

Police Department staff increases bring needed additions to several specialty assignments

The first deployment shift change for 2018 for the Costa Mesa Police Department has taken place, resulting in some exciting and new additions to several key specialty assignments.

The Traffic Safety Bureau gained a second traffic sergeant position to fill a long-time vacancy. This sergeant position will functionally oversee the department's traffic officers, part-time traffic aides, and the traffic investigator position. With the breadth and volume of traffic-related issues throughout Costa Mesa, this additional sergeant will provide considerable expertise and oversight to a unit that continues to see growth.

The Police Department also saw expansion of the Community Policing Unit with the addition of a third officer. The Community Policing Unit was relaunched in late 2016 with new priorities and responsibilities to include, first and foremost, concentration on homeless outreach and liaison with the city's Homeless Outreach Team. They also tackle other community issues and provide support to Patrol Services and other units throughout the department. For the first time, the Community Policing Unit will now have officers in the field seven days a week.

The Gang Investigations Unit also experienced milestone growth with the return of a gang sergeant and addition of two gang investigators, for a total of four. Enhanced staffing will allow the Gang Investigation Unit to return to an independently operating unit under the Investigative Services

Bureau. Much like the Community Policing Unit, the Gang Investigative Unit has expanded its presence and impact throughout the week.

Costa Mesa police officers conduct compliance checks

The Costa Mesa Police Department collaborated with the Orange County Probation Department last week to conduct compliance checks on offenders subject to Post-Release Community Supervision (PRCS), per the State Prison Realignment Assembly Bill 109.

These checks were designed to locate and audit the activity of local criminal offenders residing within the City of Costa Mesa who are under the supervision of OC Probation.

Officers completed 27 residential home checks of offenders and contacted 43 individuals, 23 of which were and classified as PRCS/Probation offenders and five of which were on formal probation with gang terms.

The compliance checks resulted in eight offenders being arrested for violations of the conditions of their probation and/or new criminal law violations, and two other individuals being cited for having an open container in public.

Four new officers welcomed to Costa Mesa Police Department at Monday ceremony

Costa Mesa Police Chief Rob Sharpnack welcomed four new members of the Police Department on Monday during an official badge-pinning and swearing-in ceremony outside his office.

“Obviously this is an awesome day for the department,” Chief Sharpnack said. “This really sets the momentum for the next year. The spirit of police work, teamwork and excellence is continuing to grow here in this department.”

Joining the department this week are Officers Frank Nguyen and Bunnath Phot both of whom are lateral transfers from Fullerton Police Department.

Also, welcomed on Monday were two recent graduates from the Sheriff Academy, Eric Molina and Mark Garcia.

Nguyen has a degree in criminal justice from Cal State Fullerton and has worked for Fullerton PD for the last 10 years. He has earned a MADD Award for DUI arrests and in 2010 received an award from the Chief of Police for exemplary service.

Phot is currently attending Cal State Fullerton and is working on a degree in kinesiology. He has been a Marine Corps reserve since 2012 and has worked for Fullerton Police Department since 2014.

Molina grew up in Costa Mesa and is an Estancia High graduate. He served as a Police Explorer for five years and later as a part-time aide in the traffic bureau. He has completed course work at Golden West college.

Garcia is a 2013 graduate from the University of California

Riverside with bachelor's in sociology. He also volunteers in the evening hours after work helping children with psychological challenges.

Probation home checks result in 14 arrests

Costa Mesa Police officers recently attempted 19 residential home checks of Post Release Community Supervision (PRCS), Formal Probation and Gang Terms Probation offenders. Over the course of the evening, the team made multiple contacts, which included 21 offenders, 15 of whom were classified as being on formal supervised probation or were PRCS/Probation offenders living in Costa Mesa.

An additional six offenders on Supervised Gang Terms Probation were also contacted. The compliance checks resulted in 14 offenders being arrested for violations of conditions of their probation and/or new criminal law violations. Teams also assisted patrol on a felony battery investigation and searched a hoarder/unsafe nuisance house at 769 W. Wilson Street where they contacted 17 persons inside.

Code Enforcement will have to follow up due to numerous violations and safety issues at the home.

