

# **Costa Mesa and Santa Ana police seek two men who reportedly have scammed two elderly victims**

The Costa Mesa Police Department (CMPD) and the Santa Ana Police Department (SAPD) are seeking the public's help in identifying two men suspected of scamming two elderly victims on two separate occasions, in the Cities of Costa Mesa and Santa Ana.

On April 11, 2017, at approximately 1:20 p.m., two suspects approached an 84-year-old Santa Ana resident on the street. The victim was convinced to go to a bank on Main Street and make a withdrawal from his own bank account. The two men are suspected of then taking the victim's money and fleeing the scene.

On April 28, 2017, at approximately 10:30 a.m., the same suspects from the previous Santa Ana incident approached a 68-year-old Costa Mesa resident as he is walking home and started a conversation with the victim. The two men are suspected of convincing the victim into a car and driving him to his bank on Harbor Boulevard. They are further suspected of convincing the victim to withdraw money from his bank account and took the money from him. The two suspects then dropped off the victim in the same neighborhood before fleeing the scene.

These two suspects are known to loiter around banks and bus stops near banks.

The investigation is ongoing. Anyone with additional information regarding this is encouraged to contact CMPD's Det. George Maridakis at (714) 754-5051 for incidents in Costa Mesa, and SAPD Robbery Unit Det. Cpl. A. Silva at (714)

245-8545 for incidents in Santa Ana.

**Descriptions:**

Suspect 1: Male, Hispanic, 50-60 years old, 5'06"-5'07" tall, 150-160 lbs., brown eyes, gray hair, missing teeth (in photos).

Suspect 2: Male, Hispanic, 50-60 years old, 6'00"-6'02" tall, 160-170 lbs., gray hair, brown eyes, and broken teeth (no photo available).

Vehicle: late model Gold American sedan, possible Ford Taurus.



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**Temporary road closures**

# expected for this weekend's U.S. Bank OC Marathon

As many as 35,000 people, including participants, spectators and volunteers, will be out in force for the 13th annual U.S. Bank OC Marathon. The full and half marathons will take place in the morning on Sunday, May 7, necessitating temporary closures of several main Orange County thoroughfares.

[Click here for more information.](#)

In Newport Beach, southbound MacArthur Boulevard will be closed from San Joaquin Hills Road to East Coast Highway. Coast Highway will also be closed from MacArthur Boulevard to Orchid Avenue, as will Bayside Drive in both directions from Jamboree Boulevard to Marguerite Avenue. Other temporary closures will include portions of Harbor Boulevard and Fairview Road in Costa Mesa, among many other smaller roads throughout the course that traverses Newport Beach, Santa Ana and Costa Mesa.

Thousands of runners from more than 20 countries and all 50 states are expected to compete at the 3-day Running Festival that includes the full and half marathons, the Wahoo's OC 5K, and one of the biggest kids' races in the country, the Kids Run the OC presented by Nutrilite, which expects about 9500 local school-age children. The full and half marathons begin early Sunday morning at the starting line in Newport Beach's Fashion Island, culminating in the Ultimate Finish Line Festival at the OC Fair and Events Center in Costa Mesa.

More than 12,000 spectators will come out to enjoy the race from various vantage points along the route, cheering on runners and offering moral support in the form of signs, balloons and water stations.

The Wahoo's OC 5K will take place on Saturday, May 6 at 5:00

pm. Westbound traffic on Merrimac will be closed, as will Fairview Road at Merrimac between 4:30 pm and 6:00 pm.

For more information about road closure times, shuttles and spectating opportunities, please visit the U.S. Bank OC Marathon website at [ocmarathon.com](http://ocmarathon.com) or email us at [traffic@ocmarathon.com](mailto:traffic@ocmarathon.com)

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## **OCTA needs the public's help in shaping the future of the county's transit systems**

The Orange County Transportation Authority wants to know what vision do the residents of Costa Mesa have for transit in and throughout Orange County.

Do residents want trains, buses, shuttles or something different?

