal activity such as drug use and sales and prostitution.

In a unanimous vote, the city council voted in closed session to take this legal action against the New Harbor Inn. If the court grants the city's request to shut down, or place a court-appointed receiver over the New Harbor Inn, that would be a major victory for residents and business owners who regularly have to deal with the criminal activity.

"Costa Mesa works hard to encourage and support our local businesses and residents," Mayor Mensinger said. "But this drastic intervention is necessary given the pattern and practice of bad business operations."

Police and fire investigators say 13-year-old responsible for spate of weekend arson fires

After a string of dumpster and small brush fires throughout the weekend, Costa Mesa Fire and Police personnel conducted an arson investigation that led them to a 13-year old male Costa Mesa resident.

The boy was arrested for the related arson incidents and later booked at OC Juvenile Hall.

[Click here to read the press release of the arrest.](#)

SMART Camp is back for 2016

SMART Camp, which is a collaborative program between the City of Costa Mesa and the Newport-Mesa Unified School District, will be back again this summer. The free summer camp will be held Monday through Thursday July 5 – Aug. 4 on the campus of Costa Mesa High School.

The Sports Camp will include: Aquatics, basketball, cheer, football, soccer, softball, tennis, track, volleyball and wrestling. The Music Camp will include jazz band and orchestra lessons and the Arts Camp will include two and three dimensional visual art projects and theatrical acting.

A new acting component has been added to the Arts Camp as well.

In an effort to increase participation, organization and registration, this year's SMART Camp registration will be available online through the City's ActiveNet registration software as well as in person at City Hall, Balearic Community Center, Neighborhood Community Center, and Downtown Recreation Center.

Construction Documents in Progress For reconstruction

of Fire Station No. 1

Progress continues in the preparation of the construction documents for the reconstruction of Fire Station No. 1. The station was originally built in 1961 and is currently experiencing foundation settlement causing structural damage. The station is not built to current building codes and standards, and does not provide efficient multi-gender accommodations.

The Public Services Department in coordination with the Fire Department is working with WLC Architects to complete the construction documents for a state of the art Fire Station.

The new station will be equipped with a three-bay and double-deep apparatus room, ten fire fighter dorm rooms, administrative offices, kitchen, dining room, day room, physical training room, EMS training room, mechanic shop area, and emergency medical supply room within the 11,675 square foot building. Additional site features include an emergency generator, fuel station, hose drying tower, and a City emergency supply storage unit.

The new station will provide direct access to Adams Avenue in an effort to minimize emergency response time and improve traffic safety. The floor plan is being designed and coordinated to ensure that usability and circulation are maximized.

The new station will achieve LEED Gold certification and exceed California Title 24 Energy Code requirements by at least 15%. The attached architectural concept was approved by the Planning Commission in January. It is anticipated that bidding on the project will begin in the summer of 2017 with award of the contract by the council in October of 2016. Construction is anticipated to begin in January 2017.