

OCC soccer players get Mayor's Award honor

Five players from the OCC Men's Soccer Team who earned a spot on the 2015 All-Orange Empire Conference Team were honored at City Council meeting on Tuesday Jan. 19.

Ryan Brown, Ty O'Connor and Costa Mesa High School graduate Peter Marquez were named to the first team, while Estancia High School grad Marco Pineda and Taylor Kane earned second-team honors.

This is not only a great individual accomplishment for each of these student athletes, but also a great honor for Orange Coast Athletics.

CMPD adds another officer this week

Costa Mesa Police Department brass and ranking city leaders welcomed new Police Officer Nick Wilson in a swearing-in ceremony early Tuesday morning.

Police Chief Rob Sharpnack officiated the ceremony with some welcoming words for the new lateral hire officer, who formerly worked as a Los Angeles County Sheriff's deputy. Sharpnack noted Wilson's already impressive career achievements.

"He really embodies what we embody as a city and a police department," Sharpnack said. "I'm excited to welcome Nick. We are fortunate to have him."

Wilson is one of three boys raised by John and Antonia Wilson in the small town of San Marino, nearby Pasadena. He is a graduate of San Marino High School, where he played high school baseball. He served as a cadet for San Marino Police Department from 2008-2011.

Wilson's father is a retired 31-year veteran of the California Highway Patrol and one of his brothers is an officer for the San Marino Police Department. Wilson graduated from Rio Hondo with an Associates of Science degree in Administration of Justice in 2011.

Wilson was hired by the Los Angeles Sheriff Department in 2012. Since then he served in the custodial environment and is currently assigned to the courthouse in Compton.

Several family members attended the ceremony, including his father and brother. Also attending was his wife, who placed his badge on him after he was sworn in by City Clerk Brenda Green.



Mayor Steve Mensinger and Councilmember Katrina Foley, City CEO Tom Hatch and Assistant CEO Rick Francis, and several members of the police command staff were also in attendance.



The department's three new academy graduates, Brandon Kim, Tyrus Ranck and Matthew Richie, also made an appearance to support their fellow officer.

Chief Sharpnack noted that the department continues to move in the right direction with these new hires, which puts the staffing levels now at 112 sworn officers.

Three new officers graduate academy and join Costa Mesa Police Department

The Costa Mesa Police Department continues its practice of hiring the best and the brightest new officers, three of whom graduated from the Orange County Sheriff's Academy on Thursday night.

The new Officers, Brandon Kim, Tyrus Ranck, and Matthew Richie all finished in the top 10 of their class, with Kim receiving the Top Recruit ranking (No. 1 in the class).

In addition, Officer Ranck earned the Top Shot award with the best shooting score in the class.

“We are very proud of these new officers and we look forward to their contributions to our community and our department,” Chief Rob Sharpnack said. “We are happy to see that our new recruits have continued the tradition of being the top recruits in what is a very competitive sheriff’s academy class.”

In addition, three more recruits will begin their academy classes next week.

First wave of El Nino storms caused minimal damage; sandbag locations increased

The thunderstorm cells that passed through the City last week brought periods of heavy rain and strong gusting winds but no significant damage to report.

While there was some localized street flooding and large amounts of debris on streets and sidewalks, the largest casualty was an Aleppo Pine tree in Wilson Park that was damaged.

The pine tree, in excess of 50 feet in height with multiple large trunks, split in half, damaging another tree as it fell and narrowly missing the park restroom. Fortunately there were no patrons in the park at the time and no structural damage to any park facilities resulted.

Public Services staff determined the tree to be unsafe and was

subsequently removed. The remaining damaged tree will be further evaluated and removed if determined to be a potential risk in the future. There were also a number of private trees which fell at various parts of the City, all of which have been removed by the respective property owners.

In addition, Public Services added two new locations for residents along with Fire Station No. 4 to get sandbags, one at City Hall and another at Lions Park.



These locations will be available 24/7 to the public. These two additional locations have the advantage of being lighted for safe 24 hour access; allow for pull through traffic circulation to ease congestion and easy access for dump truck supplying sand; are adjacent to city facilities to support potential volunteers providing assistance to citizens; and are non-flood prone or high traffic areas to reduce likelihood of not being able to access the sites easily.

For more information on sandbags, [click here](#).

Costa Mesa Pop Warner and Cheer are celebrated with Mayor's Award

Several young members of the community packed into the City Council chambers on Tuesday to be honored with the Mayor's Award.



Members of the Costa Mesa Pop Warner and Cheer teams posed with city officials for photos and received praise from the mayor and coaches. The Pop Warner team was the winner of the Orange Empire Conference Championship.

Each council meeting, a recipient of the community receives a Mayor's Award. Stay tuned for the next award.

City and residents brace for punch of winter storms

Residents are urged to take precautions as three winter storm systems bear down on Costa Mesa and the Orange County region over the next few days. The first will hit today and more is expected Wednesday through Friday.

