

Local students go behind the scenes at Youth in Government Day at Costa Mesa City Hall

About 80 students from Costa Mesa, Estancia, Newport Harbor and Early College high schools took over City Hall on Wednesday morning April 20 to take part in the inaugural Youth in Government Day.

The students got a behind the scenes look into how city government works, spending time with public services, police, fire, city administration, parks and community services and finance teams to learn the intricacies of the job.

The students were welcomed to City Hall by Mayor Steve Mensinger, Councilwoman Katrina Foley and City CEO Tom Hatch.

Mayor Mensinger talked to them about the importance of being a leader and how the city needs more people to step up into leadership roles.

“You being here today makes you a part of that group,” he said. “We are looking forward to having you as future leaders.”

Councilwoman Foley told the group how important it is to vote and how much local government can change things.

“Costa Mesa City Hall is the place where you can effect the most change that you can see in your daily lives,” she said.

Next, CEO Hatch talked about the importance of local schools, which he called the “lifeblood of the community.” He also told the students how he was attracted to a career in government because it is a place where you can quickly solve problems.

After the morning welcome session, the students split up and spent time in their assigned groups where they learned about finance, policing, fire service, city administration and parks and recreation.

After an afternoon lunch, which included a presentation by County Registrar of Voters Neal Kelley, the students filed into the council chambers to hold a mock City Council meeting.

The council members included Mayor Maraide Green, of Estancia High School, Mayor Pro Tem Andrew Ghobrial, of Costa Mesa High School, Council Members Jennifer Contreras, of Costa Mesa High School and Council Members Roman Giglio and David Coreas from Early College High School.

Also on the dais were City CEO Catherine Pimentel from Costa Mesa High and City Attorney Julia Paluch from Estancia. Estancia's Abby Dunham played the part of City Clerk and Tia Gordon of Costa Mesa was a staff presenter. Andrew Garcia of Costa Mesa and Ulises Rodriguez from Early College were public commenters.

The mock council heard a presentation by Architect Steve Johnson of the firm Johnson Favaro regarding the plans for a new teen area in the city's soon to be re-built Donald Dungan library. After hearing the presentation and asking great questions, the council approved the plan 5-0.

City looking for volunteer to fill vacancy on Parks and Recreation Commission

The Costa Mesa City Council is accepting applications to fill one vacancy on the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Applicants must live in Costa Mesa and be registered to vote.

This Parks and Recreation Commission assists the City Council and various City departments with issues related to parks and parkways.

There is one vacancy with a term expiration of February 2017. For further information, please contact Acting Parks and Community Services Manager Justin Martin at (714) 754-5065. Those interested must complete a Commission Application Form from the City Clerk's Office or from the City's website.

The completed application may be submitted online; mailed to Costa Mesa City Clerk at Post Office Box 1200, Costa Mesa, California, 92628-1200; faxed to (714) 754-4942; or hand-delivered to the City Clerk's Office at City Hall, 77 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa.

The deadline to apply is 5 p.m., Friday, May 13, 2016. Appointments are tentatively scheduled for the June 7, 2016 City Council meeting. For further information, please contact the City Clerk's office at (714) 754-5225 or cityclerk@costamesaca.gov.

Mayor Mensinger and church leaders will again help local residents spruce up their homes

On April 30, please join Costa Mesa Mayor Stephen Mensinger along with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Christ Lutheran and Palm Harvest Churches for the second annual Neighbors Helping Neighbors event to assist homes throughout the Costa Mesa community in need of some TLC.

“I’m looking forward to joining my fellow Costa Mesans as we help out our neighbors in times of need,” Mayor Mensinger said. “It’s always impressive how many volunteers answer the call when we ask for help. And this year is no different.”

Once again, no City funds will be used, just good old fashioned community elbow grease and donations.

Last year, Neighbors Helping Neighbors successfully cleaned up two homes, much to the appreciation of the owners. This year, church organizers have identified a number of properties in the community that are in need of assistance and have begun the prep work for painting.

Funds and additional volunteers are still in need for the prepping, painting and clean-up and materials to ensure success.

Those interested in donating and keeping COSTA MESA COOL can email or call cm.cool@costamesaca.gov or 714-754-5156 to sign up.

Donors so far for this year's event include:

- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- Christ Lutheran Church
- Palm Harvest Church
- Mayor Pro Tem Jim Righeimer
- Council Member Gary Monahan
- Preface Group
- Estancia Sports Boosters
- Skosh Monahan's
- The Harbor Center
- Vista Paint
- CR&R

Larry's Building Supply

DUI Checkpoint scheduled for Friday April 15

The Costa Mesa Police Department will be conducting a DUI/Driver's License Checkpoint on April 15, 2016, at Baker St. and Bear St., between the hours of 8:00 p.m. to 2:30 a.m.

The deterrent effect of DUI checkpoints is a proven resource in reducing the number of persons killed and injured in alcohol or drug involved crashes. Research shows that crashes involving alcohol drop by an average of 20 percent when well-publicized checkpoints are conducted often enough.

