



## CEO's Message



### An Important Month

The month of March is an important month for all of us. Daylight Savings Time returns on March 13. March 20 is the first day of Spring. And sometime this month, the California Legislature may have a budget agreement in place, at least if the Governor has his way.

The impact of the State budget on County government cannot be downplayed. The proposed realignment of additional services from the State to counties will shape what we do and how we do it for many years to come. The Board of Supervisors and County staff are working with legislators and other partners to ensure the County's interests are considered in this process but there

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## 10 Questions for Veterans Service Officer Joseph Ford

### 1. What is a Veterans Service Officer?

A Veterans Service Officer is an individual that assists a Veteran or a Veteran's family member in identifying and obtaining any Federal or State Veteran Benefit they could be entitled to.

### 2. What drew you to this type of work?

I was working for the Federal government as a military consultant and a friend of mine told me about the County Veterans Service Office and what the office does for Veterans. The challenge of helping our Veterans really swayed me in applying for the position.

### 3. What does a typical day at the office include for you?

A typical day includes interviewing Veterans or their family members and responding to emails, phone calls and other government agency requests regarding Veteran issues.

### 4. How much interaction do you have with other County agencies or departments?

Our office personnel interact with other County organizations on a daily basis, including the Orange County Housing Authority, Office on Aging, Public Administrator/Public Guardian and Social Services Agency. These departments have frequent contact with Veterans and they provide excellent service to our Veterans and their family members and refer them to our office to ensure they are getting the benefits they are entitled to.



Veterans Service Officer Joseph Ford

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is no doubting the State is facing a day of reckoning that will reverberate to the local level.

As a County, we have taken proactive steps to live within our means while limiting the impact on the public and our staff to the greatest extent possible. In spite of our best efforts, there will be more changes to come, many driven by the State's decisions. We will continue to look for opportunities to collaborate with employee bargaining units as adjustments to our operations are needed. We also think it is vitally important that you stay informed as news about the impact of changes at both the State and Federal levels is likely to accelerate rapidly in the weeks ahead. We will do our best to help in this process.

As always, my thanks for all that you do on behalf of the residents of Orange County. Working together, we have made it through difficult times before and I know we will make it through again.

**Thomas G. Mauk**  
County Executive Officer

**(10 Questions for Veterans Service Officer Joseph Ford** *Continued from page 1)*

**5. What is your favorite part about your job?**

My favorite part is helping the Veteran who is struggling with mental health, drug or alcohol issues and making him or her aware of the options available.

**6. What is the hardest/most challenging aspect of your job?**

The most challenging part of this job is letting the people of Orange County know that there is a place that Veterans and their family members can contact to see what benefits may be available from the Federal and State Department of Veterans Affairs. It is amazing how many Orange County Veterans don't know that our office exists.

**7. How can someone reading this get involved to help our veterans here in Orange County?**

There are many organizations in the local communities that are specifically geared towards Veterans. Contact the local American Legion, AMVETS or VFW Post and ask what events they could use help with. The Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Long Beach has a wonderful volunteer program as well.

**8. What advice would you give someone who is interested in becoming a Veterans Service Officer?**

This job is very demanding due to the increase in the Veteran population as a result of the current War on Terror. If you are interested in becoming a Veterans Service Officer, ensure you are flexible, able to multi-task and have a strong desire to assist those that served our Nation.

**9. What professional accomplishment are you most proud of achieving?**

I retired as a Marine Corps Gunnery Sergeant and while on active duty I saw the impact traumatic events can have on military personnel. At our office, I met a Marine Veteran who was suffering from severe mental health issues from combat in Iraq. He was getting the wrong information and advice until he came to our office. Sadly, until he saw me, he was being told he was not entitled to anything. During the interview, I identified the benefits he was entitled to and processed the necessary paperwork. He has come back to the office frequently to tell me how thankful he is to get the care and benefits he needs. I am very proud and honored to assist him; he is a true hero.

**10. If an Orange County veteran needs assistance with his or her benefits, how can they get in touch with you?**

Veterans that are interested in the benefits they could be entitled to are encouraged to call the office at (714) 567-7450 and ask to speak to a Veterans Service Officer. They can also come to our office at 1300 S. Grand Ave., Bldg B. in Santa Ana. ■

## Certified With Pride

As you enter the Civic Center Garage facility in Santa Ana, you may notice a new addition that is a source of great pride for the garage staff. That new addition is a banner signifying that the garage has achieved the Blue Seal of Excellence status issued by the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE), an achievement that employees take very seriously.

