

Work gets started on rehabilitation of Ketchum-Libolt Park

City and state leaders took part in groundbreaking ceremony on Monday Feb. 10 as the revitalization of Ketchum-Libolt Park officially began.

In attendance were Mayor John Stephens, Mayor Pro Tem Manuel Chavez, City Manager Cecilia Gallardo-Daly, Public Works Director Raja Sethuraman, Parks & Community Services Director Brian Gruner and Assembly Member Cottie Petrie-Norris, whose secured \$1.2 million in state funding for this project.

Also in attendance was Assistant City Manager Alma Reyes, Deputy Police Chief Jason Chamness, Parks & Community Services Commissioners Kelly Brown and Jason Komala and several city staffers.

When completed, this park will serves a community on the Westside that is very much in need of parks and open space. This long-awaited project was shaped by community input and collaboration.

The park continues to honor the legacy of Officers James "Dave" Ketchum and John "Mike" Libolt, the only CMPD officers to lose their lives in the line of duty.

Detective Sergeant Jacobi is

February's City Manager Leadership Award recipient

City Manager Cecilia Gallardo-Daly presented the City Manager's Leadership Award for February to Police Department Detective Sgt. Jake Jacobi.

"Sgt. Jacobi's integrity, work ethic, and quiet dedication make him not only an outstanding detective sergeant, but also a powerful example of leadership in action," Gallardo-Daly said. "As our Police Department continues to grow, we need strong leaders like him to take us into the future. I'm honored to present him with this award."

Sgt. Jacobi joined Costa Mesa as a police recruit in 2013, was hired as a police officer in 2014 and promoted to Sergeant in 2023.

Jacobi routinely takes the initiative to train, mentor, and educate others, ensuring officers are well prepared to deliver high-quality service to the community.

He has played a critical role in addressing a significant backlog of case assignments, greatly improving case progression, and ensuring the department continues to meet the high standards of service expected by our community.

His ability to effectively balance investigative responsibilities with administrative oversight has been exemplary. Beyond case management, Sergeant Jacobi has served as a key leader on both the Crisis Negotiations Team (CNT) and the Arrest Control Team (ACT).

During critical incidents, his calm, strategic approach provides stability and clear direction to his team and the department as a whole. He consistently demonstrates professionalism under pressure and maintains a strong focus on

safety, coordination, and successful resolution.

What truly distinguishes Sgt. Jacobi is his humility and team-first leadership style.

Despite his accomplishments and the respect, he has earned across the department, he never seeks personal recognition. He embodies the principles of servant leadership by prioritizing the mission and the success of those around him.

Sgt. Jacobi has a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Cal State Fullerton.

The time is now to apply for a Community Development Block Grant

The City of Costa Mesa released the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-2027 on January 26, 2026, for tax-exempt nonprofit organizations operating within its jurisdiction providing public services that benefit low- and moderate-income Costa Mesa residents.

This year will be the second year that CDBG Public Service Grant applications will be completed and submitted online.

The application and related instructions are available on the City website here: [Public Service Grants Program | City of Costa Mesa](#).

The application deadline is 5 pm on February 25, 2026. If you have any questions regarding the application process, please

send an email to amber.miranda@costamesaca.gov prior to the application deadline.

Public Works Installs New Crosswalk Serving Jordan Park

City Public Works staff recently installed a new crosswalk across Tustin Avenue between 21st Street and 22nd Street.

The new designated crossing provides an organized and convenient crossing for youth and adults traveling to Jordan Park, Kaiser Elementary School, and the Boys and Girls Club of Costa Mesa – Argyros Center for Opportunity.

New pedestrian curb ramps ensure that the crosswalk is accessible while the high visibility crosswalk striping, painted curb extension with flexible plastic posts, and signs serve to bring increased awareness to the crossing.

This improved crossing also includes Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons, which use an amber light flashing pattern activated by the pedestrian push button.

The lights further increase driver awareness of the crosswalk and enhance pedestrian visibility during daytime and night conditions.

Research shows the beacons are highly effective and can increase driver yielding compliance.

Renovation Work Continues at TeWinkle Park Lakes

The renovation work at TeWinkle Park Lakes continues. The initial phase of this renovation project involved the transfer of aquatic wildlife from the upper lake to the lower lake and subsequently, the draining of the upper lake.

Fencing was placed around the upper lake and the demolition work started. Grading of the lakebed is proceeding with the lake liner to be installed to minimize leakage and water loss.