Fidel Gamboa receives CEO Leadership Award

Costa Mesa CEO Tom Hatch presented Chief of Code Enforcement Fidel Gamboa with the CEO Leadership Award at the monthly Meet and Greet event on Thursday Oct. 27 where new employees are welcomed and new promotions celebrated.

“Controversy often accompanies the cases Code Enforcement handles,” Hatch said. “And there can be many heart breaking reasons why a resident is not complying with Code. Fidel has honed the skill of balancing the direction of City officials and compliance with Code, while compassionately dealing with residents.”

Named Chief of Code Enforcement in February of 2015, Gamboa oversees 12 full-time and part-time Code Enforcement Officers as well as a management analyst and one support staff.

Code Enforcement is responsible for enforcing a variety of complaints including those involving dilapidated properties, group homes, and homeless matters. Since the beginning of the year, more than 1,700 cases have been opened to address complaints received from a variety of sources including the online Costa Mesa Connect and telephone hotline.

Gamboa was also instrumental in establishing the new Community Improvement Division of Development Services, providing assessments of current staffing and their deployment as well as comparing our Code and with those of other cities, formulating recommendations to improve the division where appropriate.

With the exception of a small stint at the City of Irvine, Fidel has worked for the City of Costa Mesa since 1994 as a Crime Scene Specialist in the Police Department but, primarily, in Code Enforcement since 2000. He has a

bachelor's degree in social sciences from UC Irvine.

In addition to honoring Gamboa, CEO Hatch welcomed several new employees including, Nadia Flores, Office Specialist, City Clerk Division; Johnwilly Aglupos and Roger Rath, Assistant Planners, Development Services; Danielle Garza, Permit Processing Specialist, Finance Department.

In the Parks and Community Services Department new employees include Geovanny Benitez and Jordan Brucelas, Recreation Leader III; Karen Caspa, Trenton Cooper, Silvia Hernandez, Matthew Nguyen, Tu Nguyen, Sunya Ungar-Rujijanyawat Janet Zuazo, Recreation Leader, Jason Ramos, Recreation Leader IV and Paul Lopez – Maintenance Worker; and from the Police Department, Michele Wilson, Police Records Technician.

Those celebrating promotions included Heather Hamilton promoted to Management Aide in the Information Technology department and Laura Gomez and Gabriela Ruiz who were both promoted to Recreation Leader IV in Parks and Community Services.

Costa Mesa City Council takes a public stand against Proposition 57

The Costa Mesa City Council unanimously passed a resolution opposing Proposition 57 and joined a growing chorus of cities, law enforcement officials and district attorneys who oppose the ballot measure that will reduce prison sentences and allow more opportunities for convicted felons to apply for parole.

[Click here to read the resolution.](#)

Also, in a letter to Gov. Jerry Brown, Costa Mesa Mayor Stephen Mensinger took direct aim at the statewide initiative, which is backed by the governor.

“Proposition 57 will undermine the work that has been put into stopping sexual assault, domestic violence, and human trafficking and weakens legislation protecting victims,” Mensinger wrote. “Important legislation such as the Victim’s Bill of Rights, Mary’s Law, Californians against Sexual Exploitation Act, and the Gang Violence and Juvenile Crime Prevention Act will become weaker if Proposition 57 passes.”

[Click here to read the entire letter.](#)

Costa Mesa joins the League of California Cities, prominent Police Chiefs, District Attorneys and law enforcement agencies and associations throughout the state in ardent opposition to the Proposition 57, which appears on the Nov. 8 ballot.

Like many cities in the state of California, Costa Mesa is feeling the effects of statewide laws and ballot measures that aimed to lessen the prison population but have in turn put more criminals back on the street prematurely.

According the League of Cities, California has experienced increased and sustained property crime in the aftermath of the 2011 public safety realignment and the passage of Proposition 47 in 2014, leading to an increasing number of crimes being treated as misdemeanors, aggravating a pre-existing shortage of beds in county jails, and resulting in an increasing number of offenders being at liberty on the streets of California's cities.

The league also points to reports in the Los Angeles Times that show violent crime rose in California by 10% in 2015, a figure corroborated by crime statistics maintained by the state's Department of Justice, which indicate that over 15,000 more violent crimes occurred in California in 2015 than in 2014.