The garage, located at 445 Civic Center Drive West in Santa Ana, outfits and services light duty vehicles including cars, pick up trucks, vans and SUVs used by a wide variety of County departments. In order to achieve Blue Seal of Excellence status, 75% of the garage staff performing diagnosis and repairs have to be ASE certified and each area of service offered in the shop must be covered by at least one ASE-certified mechanic.

Civic Center Garage staff studied training guides and CD's on their own time to prepare for the certification exams. The questions on the certification test are written and approved by industry experts including working automotive technicians, vocational educators, parts and equipment manufacturers and representatives of automobile manufacturers. To gain certification, you must also have two years of relevant work experience.

One of the garage staff who has achieved Master Technician status, Robert Markworth, said achieving the certification helps to show the garage is on a par with shops in private industry. "It speaks volumes about your qualifications and commitment." Another of the Master Technicians, Ezequiel Lopez, said of the ASE patch on his sleeve, "It feels good to wear it," and the same pride was exhibited by other mem-

CERTIFICATION SLIDESHOW: [CLICK HERE](#)



Staff from the Civic Center Garage invited County Executive Officer Tom Mauk to join in the celebration of the achievement of ASE Certification for the garage facility. Pictured (l-r) are: Ami Leofa, Francisco Alvarez, Frank (Cruz) Correa, Gustavo Jimenez, Mike Holton, Robert Markworth, Kevin Wilson, Mr. Mauk, Scott Pipher, Henryk Lojewski, Richard Lam, Juan Ochoa, Todd Eggers and Anthony (A.J.) Marquez.

bers of the staff. Also achieving Master Technician status, meaning they have passed examinations in all eight categories, are Frank (Cruz) Correa and Mike Holton. Civic Center Garage mechanics with ASE certification in specific areas are Francisco Alvarez, Gustavo Jimenez, Scott Pipher, Kevin Wilson, Lee Yopez and Armen Zanzanian.

ASE provides on-going education to technicians, allowing them to keep up with the latest technological changes while helping to prepare them for the recertification that is required every five years. With hybrid and compressed natural gas vehicles entering the County fleet, along with the growing computerization of the other vehicles used by County departments, the staff at the Civic Center Garage truly must keep up with technology to keep the hundreds of County vehicles on the road and operating safely. ■

## Collaboration Paves Way For Midway City Improvements



Gas and other utility lines are being relocated to make way for long awaited street and storm drain improvements in Midway City.

As one of Orange County's oldest communities, Midway City's streets and sidewalks were designed and constructed well before modern engineering standards were developed. As a result, residents of the area have had to deal with drainage problems that lead to flooding and ponding water, in addition to paving issues on neighborhood streets.

Although County engineers began working on improvement plans nearly a decade ago, recent efforts

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by the office of First District Supervisor Janet Nguyen and the availability of funding from a number of sources have made it possible to begin a long-awaited project to improve storm drains and streets. Construction started in January 2011 with completion expected in June 2012. The scope of work includes improvements to pavement, curbs and gutters, curb ramps, driveway approaches, and sidewalks; installation of a storm drain system; and the relocation of water, sewer and gas lines.

The project area encompasses over 500 homes, so community outreach and involvement were priorities for Supervisor Nguyen and for the OC Road project team. OC Road staff recognized that their approach to this project would need to be highly collaborative to ensure that resident concerns were heard and addressed throughout the project. To ensure success, the OC Road project team kicked off a series of public meetings attended by Supervisor Nguyen and her staff, in which County staff discussed the project and its anticipated benefits. Many weekends were devoted to staff meeting one on one with residents to explain the County’s need for temporary construction easements to perform project work.

OC Road staff also saw the Midway City project as an opportunity to install a number of green technologies like alley pavement that allows water to infiltrate slowly into the ground instead of running off into curbs and gutters; warm mix asphalt that is less polluting to the environment and consumes less gasoline; and screens in catch basins to prevent trash from reaching the ocean. Of special note is the use of a natural filtration method that allows the root systems of trees to filter out many pollutants before they enter the drainage system.

A construction sequence was devised to facilitate the contractor’s completion of work block by block, rather than street by street. The contractor will avoid working on adjacent blocks and restrict the construction to one side of the street at a time to allow residents to park as close to their homes as possible. Staging of the construction and repair projects in this manner will add some time to the project, but provide a huge benefit to Midway City residents by minimizing their inconvenience throughout the 18 month process. ■

## Meet “Free Bird” the Bald Eagle

In late January, a wild bald eagle began visiting the OC Zoo inside Irvine Regional Park. Though such wildlife isn’t uncommon in OC Parks, this particular animal captured the public’s interest because it frequently perched near the enclosure of Olivia, the zoo’s 6-year-old bald eagle, and called back and forth with her.