Officers will be contacting drivers passing through the checkpoint for signs of alcohol and/or drug impairment. Officers will also check drivers for proper licensing and will strive to delay motorists only momentarily.

Specially trained officers will be available to evaluate those suspected of drug-impaired driving. Drivers caught driving impaired can expect jail, license suspension, and insurance increases, as well as fines, fees, DUI classes, other expenses that can exceed \$10,000.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), checkpoints have provided the most effective documented results of any of the DUI enforcement strategies, while also yielding considerable cost savings of \$6 for every \$1 spent.

Based on collision statistics and frequency of DUI arrests, DUI Checkpoints are placed in locations that have the greatest opportunity for achieving impaired driving deterrence. Locations are chosen with safety considerations for the officers and the public.

This checkpoint was funded by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

City earns ‘Mega’ water saver title from Mesa Water District

At the Mesa Water District’s Board of Directors regular meeting on Thursday April 14, the City of Costa Mesa was recognized for its water conservation efforts and presented with the “Mega” Mesa Water Saver award.

Through the city’s efforts, along with other local agencies,

businesses, schools and residents, the water district has reached and exceeded the state's 20 percent conservation mandate with over 21 percent reduction in water use from June 2015 through February 2016.

"The 10 Mesa Water customers we're recognizing today include property owners and managers with varying responsibilities, who are clearly dedicated to doing the right thing and engaging in activities that achieve higher-than-average water savings during this extended drought," said Mesa Water Board President Shawn Dewane. "We're proud to be part of a community so dedicated to water efficiency."

The water district focused on outdoor watering, reducing water waste at residential, multi-family, business and government properties.

Customers who increased water efficiency beyond expectations were responsible for higher-than-average water savings ranging from 31 percent to 56 percent.

Businesses and Homeowners' Associations amended their outdoor watering for larger landscapes to comply with Mesa Water's watering schedules that changed with seasonal temperatures and weather.

Single-family homeowners and local government agencies implemented additional water-saving techniques, including installing a pool cover, replacing thirsty turf with water-wise landscaping, updating old irrigation with drip irrigation, reducing sprinkler times, installing smart-timers, and decreasing off-peak utility use.

The following were recognized at Thursday's event by Mesa Water's Board of Directors as "Mega" Mesa Water Savers:

- Janice and Steven Frates
 - Susan and Geoff West
 - Brookview Homeowners' Association
 - Harbor Village Apartments
 - C.J. Segerstrom & Sons
 - Mariners Christian School
 - Vanguard University
 - City of Costa Mesa
 - John Wayne Airport
 - Newport Mesa Unified School District
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Firefighters save ducklings from storm drain

On April 13, 2016, the Engine 81 team of Capt. Taylor Voss, Engineer Cinnamon Basco and Firefighter/Paramedic Jeff Bibler responded to Southbound Harbor north of the San Diego Freeway to investigate a report that several ducklings had fallen into a storm drain.

See video of the rescue below:

When the crew from Engine 81 arrived they used a pry bar to gain access to the storm drain and were able to rescue nine ducklings.

Initially, one of the ducklings was resistant to being rescued; however, the firefighters were persistent and successful in rescuing all the ducklings.

We are happy to report that all ducklings were released and reunited with Mama Duck.

After the rescue, the crew was said to be quacking up as they reflected on the day's events.

Costa Mesa telecommunications team celebrates national recognition week

The 20-plus members of Costa Mesa's Telecommunications Bureau received some special recognition this week as city, police and fire officials celebrated the National Public Safety Communicators Week that runs through April 16.

The week, sponsored by the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) International and celebrated annually, honors the thousands of men and women who respond to emergency calls, dispatch emergency professionals and equipment, and render life-saving assistance to the world's citizens, according to a statement on the association's website.

City CEO office staff, including CEO Tom Hatch, was one of several departments to provide food, deserts and beverages to the team as a way to honor and thank them for the work they do.

On Wednesday April 13, Hatch and others visited the bureau, located just behind City Hall, and met with members of the telecom team and got a demonstration of their duties.

"They provide quality customer service to residents by continually and quickly helping to solve problems for the community," Hatch said.



CEO Tom Hatch and telecom Supervisor Sandra Marquez

The communications officers who work in the bureau take in more than 100 calls a day and put in 12 and sometimes 18-hour shifts taking calls from accident victims, suicidal, belligerent and despondent callers or victims of fire or crime.

“How often do you have to take a call from someone who is having perhaps the worst experience in their life,” said Costa Mesa Police Lt. Keith Davis, who supervises the Telecommunications Bureau. “They do it every single day.”

Davis noted the bureau is only one of two in the county that manages all dispatch duties for a single city. The telecom team handles both emergency and non-emergency calls for police, fire, animal control maintenance and water services. They provide members of the public with directions on how to respond to medical emergencies.

Davis, who has supervised the crew for a little more than a year, said he’s learned a lot about just what they do.

“I think they are extremely deserving of the recognition,” he

said. "This is an opportunity to tell them that we do appreciate them and there are a lot of people dropping by and recognizing them. It makes them feel they are not unnoticed. They are real excited."