At its Oct. 4 meeting, the City Council voted 4-0 to approve a resolution officially opposing Proposition 57, citing its potential to further increase levels of violent crime.

Costa Mesa public safety staff honored at annual chamber barbecue lunch

Costa Mesa's public safety employees were treated to a free lunchtime barbecue at the OC Fair & Event Center care of the Costa Mesa Chamber of Commerce that included live music and performances from the Orange Coast College cheerleaders.

About 200 people attended this year's Public Safety Recognition Barbecue on Thursday Oct. 8, including 90 police, fire and dispatch personnel.

Guests were served up dishes of chicken, tri-tip steak, mashed potatoes, vegetables and salad.

The community and civic leaders in attendance which included City Council Members Katrina Foley and Sandy Genis, OC Fair & Event Center CEO Kathy Kramer, Orange Coast College President Dennis Harkins, Costa Mesa Police Chief Rob Sharpnack and Fire Chief Dan Stefano.

"It was an honor to attend today's Public Safety Recognition Barbecue," Chief Sharpnack said. "On behalf of the CMPD staff, I want to thank the Chamber of Commerce for their generosity and others in attendance for their support of public safety personnel. We are proud to serve the Chamber of Commerce membership and look forward to collaborating in the future to make Costa Mesa an even greater city in which to live, work, and visit."

Chamber of Commerce CEO Eileen Benjamin said the chamber is proud to honor the city's protectors.

"The men and women of our Fire, Police and Communications departments keep our community safe and are willing to put

their lives at risk for us every workday,” said Benjamin, who emceed the event along with Chamber President Tom Johnson. “This event is a small way to demonstrate our appreciation. It is wonderful to see many supporters joining together to show gratitude to these fine guardians. The people of Costa Mesa are inspiring in so many ways.”

In addition to the OC Fair & Event Center donating the venue, the Orange County Marketplace donated the catering and other supporters were Care Ambulance, Harbor Center and ICI Development, Metro Pro Towing and The Triangle. Longtime Chamber Board of Director member Patty Mason was also instrumental in supporting this event, and the music was provided by the Mike Donahue band.

Costa Mesa Police Lt. Joyce LaPointe is latest to receive CEO Leadership Award

At the September Meet and Greet, City CEO Tom Hatch presented the CEO Leadership Award to Lt. Joyce LaPointe in recognition of her to work dealing with the city’s quality of life challenges, including coming up with solutions in regards to homeless and transient population issues.

“What I admire about Joyce is that she is always quick to point out that what she does is part of a larger team effort,”

said CEO Hatch. "I appreciate her leadership skills and value the hard work she has done throughout the years and most recently her efforts to solve our homeless challenges."

LaPointe is a 19-year veteran of the Costa Mesa Police Department. She started her career at Costa Mesa as a police officer in 1997 and was promoted to the rank of Corporal in 2002, Sergeant in 2007 and the rank of Lieutenant in 2015, when she became the first female to hold that rank in the department's history.

As an officer LaPointe has extensive field experience including patrol, field training, bike patrol, traffic investigation, defensive tactics instructor, and tactical flight officer. Joyce is the recipient of the Mothers against Drunk Drivers Century Award, a Life Saving Merit and recently helped with a child birth in the field.

During her eight years as a sergeant, Joyce had the opportunity to manage several Patrol Teams, the Field Officers Training Program, Jail Operations and the Force Tactics Training Team.

Currently, she is the Area 1 Commander, who oversees Patrol Operations in south end of Costa Mesa. She also manages the Field Officers Training Program, the Force Tactic Training Team, Community Service Officers, Park Rangers, and Bike Detail Team.

Prior to joining Costa Mesa PD, she worked at Costa Mesa High School as the Athletic Trainer and Campus Security. A native of Mt. View California, LaPointe graduated from Southbay Christian High School in 1986 and then attended Vanguard University on an Athletic Scholarship, where she received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Kinesiology.

In addition to LaPointe, the CEO welcomed several new members to the Costa Mesa team, including, Development Services Intern Katelyn Walsh, Parks and Community Services Recreation Leaders Victor Acosta, Fernando Barajas-Valladares, Jessie Cerda and

Denzel Muldrew.