In the coming weeks, the following construction activities are planned: upgrading the shape of the lake in order to help promote more natural water movement; rebuilding the damaged and eroded shorelines with natural edges; repairing and replacing the existing circulation system to improve functionality; and adding landscaping along the shoreline to provide a more natural appearance.

The City appreciates the public's cooperation in contributing to the renovation of TeWinkle Park lakes.

City Manager taps Jason Pyle to be Interim Fire Chief

City Manager Cecilia Gallardo-Daly has appointed veteran Fire & Rescue leader Jason Pyle to be the Interim Fire Chief to lead the 100-member-strong department that includes six active fire stations and a new Regional Training Center.

Pyle has been the Assistant Fire Chief since 2023 and will

succeed Chief Dan Stefano, who is leaving the City after a 30-year fire service career.

“Assistant Fire Chief Pyle is a long-time and dedicated City employee with extensive experience, institutional knowledge, and a deep understanding of the community of Costa Mesa and the Fire and Rescue Department operations,” Gallardo-Daly said. “Assistant Chief Pyle is well prepared to continue the department’s mission and uphold the high standards established under Chief Stefano’s leadership. We look forward to the continued strength and stability of the Fire Department under the Interim Fire Chief’s leadership.”

Pyle began his career in Costa Mesa in April of 2003 and quickly promoted to Engineer, Captain, Division Chief and then Assistant Fire Chief. Prior to Costa Mesa, he worked for the Fullerton Fire Department and the Menlo Park Fire Protection District and he was a reserve firefighter for both the Los Alamitos and Anaheim Fire Departments.

“While Chief Pyle has big shoes to fill, I’m confident he will do just that,” Mayor John Stephens said. “We take pride in our Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue team, and the work they do daily to save lives and property. As our Assistant Fire Chief for many years, Chief Pyle has developed expertise on every aspect of the department. With Chief Pyle at the helm, the CMFRD will continue its tradition as the model of fire and emergency medical service excellence.”

This role has a special meaning for Chief Pyle, as Costa Mesa is a deep part of his roots. He grew up in the Newport-Mesa community, attended Newport Elementary, Ensign Middle School and Newport Harbor High. As he started his fire service career, it was always his goal to return to Costa Mesa.

“I am honored to be named the Interim Fire Chief for my hometown of Costa Mesa,” Chief Pyle said. “My family and I have deep ties here and this is just a continuation of being a

part of the community I grew up in and has been a part of my entire life. Further, I look forward to meeting the high standards we have set for this department and leading this premiere team of professionals.”

Chief Pyle has served as the CMFR Training Officer and is certified as both the CMFR & California State Fire Marshal Company Officer and CMFR & California State Chief Officer.

He has been the past president of the Orange County Fire Chiefs Association Operations Sections, a Board Member for the Orange County City Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Authority, a deputy director for the SoCal Training Officers, a Fire Service Representative for the League of Cities Environmental Quality Policy Committee, a logistics specialist for the FEMA USAR Team – CA Task Force 3 and a Facilities Unit Leader for CA Team 2 for the US Forest Service National Incident Management Type 1 Team.

He’s a graduate of Leadership Tomorrow and both the CSUF Leadership and All American Leadership Programs.

Pyle has an associate of science degree in fire administration from Santa Ana College and a bachelor’s degree in political and social science from UCI.

He and his wife Jennifer have two sons, Jacob, who is also a UCI graduate and Jay, who is currently attending the US Air Force Academy.

Roger Neth, longtime Police

Chief and one of the Department's first sworn officers, passes away

With deep sadness, we share that our former chief, Roger Neth, a foundational leader in the history of the Costa Mesa Police Department, has passed away.

"Chief Neth's 33-year career in law enforcement was remarkable in both its longevity and its impact," said Chief Joyce LaPointe.

[Click here](#) to watch this CMTV video honoring Chief Neth.

Neth joined the Costa Mesa Police Department in 1953 as one of the city's first sworn officers. He proudly wore badge #2. From the very beginning, he helped shape the department's identity, becoming the first officer to patrol the streets of Costa Mesa.

Throughout his distinguished career, Chief Neth rose through the ranks, serving as patrol officer, sergeant, lieutenant, captain, and assistant chief before being appointed chief of police in 1965, a position he held with distinction for 21 years until his retirement in 1986.

Chief Neth's tenure remains the longest in the history of the department. His commitment to innovation and community-oriented policing helped establish many practices that became hallmarks of CMPD.

Under his leadership, the department built a state-of-the-art communication building, introduced vehicle-mounted computer terminals, enhanced DUI enforcement video technology, and brought handwriting experts to Orange County law enforcement.