It’s unknown if the wild bird-of-prey was drawn to Olivia’s calls, or to the fish in normally dry Santiago Creek. Nobody even knew for sure if it was a male. One thing that is certain is that that Olivia, like most of the OC Zoo’s animals, is not able to independently survive in the wild. So she stayed safe in her enclosure



Since January 23rd, a wild Bald Eagle has been visiting the OC Zoo inside Irvine Regional Park. This Bald Eagle has been spotted perched in trees above the zoo’s Bald and Golden Eagle exhibits.

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Kristen and Keith Pearson, who won the Name the Eagle Contest, got a behind-the-scenes tour of the OC Zoo. Here, they meet black bear Yoyo, with the help of zookeeper Lauren Serrano.

while her feathered friend remained in his wild domain.

Because the eagle earned a special place in the hearts of so many over the course of his visits to Orange County, OC Parks held a contest on its [Facebook page](#) to help give the creature a name.

Over a period of three days, nearly 600 people viewed the website and submitted a total of 70 entries. Members of the OC Parks Commission served as judges and selected the winning name – “Free Bird” – from among the top 10. Winners Kristen and Keith Pearson received a behind-the-scenes tour of the OC Zoo and a 2011 Annual Pass to OC Parks’ regional, wilderness and coastal facilities. ■

## Landfill Power!

If you live in the City of Anaheim, the electricity that powers your home comes in part from an unexpected source: the County’s Olinda Alpha Landfill in Brea.

OC Waste and Recycling recently joined with a number of private and public partners, including Anaheim Public Utilities, to break ground on an expansion of the plant that converts landfill gas to electrical energy. The new facility will generate 32.5 megawatts when the expansion is complete (one megawatt = one million watts). That’s enough electricity to power more than 22,000 homes.

Board of Supervisors Chairman Bill Campbell participated in the groundbreaking, saluting the project as efficient and environmentally friendly. “Olinda Alpha Landfill is one of the largest landfills in the western United States. We are very pleased that our award-winning operations offer opportunities like this.”

LANDFILL POWER SLIDESHOW: [CLICK HERE](#)



Participating in the groundbreaking for the expanded landfill gas to energy plant were (l-r): Mike Giancola, Director, OC Waste & Recycling; Bill Campbell, Board of Supervisors Chairman and Third District Supervisor; and Randy Holmes, Chief Executive Officer, Broadrock Renewables LLC.

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The project received a \$10 million stimulus grant from the U.S. Department of Energy and is expected to create 155 construction jobs as well as provide a positive economic impact through the local purchase of materials and equipment.

A unique aspect of the project was the use of 325 goats on a “weed abatement crew” to help clear the area for the expansion. The goats seemed to enjoy their stay at Olinda Alpha, with 20 to 30 baby goats born while the crew was on duty, increasing their productivity. ■

## Internal Audit Fraud Hotline

If you suspect fraud, waste or abuse of County resources, contact the OC Internal Audit Department Fraud Hotline at (714) 834-3608 or visit [www.ocgov.com/audit](http://www.ocgov.com/audit). Messages are accepted any day or time and can be made anonymously. In addition, employees are provided protection under the California Whistleblower Law. ■

**24/7 Fraud Hotline**  
 "Because Our Vigilance Never Sleeps!"

The Board of Supervisors Independent Internal Audit Department  
 2005 Recipient of the Institute of Internal Auditor's Award for  
 Recognition of Commitment to Professional Excellence, Quality and Outreach

- ☎ Call us 714.834.3608 and remain anonymous.
- 🕒 Call anytime, anyplace, day or night.
- 🚨 Report questionable behavior, waste, and abuse involving County vendors, employees, and processes.

→ **Hotline Website Information:** <http://www.ocgov.com/audit>  
 → **Hotline Phone Number:** 714.834.3608  
 → **Online Submission:** <http://www.ocgov.com/audit>  
 → **Address to send documentation:**  
 Fraud Documentation  
 12 Civic Center Plaza, Room 232  
 Santa Ana, CA 92701

**Other Hotline Numbers:**  
 Child Abuse

## Dialing Up Savings on Your Cellular Bill

Did you know that many businesses offer discounts on goods and services to government employees? Among them are mobile telephone providers including AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile and Verizon. Some of the providers have information about these discounts on their website. You may be asked to enter your County e-mail address and, in some cases, your work telephone number. Don't forget to “un-check” any boxes that offer you product and news updates. Otherwise you could end up with a full mailbox!