From the Police Department, Hatch welcomed new Officer Cory Montgomery and Crime Scene Specialist Brittany Godoy. Not in attendance but also recognized were Officer Nick Dempkowski and Police Aide Jeremiah Stanley.

In the way of promotions, Hatch congratulated Marian Traylor, who was promoted to Deputy City Clerk, Denise Baldacci now a Recreation Leader III, Briana Delfin And Enyelber Franco Recreation Specialists And Joseph Mendoza and Delgado Salazar – Recreation Leader II.

Hatch also thanked retiring city employees Maintenance Services Manager Bruce Hartley, Fire Protection Analyst Dave Hollister, Police Officer Matthew Olin and Senior Records Technician Teresa Peterson-Goerke.

Costa Mesa Police nab transient accused of robbing 74-year-old woman

Costa Mesa Police arrested a 24-year-old transient who is accused of a strong-arm robbery against a 74-year-old woman who had just withdrawn money from the ATM machine outside of Bank of America at 2701 Harbor Boulevard.

Police said Simon Yousif grabbed the woman's wallet and during the ensuing struggle to retain her wallet, the victim fell to

the ground and sustained a broken hip.

Per witnesses, the suspect fled east across Harbor Boulevard and a description of the suspect was broadcast to responding police officers.

Officers searched a nearby apartment complex at 2700 Peterson Place and spoke with bystanders standing outside. Those bystanders alerted the officers that they saw a suspicious male running east through the apartment complex toward Orange Coast College.

Officers responded and saw a male, later identified as Yousif, attempting to hide behind a tree on the south side of Adams Avenue west of Pinecreek Drive.

The male attempted to flee from officers and was subsequently detained. The victim's property, including cash, government identification, and social security card, was located in the suspect's possession.

Officers were unable to locate the victim's wallet or debit card.

The suspect was identified by a witness and placed under arrest for strong-arm robbery. The victim was taken to a local area hospital for treatment.

Yousif was later taken to the Orange County Jail on \$50,000 bail.

Costa Mesa police join the

fight to combat human trafficking in county

Speaking to a crowd of about 150 spectators in front of City Hall, Police Chief Rob Sharpnack announced that Costa Mesa will join other law enforcement and social services agencies in the Orange County Human Trafficking Task Force to crack down on sex trade criminals who are leaving a wake of young victims throughout the county.

“It’s truly an honor for the Costa Mesa Police Department to join this effort,” Chief Sharpnack said as he urged members of the public to report incidents of human trafficking that they may witness through the National Hotline number at 1-888-3737-888. “You can be the one to help a victim find safety and new hope.”

Sharpnack announced that human trafficking is on the increase in Orange County and Costa Mesa Police will assign one full-time officer to the human trafficking detail.

“It’s the second largest criminal enterprise in the world and it is the fastest growing,” Chief Sharpnack said.

<https://youtu.be/xEoN2Rc4ZLI>

Chief Sharpnack was joined by Mayor Steve Mensinger, Anaheim Police Deputy Chief Julian Harvey, Director of Victim Assistance Programs for Community Services Programs Lita Mercado and District Attorney Tony Rackaukus at a press conference in front of City Hall on Friday morning Sept. 9.

Also in attendance were Councilmembers Katrina Foley and Jim Righeimer and many law enforcement personnel from throughout the county.

“Costa Mesa will do everything in our power to combat human

trafficking in our city, as well as support this important regional effort” Mayor Mensinger said.

Mercado’s group, the Community Services Programs based in Santa Ana, cofounded the task force in 2004, which consists of law enforcement personnel from Anaheim, Costa Mesa, Santa Ana, Irvine, the California Highway Patrol, the OC Sheriff, the FBI, Homeland Security, the U.S. Attorney and OC District Attorney office.

Since 2004, the task force has worked to identify the origin of the victims and how they wound up being part of this tragic trend. Only a little more than 20 percent come from Orange County, though much of the trafficking occurs here with the pimps using Beach and Harbor Boulevards as major corridors.

The task force aided and provided assistance to 580 sex and labor trafficking victims.

In addition the task force not only goes after the pimps who brutalize these young victims and exploit them as sex slaves, but also those who pay to have sex with them.

“We now have the purchasers of sex in our sights,” Anaheim Deputy Chief Harvey said. “We will be looking for you and you will go to jail.”