Chief Neth was the driving force behind early CMPD helicopter

operations and was known for flying Santa to local elementary schools during the holidays.

Colleagues knew him as a dedicated professional who believed in being progressive, innovative, and above all, service oriented. He will be missed but his legacy lives on in our culture and community.

City Manager Leadership Award for January is a Banner achievement

City Manager Cecilia Gallardo-Daly presented the City Manager Leadership Award for January to Andrew Banner, the Network Systems Administrator for the IT Department.

“Andrew’s contributions have strengthened departments across the City, and his leadership has made a lasting difference,” Gallardo-Daly said. “He embodies what it means to serve with integrity, professionalism, and heart. I am thrilled to present him with this well-deserved award.”

His dedication, commitment, and passion are consistently acknowledged by his peers and by the leaders of the City of Costa Mesa.

Banner joined the City of Costa Mesa in 2022 and made an immediate and meaningful impact. In his very first assignment with the Police Department, he not only mastered a new system with impressive speed, but also brought forward fresh ideas and a thoughtful perspective that elevated the work of the entire team. He improved processes, strengthened

communication, and helped create a more efficient and supportive environment.

His helpful nature and positive attitude have become defining traits. He approaches every challenge with a calm, solutions-oriented mindset, and he consistently goes above and beyond to support his colleagues.

Whether he's troubleshooting a complex issue, guiding someone through a new process, or simply offering a steady presence during a busy day, he makes people feel supported and valued.

It's no surprise that so many staff members trust him and request him personally to help with their IT needs.

Banner holds a master's degree in information technology management from Western Governor's University and a bachelor's degree in computer engineering from Cal Poly Pomona.

Finance Buyer Mike Fuentes presented with City Manager Leadership Award

City Manager Cecilia Gallardo-Daly presented the City Manager Leadership Award for December to Finance Department Buyer, Mike Fuentes.

"Mike is a dedicated and valued team member in the Finance Department," Gallardo-Daly said. "He is one of those rare employees whose blend of dedication, skill, humor, and humility makes a genuine difference across the organization. I'm proud to present him with this award."

Fuentes is an important member of the Purchasing Division responsible for contract management, bid development, and day-to-day purchasing needs. He approaches each task with professionalism and careful attention to detail, ensuring the City maintains transparency, compliance, and consistency in all procurement activities.

Whether it's preparing solicitations, assisting with vendor questions, or tracking down urgent requests, he handles it all with reliability and a positive attitude.

Fuentes first joined the City in August 2014 as a part-time Permit Process Specialist, quickly proving himself to be reliable, and committed to public service. His performance led to his promotion to full-time Permit Process Specialist in January 2016.

Continuing to expand his skills and responsibilities, Fuentes joined the Finance Department as a Buyer in February 2017, where he has been an essential part of the Purchasing Division ever since.

Throughout his time with the city, Fuentes has taken on a variety of procurement responsibilities and has consistently demonstrated growth in his role.

His ability to navigate complex purchasing processes, support departments with their procurement needs, and keeps moving forward reflects his commitment to high-quality work and exceptional customer service.

Fuentes holds a bachelor's degree in political science, with an emphasis on policy, from Cal State Fullerton.

City Manager Gallardo-Daly appoints Alma Reyes to Assistant City Manager

City Manager Cecilia Gallardo-Daly has promoted Alma Reyes to Assistant City Manager, where she will continue to assist with and supervise the day-to-day management of city operations.

“In the role of Deputy City Manager, Alma has demonstrated exceptional leadership, strategic thinking, and a strong commitment to serving the community,” Gallardo-Daly said. “Her work has been instrumental in advancing key city initiatives, strengthening interdepartmental collaboration, and improving the quality of services delivered to our residents. Her partnership, insight and commitment made a significant difference as I filled the role of interim City Manager, and I truly appreciated her willingness to step in, collaborate, and help ensure our work continued smoothly.”

As Assistant City Manager, Reyes will take on an expanded leadership role, providing oversight for specific areas, guiding long-term planning efforts, and supporting the City Manager’s Office in implementing the City Council’s priorities and vision, Gallardo-Daly said.

Mayor John Stephens congratulated Reyes on her appointment.

“I really applaud this move to make Alma the Assistant City Manager,” Mayor Stephens said. “She has cemented her reputation as a problem solver, and we look to her for guidance on some of the more complicated issues we face. Alma will be an outstanding Assistant City Manager, and we are very fortunate to have her in that position.”