Davis pointed out that the dispatchers and call takers end up being spokespeople for the city. How a member of the public is treated can really change perceptions.

"It helps to have talented people," he said. "I thought I knew a little bit about dispatch. I had no idea about the scope of their responsibilities. Doing what they do on a daily basis, especially being short staffed, is even more admirable."

City to test drive new hydrogen-powered Toyota

Toyota Motor Sales USA will be lending the City a 2016 Toyota Mirai for a couple of weeks to test drive.

The car has an electric motor powered by hydrogen fuel cells, resulting in a 100-percent-pollution-free vehicle.

The fuel cells produce electricity from the high pressure hydrogen with only water as a byproduct. The 300 horsepower motor moves the car exceptionally quick, without any motor noise or exhaust.

Hydrogen is available locally at the Valero gas station on Harbor Boulevard to retail customers.

Several City departments will be given an opportunity to drive the vehicle for routine City business over the two weeks of the test.

The car will travel over 300 miles per fueling and may be leased by the public in the \$400-500 a month range or purchased with State incentives for the mid \$40,000's.

New fence built at Downtown Recreation Center enhances event space

City officials recently installed new fencing outside the Downtown Recreation Center in Lions Park.

The new fence will allow for an enhanced events space for both recreational use and private rental use, and will provide dedicated space to children who want to engage in recreational activities at Lions Park.

Expanded programming by Parks and Community Services will be implemented in this new outdoor space.

Tesla Motors presented with

Mayor's Award

Costa Mesa Mayor Steve Mensinger announced that Tesla Motors, an innovative automotive and energy storage company known for its high-end luxury electric cars, is the winner of the Mayor's Award presented at the Tuesday April 5 City Council meeting.

Accepting the award on behalf of the company was Tesla Store Manager Peter Najera and Service Manager Joe Estrada.

"We are deeply honored and this is a wonderful and amazing thing that you have done for us," Najera said. "We are thrilled to be here in Costa Mesa. It's a perfect location."

Costa Mesa is not only one of five Tesla sales locations in the county, but is also home to one of only two Tesla service centers in the county.

Tesla forgoes the typical dealership model that dominates the business, and instead sells cars directly to their customers through company owned stores or galleries, which are usually located in shopping malls.

For years, Tesla operated locally out of a 10,000-square-foot facility on Pullman Street in Costa Mesa, adjacent to the 55 freeway. Nearly a year and a half ago they expanded their operation to also include a 27,000 square foot facility just down the street.

The new facility serves as a state of the art service center, complete with 26 service bays, two alignment bays, a detail center and car wash area in two buildings.

A typical day finds six service advisors and 20 service technicians servicing 30-35 vehicles per day, making the Costa Mesa location the number one Tesla Service center in terms of volume in the entire nation.

City reaches landmark agreement with Solid Landings to cease sober living home operations

The City of Costa Mesa reached a landmark settlement agreement with Solid Landings Inc. that will result in the immediate closure of 15 of the company's residential sober living homes and the closure of 18 more over the next two to three years at the latest.

"This is a major victory both for the residents of Costa Mesa and city officials who worked diligently on this issue for several years," said Mayor Steve Mensinger. "We have invested considerable resources in legal, law enforcement and code enforcement efforts to ensure a balance between our residents who deserve neighborhood peace and tranquility and those who seek facilities to battle their addiction problems."

The agreement with Solid Landings, the largest group home operator in the city of Costa Mesa, will effectively end years of both federal and state litigation between the company and the city and will keep intact the city's two groundbreaking ordinances that place appropriate restrictions on group homes, limiting the number of occupants and the proximity between similar homes.

By entering into the agreement, Solid Landings will ultimately close 33 residential facilities and no legal fees will be paid by the city. Further, Solid Landings will relocate its counseling facilities to two locations in the city, one in a commercial area and the other in an industrial location.

The settlement discussions began approximately a month ago when the City Council directed Mayor Pro-Tem Jim Righeimer to negotiate on behalf of the city.

The negotiations between Righeimer and Solid Landings resulted in an agreement reached Tuesday April 5 when the council voted 3-0 to accept the terms of the settlement.

Two more recruits join CMPD

On Monday April 4, Costa Mesa Police Department leadership attended the Class No. 219 graduation ceremonies at the Orange County Sheriff's Regional Training Academy to welcome two new officers to the department.

"We want to extend a big welcome to new officers Candyce McMorris and Jason Santos," Police Chief Rob Sharpnack said. "We are thrilled to have them join our team, and we look forward to these individuals making big contributions to the department and the community for years to come."

Graduates McMorris and Santos both received awards for their academy achievements.

McMorris was presented with the Outstanding Practical Application Skills Award and Santos received the Outstanding Physical Training Award.

ACADEMY CLASS #219

GRADUATION CEREMONY



The officers are part of a major recruitment effort led by the department that has seen approximately 40 new officers hired over the course of two years and more on the way.

“This is further proof that we are a department on the rise,” Chief Sharpnack said. “Costa Mesa is a prime destination for the best and brightest officers in the county and we are proud of that hard-earned reputation.”