District Attorney Rackauckus also noted there was an uptick in violence against those kept captive and he provided gruesome details of some of the injuries these young women, and in some cases children, receive. He said that his office has experienced more and more gang members, many from the Fresno area, taking part in these illegal activities and he vowed to put the perpetrators behind bars.

“We are working to get them the longest sentences possible so we can put them out of business,” he said.

[Click here](#) for more information and links to data on the OC

Human Trafficking Task Force website. And [click here](#) for more information on Community Service Programs.

CMPD snares seven offenders in probation compliance operation

Officers from the Costa Mesa Police Department and members of the Orange County Probation Department arrested seven offenders on Thursday Aug. 25 for outstanding arrest warrants, violations of probation, and/or new criminal law violations.

The two agencies conducted the compliance checks on offenders who are subject to Post-Release Community Supervision as well as subjects with probation gang terms. These checks were designed to locate and audit the activity of local criminal offenders residing within Costa Mesa who are under the supervision of the Orange County Probation Department. Officers attempted 19 residential home checks of offenders and contacted 33 offenders, 10 of which were classified as PRCS/Probation offenders living in Costa Mesa.

Summary of those arrested (names withheld):

Male, 15 years old, Costa Mesa

Location of arrest: 1800 block of Park Drive

Supervision status: None

Charges: Armed Robbery (warrant obtained/served on Costa Mesa open case)

Female, 33 years old, Costa Mesa

Location of arrest: 3000 block of Fillmore Way

Supervision: Probation – PRCS

Charges: Probation Violation

Male, 49 years old, Costa Mesa

Location of arrest: 300 block of Princeton Street

Supervision: Mandatory Supervision

Charges: Probation Violation

Male, 40 years old, Costa Mesa

Location of arrest: 500 block of Traverse Street

Supervision: None

Charges: Misdemeanor Warrant arrest

Female, 28 years old, of Mission Viejo

Location of arrest: 700 block of Wilson Street

Supervision: None

Charges: Possession of Paraphernalia

Male, 54 years old, of Costa Mesa

Location of arrest: 700 block of Wilson Street

Supervision: None

Charges: Possession of Paraphernalia

Male, 48 years old, Costa Mesa

Location of arrest: 700 block of Wilson Street

Supervision: None

Charges: Misdemeanor Arrest Warrant

The Costa Mesa Police Department will continue to collaborate with the Orange County Probation Department to conduct similar, future compliance checks of PRCS offenders living in the Costa Mesa community.

Chief Sharpnack welcomes newest officer to the department at swearing-in ceremony

Police Chief Rob Sharpnack on Monday Aug. 29 welcomed Nicholas Dempkowski to the force, the latest police officer to leave another department and join Costa Mesa's men and women in blue.

"This is yet another bright spot for Costa Mesa PD," Sharpnack said as he introduced officer Dempkowski. "Nick is going to be a great addition to our department. He is committed to public service and law enforcement and we are glad to have him aboard."

Attending the swearing in ceremony were Mayor Steve Mensinger and City CEO Tom Hatch as well as several staff members from the Police and Fire Departments and City Hall.

Dempkowski comes to Costa Mesa by way of Fullerton, where he

joined that force in 2013 and trained as a K9 officer.

Prior to that, he worked as a reserve officer for the Long Beach Police Department after graduating from the Fullerton College Police Academy. He also has a background in off-road racing.

In addition to Officer Dempkowski, Sharpnack introduced new academy graduate Cory Montgomery as well as three new hires for Communications/Dispatch division, Erin Cedillo, Nydia Robles and Jennifer Rosenberg.

He also congratulated several police officers for the great restraint they showed during an incident on Friday night, where a man armed with a knife was trying to commit suicide-by-cop. The man was detained safely, despite making threatening gestures toward police.

Sharpnack noted this is a particularly proud time for him as he rebuilds the department with the best and the brightest and bulks up staffing in speciality areas like detectives and community policing.

He thanked the efforts of recruiters such as Sgt. Jerry Hildeman and training assistant Jody Gonzalez for their efforts in bringing in top talent and he commended his officers for doing great work, even in the lean times.

“We have not dropped our service levels at all,” Sharpnack said. “We continue to provide a high level of service to the residents of Costa Mesa.”