Reyes has been the Deputy City Manager since April of 2023, managing Constituent Services, Community Outreach, Government

Affairs, Costa Mesa TV, as well as key Citywide projects and City special events. Prior to that, she held the role of Assistant to the City Manager.

She began her career with the City of Costa Mesa in January of 2011, where she began her first job as a Management Analyst for the Public Services Department. In April of 2013, she transferred to the Parks and Community Services Department to serve as both the Management Analyst and Recreation Supervisor. In November of 2015, Reyes moved into the Fire & Rescue Department to serve as a Management Analyst, and Chief Dan Stefano praised her passion for public service, team value orientation, and engaged professionalism.

“I am honored to step into the role of Assistant City Manager and remain deeply committed to fostering collaboration, strengthening community partnerships, and advancing initiatives that enhance the quality of life for all our residents,” Reyes said. “I also look forward to supporting our organization with integrity, empowering our teams, and helping guide the innovative work that moves our city forward.”

Prior to working in Costa Mesa, Reyes worked for 10 years for the City of Hawaiian Gardens in various areas of local government including: Administration, Public Relations, Public Safety, Public Works, Recreation, Code Enforcement and Finance.

Reyes holds a Master’s Degree in Public Administration and Public Policy from California State University, Long Beach, and a Bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice and Public Administration from California State University, Fullerton.

She begins her role effective immediately.

Costa Mesa Fire and City Leaders unveil new state-of-the-art Regional Training Center

Costa Mesa Fire, City and State leaders held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Tuesday, Dec. 9 to celebrate the new state-of-the-art Regional Training Center and tower that replaced the aging infrastructure at Fire Station No. 4.

“Our new Training Center is a promise to our Costa Mesa Community,” Fire Chief Dan Stefano said. “A promise that we will never stop moving the needle. Never stop improving. Never stop learning. Never stop leading. And never stop preparing for the moments in time our community and those we serve need us most. The new Training Center is part of our collective Costa Mesa Fire Family Legacy, honoring Our Past, driving Our Present and thoughtfully planting the sustaining seeds of success for Our Future.”

The dynamic new Regional Training Facility was made possible first through seed money from Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris (D-Irvine), who secured \$2.5 million in state funding and later from the Costa Mesa City Council, which approved \$2.2 million toward the project.

“I am honored to stand with Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue as we dedicate this new regional training tower and demonstrate our shared commitment to public safety,” said Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris (D-Irvine). “By giving our firefighters access to the best training and resources, we are ensuring they can continue to protect our families and keep our neighborhoods

safe.”



The new building and training grounds will also be used by neighboring cities and agencies, hence improving the region’s preparedness to address fire emergencies and natural disasters while leading to a more resilient and collaborative fire service. The new facility bridges the gap between fire dynamics knowledge and the use of the training building and props for hands-on training.

Mayor John Stephens thanked City leadership for bringing this project to fruition.

“This new state-of-the-art training facility will help to keep our fire fighters and the public safe into the future. There is nothing more important than that.” said Mayor John Stephens. “I’m extremely grateful to Assembly Woman Cottie Petrie-Norris for providing the majority of the funding for

this project and my council colleagues for funding the balance. Thank you to our contractors and city leadership for the great work on this facility, especially Fire Chief Dan Stefano and Public Works Director Raja Sethuraman. We rely on our firefighters every day to keep us safe. Now they will do so with greater training and preparation than ever before.”

Also attending the event was District 1 Council Member Mike Buley and District 4 Council Member Manual Chavez.

City Manager Cecilia Gallardo-Daly also welcomed the addition of this new facility.

“Because of the increasing dangers of wildfires, we need our fire crews to be properly trained and ready for this new reality,” Gallardo-Daly said. “This facility will help us and our regional partners stay prepared. I’m proud of Costa Mesa Fire and our Public Works teams for their dedication to this project and providing us with a facility that we can all be proud of.”

Public Works Director Sethuraman thanked his team of engineers for their hard work and dedication to this project.

“We can all be proud of this state-of-the-art facility, which will serve as a regional training home for not only our own firefighters but throughout Orange County. This project includes a five-story prefabricated training tower equipped with multiple features and the latest, most advanced training props available today. The design provides realistic high-rise, residential, and industrial training scenarios that will prepare our firefighters for the complex emergencies they face daily.”