The Orange County Transportation Authority is asking for the public's help in shaping the future of transit.

Participants can design their own transit system with the fun and interactive Build Your Own System survey that allows them to select from various transit features that could enhance transit in Orange County.

These features include stops, stations, vehicle types, and service.

By developing a personalized transit system, residents can see the benefits – such as enhanced ridership, travel time, accessibility, or passenger experience – change in real-time.

Check it out at <https://octransitvision.com/>.

For more information, visit [www.octa.net/octransitvision](http://www.octa.net/octransitvision).

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## **Giovanni La Placa receives the City Manager Leadership Award for April 2017**

City Manager Tom Hatch presented firefighter paramedic Giovanni La Placa with the April City Manager's Leadership Award at the monthly Meet and Greet event.

"Like his colleagues on our Fire & Rescue team, I very much appreciate Giovanni's passion for having a well-trained EMS team," Hatch said. "On top of that, his dedication to service, volunteerism and family outside of his job is very admirable. I'm happy to present him with this Leadership Award."

La Placa began his career with the City of Costa Mesa in 2006 as a firefighter paramedic and he currently holds the position of chair of the EMS Committee. He attends the Orange County Fire Chiefs EMS meetings and Community Paramedic Advisory Committee meetings representing the organization. Since his arrival here, he has been committed to the organization and was a part of the strategic planning committee and was a paramedic evaluator during the last recruitment process.



La Placa has a passion for teaching and has obtained his American Heart Association BLS/ACLS and PALS instructor certification, teaching CPR, first aid, ACLS and PALS to current employees and Costa Mesa Fire Explorers. He's very adept at patient care and was recognized for a great save in 2014 by the Orange County base hospital coordinators.

La Placa's emergency medicine path started at the age of 14 when he began volunteering as an explorer for the City of Monrovia Fire Department and he later graduated from the Rio Hondo Fire Academy in 2002. He continued his education and became a paramedic, graduating from UCLA-Daniel Freeman in 2004 and went on to work as a paramedic in San Diego County and a reserve firefighter for the City of Poway.

La Placa holds two degrees from Mt. San Antonio College in Fire Technology and Emergency Medical Services. He holds multiple professional certifications and continues to strive to grow professional daily. When his not at work, he volunteers at church and at the Orange County Children's Theater making sure he is a part of his family and daughters lives. He is also a successful business owner and recently finished his first sprint triathlon last year.

In addition to honoring La Placa, City Manager Hatch also

recognized several new and newly promoted employees.

The new employees included from the City Manager's Department Stacy Bennett an Office Specialist who works in the City Clerk's Office, Heidi Jacinto, a Code Enforcement Officer in the Economic and Development Services Department, Miranda Gonzalez, a Recreation Leader III in the Parks & Community Services Department and Aura Wardle, a new Communications Officer in the Police Department.

Recognized for their promotions were Andrea Granadoes, an Office Specialist in the Fire Department and David Nguyen, an Office Specialist II in the City Clerk's office.

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## **Adams Avenue road work scheduled for this Saturday April 29**

The Public Services Department has contracted RJ Noble Co. to construct a new asphalt concrete surface layer for Adams Avenue from Fairview Road to Peterson Place.

Work will take place this Saturday, April 29 from 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

At least one lane of traffic will be maintained in both directions along Adams Avenue, however, it is highly recommended that motorists and pedestrians use alternative routes to the OCC Swap Meet and neighboring areas.

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# **Costa Mesa Police Department unveils Coyote Management Plan with tracking tool**

The Costa Mesa Police Department held a Town Hall meeting Tuesday April 25 to launch the first round of a new Coyote Management Plan to educate the public about ways to prevent and report coyote encounters.

“The key to mitigating coyote encounters is much like reducing crime,” said Capt. Mark Manley, who oversaw the plan’s creation. “It takes a partnership that starts with the community and links up with a comprehensive Coyote Management Plan.”