Here's the contact information for the cellular phone service providers listed above:

- AT&T**      [www.att.com/wireless/OCGOV](http://www.att.com/wireless/OCGOV)
- Sprint**     <http://sprint.com> (see “Employee Discount” link at lower left)
- T-Mobile**    Call 1-888-537-4242
- Verizon**    [www.verizonwireless.com](http://www.verizonwireless.com) (see “Employee Discounts” under Products and Plans)

Remember that discounts may not apply to all plans or services so check with the carriers' customer service representatives if you have any questions about the discounts or eligibility. ■

## Get the 411 On OC OC Waste & Recycling

1. In 2010, OC Waste & Recycling processed 3.5 million tons of waste in the County’s three landfills. That’s enough to fill the Rose Bowl eight times in a year.
2. Recycling successes come down to each one of us doing our part. Orange County residents are now disposing of 4.8 pounds of waste per day—below the target of 7.8 pounds per day. Way to go OC!
3. Many North OC residents will soon be part of a complete waste-to-energy cycle. An expanded power plant at the Olinda Alpha Landfill will increase the amount of landfill gas that is turned into electricity from 5 to 32 Megawatts. Residents’ curbside waste is brought to the landfill, where it decomposes and produces the methane to power the electrical plant.
4. In July, community members will be able to learn more about recycling thanks to a new County-sponsored exhibit at the Discovery Science Center. The ECO PLAZA will include a “Race to Recycle” exhibit and an ECO-Store.

To get more of the 411, visit [www.oclandfills.com](http://www.oclandfills.com).



### Service Awards

For the Month of February

#### 35 YEARS

**Malcolm McKinnon**  
District Attorney

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#### 30 YEARS

**Rachel Najera**  
District Attorney

**Bouaphan Channita**  
Health Care Agency

**Sharon Linderman**  
Health Care Agency

**Jose Aguilera**  
OC Community Resources

**Karen Roper**  
OC Community Resources

**Ly Thornburgh**  
OC Community Resources

**Gerard Hemighaus**  
OC Public Works

**Steven Kennedy**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Sima Nassiri**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Patricia Hill**  
Treasurer-Tax Collector

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#### 25 YEARS

**Katrina Easton**  
District Attorney

**Rosanne Froeberg**  
District Attorney

**Michelle Gonzales**  
District Attorney

**Elizabeth Henderson**  
District Attorney

**Alma Romo**  
District Attorney

**Patricia Sanchez**  
District Attorney

**Lori Funke**  
Health Care Agency

**Bennet Perlson**  
Health Care Agency

**Delores Reed**  
Health Care Agency

**Renee Welling**  
OC Community Resources

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**25 YEARS  
CONTINUED**

**Robert Jelinek**  
OC Public Works

**Mark Morgan**  
OC Public Works

**Jesse Gonzales**  
OC Waste & Recycling

**Paul Loya**  
OC Waste & Recycling

**Cynthia Gutierrez**  
Probation

**Diana Kennedy**  
Probation

**Anthony Veloz**  
Probation

**Denise Gragg**  
Public Defender

**Christopher Cormier**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Douglas Dubois**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Carla Kerr**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Bradley Newmyer**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Ronald Schatzle**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Bonnie Jean Boss**  
Social Services Agency

**Huong Dinh**  
Social Services Agency

**MaryKay King**  
Social Services Agency

**Anita Moncada**  
Social Services Agency

**Julie Nguyen**  
Social Services Agency

**20 YEARS**

**Kurt Bretz**  
Assessor

**Steven Cha**  
Assessor

**Susan Johnston**  
Child Support Services

**Gail Dratch**  
Health Care Agency

**Jill Savage**  
Health Care Agency

**Karen Senteno**  
Health Care Agency

**Mark Williams**  
Health Care Agency

**Virginia Ortiz**  
OC Community Resources

**Pamela Middlebrook Kosik**  
OC Public Works

**Jaime Orozco**  
OC Public Works

**Jonathan Tucker**  
OC Public Works

**Randy Sanchez**  
OC Waste & Recycling

**Shelly Nung**  
Orange County Employees  
Retirement System

**Anabel Biggs**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Steven Burkley**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Robert Lampers**  
Sheriff-Coroner

COUNTY OF ORANGE  
**MISSION STATEMENT**

**“Making Orange County a safe, healthy, and fulfilling place to live, work, and play, today and for generations to come, by providing outstanding, cost-effective regional public services.”**

Click [here](#) to read the full mission and values statement.

**CONTACT US**

**COUNTY CONNECTION** is distributed monthly by the County Executive Officer Thomas G. Mauk. The newsletter is published by CEO Community/Media Relations. Call 714.834.6203 or e-mail [ask.the.ceo@ocgov.com](mailto:ask.the.ceo@ocgov.com) with any suggestions and comments.

Editors..... Jessica Good  
Howard Sutter

Julie Nguyen  
Stephen Salcido  
Grace Chou