City leaders in attendance included Assistant City Manager Alma Reyes, Police Chief Joyce LaPointe, Finance Director Carol Molina, Economic and Development Services Director Carrie Tai, IT Director Steve Ely, Parks & Community Services Director Brian Gruner and Assistant Fire Chiefs Jason Pyle and

Ryan Bohr.



The project used locally sourced and environmentally friendly products and materials.

One of the facets includes water reclamation elements that will also be added to enhance the recovery of water that is used as part of training exercises. The reclamation elements significantly reduce water waste and provide a sustainable training option during times of drought and water conservation.

The building and training grounds includes upgrades to the existing lighting to include energy-efficient fixtures (LEDs) and will include natural light levels. Upgrades will incorporate elements of solar-powered backup energy to be used in case of a power outage. Additionally, low-flow faucets and other features were installed to promote water efficiency and conservation and will include native and drought-resistant landscapes.

Climate change and the drought conditions continue to worsen, and extreme heat incidents become more frequent and severe.

More than 40 percent of Orange County is designated as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone as assessed by CalFire. The City of Costa Mesa and Orange County will greatly benefit from these upgraded facilities to manage increased demand and mitigate wildfire risk during these events.

City Manager appoints veteran Police Department leader Joyce LaPointe to be the next Chief of Police

COSTA MESA – City Manager Cecilia Gallardo-Daly announced Costa Mesa Police Department veteran Joyce LaPointe will be the new chief of police, making her the first woman to hold that role in the city's history.

LaPointe has been the interim chief of police since June, after the retirement of former Chief Ron Lawrence.

“Chief LaPointe is a trusted member of our city leadership team and a longtime member of the Costa Mesa community, and I know she is grateful to continue serving the community she loves,” City Manager Cecilia Gallardo-Daly said. “Her years of experience and dedication to Costa Mesa made this an easy decision to name her as our new police chief, and I am looking forward to working together with her for the betterment of the city.”

Mayor John Stephens expressed his confidence in Chief LaPointe.

“Chief LaPointe is the perfect choice to lead our police department into the future,” said Mayor John Stephens. “She is a seasoned veteran who has risen through the ranks. She has been instrumental in growing our police department to its highest number of sworn officers in the past 15 years and reducing crime in our town. Chief LaPointe has been a valuable member of the command staff that embraced technology and transformed the culture of the department. She’s also a Costa Mesa resident who is extremely accessible to the community. We are very fortunate that Joyce LaPointe is our new police chief. The Costa Mesa Police Department has never been stronger.”

Chief LaPointe said she is grateful for this opportunity.

“I am incredibly honored to be appointed as the permanent chief of police for Costa Mesa,” said Chief LaPointe. “I want to thank the City Council for their continued support, City Manager Gallardo-Daly for entrusting me to lead the police department, and my CMPD family for their ongoing support and faith in me. As the police department continues to build on the positive momentum from June, my focus will remain on taking care of our personnel, strengthening our culture, staying innovative in policing, and ensuring we lead with purpose, accountability, and heart. Our community depends on us to protect and serve, and I know CMPD will always rise to that responsibility.”

LaPointe was named to the position of deputy chief, the first to hold that role in Department history, in April of 2023.

Chief LaPointe began her career in 1997 as a police officer. LaPointe promoted to sergeant in 2007, and held various supervisory roles including patrol sergeant, jail sergeant, FT0 sergeant, force tactics team supervisor, and emergency

management coordinator.

In 2015, LaPointe promoted to police lieutenant of the Executive Staff and was initially assigned as an area commander providing management oversight to a variety of special units and teams, as well as performing one of our department's most crucial and key roles of watch commander.

In 2018, LaPointe served as the telecommunications manager, where she oversaw the Police and Fire Dispatch Center, Technical Services, and special projects.

In 2020, LaPointe was promoted to police captain to serve on the department's Command Staff and has been the division commander for both the Support Services Division as well as the Field Operations Division. She is an associate member of the California Police Chiefs Association, and a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

LaPointe earned her bachelor's degree in physical education & kinesiology from Vanguard University in Costa Mesa. She is recognized by some in the community as a past sports coach at Costa Mesa High School before starting at CMPD.

Throughout her long and distinguished career in policing, she has completed several advanced law enforcement training courses including the Sherman Block Supervisory Leadership Institute, Force Science Institute Certificate Course, the Executive Development Courses for both California POST and the California Police Chiefs Association.

LaPointe is a long-time resident of Costa Mesa, where she lives with her spouse Linzi and their three dogs.

MEDIA CONTACT

Roxi Fyad, Public Affairs Manager

(714) 754-5282

rfyad@costamesaca.gov