Costa Mesa Police Lt. Victor Bakkila, California Department of Fish & Wildlife Lt. Kent Smirl, and University of California’s Dr. Niamh Quinn answered questions and addressed concerns. The plan is modeled after other similar plans within Orange County and has three main components including education and prevention, coyote hazing, and the reporting of coyote encounters.

The City has launched a Coyote Information Page where residents can get information about the Coyote Management Plan and report sightings and encounters here on the Coyote Cacher.

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# Costa Mesa to Celebrate Action Sports and Art with mural painting and skateboard event this Saturday

Highlighting the City of Costa Mesa's ties to art and action sports, the Action Arts in the Park exhibition returns this year to TeWinkle Park and will feature the work of four muralists, a skateboard competition, a dance demonstration and interactive public art projects at TeWinkle Park.

The second annual event, scheduled this Saturday April 29 from 12 noon to 4 p.m., was the brainchild of the city's Cultural Arts Committee.

"Costa Mesa is such a fun, diverse, interesting place to live and we wanted to put on a high-energy event that reflected some of the best elements of this City – the artists, the action sports and the opportunities for families to spend the day in the park," said Cultural Arts Committee Chair Andrea Marr.

For the city's Parks & Community Services Department the event presents another avenue to promote Costa Mesa as the City of the Arts and share the City's unique vibe and melting pot dynamic, Recreation Manager Justin Martin said.

"The Action Arts in the Park event is a really unique event that serves to highlight Costa Mesa's vibrant arts scene in conjunction with the City's edgy and ever-growing action sports scene," Martin said. "The goal is to have community members of all ages come together in one of the City's most beautiful parks to enjoy an afternoon that is artistic, athletic, adventurous, energetic and family oriented."

Four muralists, Josh Madrid, Maxx Gramajo, Ben Brough and Janelle Hinshaw, will paint a new mural from scratch onto a plywood canvas. In addition there will be a skate competition; live music by Cali Conscious and Sturgeon Rock; a dance performance from West Coast School of the Arts; and interactive art stations where patrons can paint a car, design a skateboard and spin art.



Newport-Mesa Unified School District high school students will be demonstrating their clay throwing skills and there will also be a Kids Zone with an Extreme Jumper and a Mechanical Surfboard

On the culinary side, Inspired Art & Wine is offering a design your own bottle event and several food trucks will also be on hand including The Big Cheese Truck, Scooter's Ice, and Burger Monster.

The title sponsor of the event is Segerstrom Center for the Arts and other sponsors include Vans, The Art Institute of California – OC, Inspired Art & Wine, Papa Murphy's, Chuck Jones Center, Attic Skateshop, Raising Canes, Garcia Chiropractic and Urban Workshop.

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# Costa Mesa City Staff continues to monitor planned facility upgrades to JWA

Costa Mesa staff continues to monitor all activities related to the airport. This included attending an April 12 meeting with the County of Orange to discuss the scope of an upcoming environmental study to evaluate the impacts of facility upgrades at the airport.

The proposed upgrades include:

- Designing aircraft T-hangars to accommodate the Cirrus SR22 and Cessna 172 series of
- aircraft, which have 38.33-foot and 36.08-foot wingspans, respectively. This is based on the fact that these two (2) aircraft account for nearly all new single engine aircraft sales
- Reconfiguring surface roads and aircraft taxiways within the airport
- Developing the Orange County Sheriff's Department ("OCSD") and flight schools as independent facilities
- Maintaining an on-site piston engine mechanic
- Providing for up to three (3) full service fixed based operators (FBOs) with adequate fueling facilities. This would increase the number of FBOs from 2 to 3. FBOs are the private businesses that provide aviation-related services such as fuel, maintenance, and flight instruction
- Providing for a general aviation terminal
- Providing for a self-service fuel facility
- Retaining the existing general aviation fuel farm

The County expects to provide additional information about this project in late 2017.

Staff has previously shared this information concerning the Metroplex project and is including it again to ensure everyone remains in the loop. The NextGen Metroplex project was initiated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

The project involves modernizing air traffic control systems in the region and includes airports such as: Burbank, Hawthorne, Los Angeles International (LAX), Long Beach (LGB), Ontario International (ONT), Oxnard (OXR), Palm Springs International (PSP), San Diego International (SAN), Santa Monica Municipal (SMO), John Wayne-Orange County (SNA), and Van Nuys (VNY).

The Metroplex system is intended to allow for more direct and efficient routing of aircraft. The new system uses GPS (instead of radar) to guide departures and arrivals; minimizing the current deviations due to older radar technology, wind, air pressure, etc.

This allows for precise flight paths and monitoring; however, some deviations are expected due to sequencing arriving aircraft. Generally, these deviations do not affect Costa Mesa because the prevailing landing pattern is over Tustin and Irvine.

The departure routes, which are a bigger concern in Costa Mesa, are expected to remain the same. The benefit of the Metroplex project is that the actual track of aircraft can be flown and monitored more precisely.

There are no additional impacts expected in Costa Mesa as a result of the Metroplex project. In fact, the most recent noise study indicates a minor decrease in aircraft-related noise in Costa Mesa i.e., a 0.1 decibel reduction.

However, this small level of reduction should not be perceptible to the human ear.

The FAA emphasizes that the Metroplex system will result in flight paths that are more precise and predictable and will minimize deviations to the east and west of the current paths.

The Google Earth information for checking individual addresses can be accessed at [this link](#).

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## **New Coyote Management Plan to be discussed at Town Hall this Tuesday April 25**

The Costa Mesa Police Department will be holding a town hall meeting on Tuesday, April 25 from 6 to 8 p.m. in City Council Chambers to unveil the City's new Coyote Management Plan.

Speakers will include members of the Police Department, California Department of Fish & Wildlife, and a coyote researcher from the University of California.

City and Police Department staff have also produced a new video about coyotes that will be shown that evening.

The management plan includes a new mobile website for the self-reporting of coyote activity, a new Police Department coyote hotline and a community training program.

The experts will also provide a detailed explanation of coyote behavior and strategies the community can employ to mitigate the frequency of coyotes within City neighborhoods.

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# **‘Even when you are stagnant, you got to go forward’**

Even the times Elmore McBride found himself homeless, he remained a very meticulous man who preferred things neat and orderly.

Still there was something holding him back that wasn't so orderly – his lack of teeth.

“I was afraid to smile,” he said.

But that was about to change. The 62-year-old McBride was in a transitional program at the Lighthouse Church in Westside Costa Mesa when he met Muriel Ullman, Costa Mesa's housing consultant who works to help the city's homeless residents and Stacy Bowler, one of the city's Community Outreach Workers.

He mentioned to Ullman that he wanted new teeth.

“She and Stacy are just two awesome people,” McBride said. “I wanted to get my teeth fixed and I told Muriel. Three days later, Stacy gave me a number to call for SOS and I was home free.”

McBride is very thankful for SOS, which stands for Share Our Selves, a local nonprofit that provides dental services for those who are not insured or have emergency need for care.

He also is most thankful to Pastor Phil Eyskens at the Lighthouse Church, who assisted him when he most needed it and while he was attending school at Orange Coast College.

“The type of person I am I would have succeeded eventually,” McBride said. “But it happened a lot faster because of the Lighthouse.”

Eyskens is a key member of Costa Mesa's Network for Homeless

Solutions, which is made up of representatives from the City Manager, City Attorney, Police, Fire, Planning and Code Enforcement offices, as well as clergy, those from non-profit agencies and community volunteers.

The Network for Homeless Solutions implements a range of strategies, including law enforcement, street outreach, prevention, rehabilitation, housing assistance and volunteer coordination. Since its inception in 2013, the Network for Homeless Solutions housed and/or reconnected 269 people as of December 2016. Of the 269, 70 were reconnected to their community of origin or to a place of their choice to end their homelessness.

After four years of assisting McBride through tough times, Pastor Eyskens said he left the Lighthouse and Costa Mesa for a short time, but recently returned and started attending church services again.

“He came to a church service and he had new teeth looking like a million bucks,” Eyskens said. “I’m so proud of him. He is just a real success story. What a perfect example. You got to hope for the best for this guy because you never know what the day is going to bring you.”

For McBride, the days have been getting much better. He now works for the County of Orange In-Home Supportive Services and really enjoys his job. The Boston native is also glad to be living in Costa Mesa, a place he has called home for about 11 years.

“I like the laid-back atmosphere here,” said McBride who is now living in an apartment in the city. “The people are awesome. The police are like the Beverly Hills police. They are so friendly.”

McBride’s advice for those who are struggling financially or homeless is pretty simple.

“You can’t give up,” he said. “You have to keep plugging. The time I was there at the Lighthouse I talked to a lot of homeless people and I always said keep walking forward. Even when you are stagnant, you got to go forward.”

For more information about the Network for Homeless Solutions visit the website [here](#) or the Facebook page [here](#) or call the Network for Homeless Solutions hotline at (714) 754-5346.

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## **Costa Mesa Police Department recognizes 19 for their performance and service to community**

The Costa Mesa Police Department honored its top performers in 2016 at the annual Employee Recognition Breakfast on Thursday April 6 at The Crossings church.

With Sgt. Clint Dieball officiating as Master of Ceremony, the department paid tribute to 19 officers, including those who received Employee of the Year in their category, six who received Life Savings Award and seven who earned the Case of the Year Award.

In addition, the department honored South Coast Metro Business Alliance as this year’s Community Partner.

“The men and women of the Costa Mesa Police Department make

every effort to perform their duties in a competent, courteous and professional manner," Chief Rob Sharpnack said as he addressed the crowd gathered for breakfast.

The breakfast was attended by Mayor Katrina Foley, City Manager Tom Hatch, Assistant City Managers Tammy Letourneau and Rick Francis and by fellow officers and family members.

"Frequently, many of our department members exceed the expectations of the public in the performance of their duties," Sharpnack said. "Today, the Costa Mesa Police Department recognizes identified personnel, as voted on by their peers, for their exemplary performance and service to our community."

The awardees included William "Bill" Knowles for Volunteer of the Year, Citlaly Gomez for Explorer of the Year, Park Ranger Lorna Lyttle for Civilian of the Year, Records Supervisor Lidian Estecoc for Civilian Supervisor of the Year, Sgt. Jerry Souza for Sworn Supervisor of the Year and Det. Jose Morales for Officer of the Year.

Officers John Elliott, Jeremy Hermes, Gloriosio Manigbas, Tyrus Ranck, Erick Ransdell and Jared Shurley were bestowed with Life Saving Awards for their efforts in resuscitating victims.

The Case of the Year went to the core team who worked on the Sudweeks Cold Case Homicide Investigation. Those members of the department who were honored included Lt. Paul Beckman, Sgt. Stephanie Selinske, Detectives Jose Morales and Jason Chamness, CSI Investigator Kimberlee Guluzian, Crime Scene Specialist Sara Nguyen and Police Aide Nicole Diaz.

"Your collective efforts led to the identification of the suspect after a 20-year period," Chief Sharpnack said. "The

culmination of this investigation has also provided much-needed closure for the Sudweeks family as they have had to carry the weight of this cold case for 20 years.”

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## **UPDATE: Costa Mesa Police announce missing autistic boy Diego Garcia has been found**

The Costa Mesa Police Department is searching for a 12-year-old autistic boy, Diego Garcia, who went missing from the 1200 block of Adams Avenue in Costa Mesa.

He was last seen by his parents last night, April 4, 2017, at approximately 9:00 p.m.

It is believed that he might have been spotted by an OCTA bus driver in area of South Coast Drive and Harbor Boulevard at about 3:30 a.m. this morning.

The boy has long black hair, possibly in a ponytail, is wearing a red T-shirt, blue pajama pants and blue tennis shoes.

Anyone with information on his whereabouts is asked to please contact Detective Sevilla at 714.313.2784.