Click [here](#) for additional information on how to prepare for the winter storms.

Sandbags are available to residents at Fire Station No. 4 at 2300 Placentia Ave. In addition, two more locations will be available 24/7 to the public at City Hall and Lions Park.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6i_rJzHUMo&feature=youtu.be

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Location No. 1: City Hall parking lot; southeast corner. Drive straight in the City Hall signal and proceed to the back of the parking lot.

Location No. 2: Historical Society/Donald Dungan Library parking lot. Enter off of Park or Anaheim. Sand & bags available north of library, east of Historical Society.

Signs will be posted at the street to assist residents.

Over the past few weeks, city officials have undergone emergency training to prepare for any problems the storms may bring and the city's Emergency Operations Center is on standby

and ready to be activated if need be.

Further, the County of Orange activated and staffed its Emergency Operations Center to a level II with County agency representatives at 8 a.m. Tuesday morning.

The county's Public Information Hotline is staffed and ready to accept calls in regard to the rainfall. The Public Information Hotline is (714) 628-7085. All resources and support personnel are identified and ready to mobilize other areas of the Emergency Operations Center when needed.



Additionally, the city's Public Services Department prepared for the coming rain storms by clearing vegetation water courses and placed sandbags and water diverting structures in Canyon Park and 7,000 sandbags in Fairview Park. Both locations have had high water issues in past winters resulting in property damage.



With the potential for multiple storms lining up, water courses that typically can handle storm runoff without a problem may be overwhelmed and need sandbags to protect property while the water recedes and flows return to more manageable levels. In addition, regular inspection and cleaning of catch basins and storm drains by City crews is continuing, with each storm that has passed through so far, providing a test of the City's preparations.

Art Beames and Kelly Vucinic retire from Costa Mesa Police Department

The month of December is typically filled with holiday cheer, family, parties and celebrations. And for some of Costa Mesa Police Department staff, it was a time to retire and enjoy the next chapter life brings.

The month of December marked the retirement of six of CMPD staff.

Recognized at the December's Meet and Greet located at City Hall, crime prevention specialist Kelly Vucinic and animal control officer Art Beames were recognized for their tenure with the CMPD.

Beames, who had 24 years served with the County of Orange and became a part-time animal control senior police aide in March 1991. In June 2003, he was promoted to full-time animal control officer.

"The most memorable animal call I can think of was a caiman in a trashcan," said Beames when asked to recall the wildest call he received. "Oh wait, one time I was told to check the kennel room before my shift, and to my surprise opened the door and saw a mountain lion cub. I didn't realize it was domesticated at first."

Vucinic, who retired with 27 years of service, was hired in 1988 as a records technician and later was promoted to community service officer in patrol, traffic and narcotics. She was promoted to crime prevention specialist in 2007.

"My favorite memory is when Santa would land at local schools by helicopter and hand out candy canes to the kids," said Vucinic when asked to recall a happy memory.

Both Beames and Vucinic have plans to relax some while they figure out what to do exactly in retirement.

Beames plans on working on household projects and helping out his wife's family.

In addition, he has dedicated time to volunteer at his church and pursue photography.

Vucinic will spend more time with her family and will try to step out of her comfort zone of always having things planned. In addition, she will continue to work part-time as an usher

at the Angel Stadium.

Del Mar Avenue entryway under construction

Public Services staff is working on the beautification of Del Mar Avenue at Newport Boulevard, a major entryway to the Eastside Costa Mesa neighborhood.

The project will replace unused asphalt areas with an entry monument sign branding the neighborhood as Eastside Costa Mesa.

The entryway will feature a colorful drought tolerant landscape pallet, which includes some trees and a decorative crosswalk, highlighting the entrance to the residential neighborhood.

The decorative crosswalk has been poured and is awaiting the final color staining.

Public Services is also proposing to rehabilitate the pavement on Del Mar from Elden to Santa Ana.

Upon the completion of the paving work, construction activities will be stopped for the holidays and will resume after the first of the year.

Completion of this project is anticipated by March 2016.

Seniors have festive breakfast with Santa Claus

More than 150 seniors were treated to a free breakfast, gift cards and a visit by Jolly Old St. Nick at the annual Senior Center "Breakfast with Santa" event from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Wednesday.

"You look beautiful today," Costa Mesa CEO Tom Hatch told the festively dressed crowd. "My compliments to the crew. Everything here looks spectacular."

Costa Mesa police officers and fire fighters, including Chief Dan Stefano, served breakfast to the delighted crowd, each of whom were also presented with a \$5 gift card. The seniors were also treated to Christmas tunes and other melodies by local musician Tom Reich and his accompanist Valerie.

The cards were part of \$1,300 raised and donated by city employees.

In addition to a visit by Santa Claus, the seniors played games such as "Pin the nose on Rudolph" and a wreath toss to win raffle prizes.

"It's probably one of their favorite events," said Senior Center Program Administrator Yvette Aguilar. "They look forward to this all year long."

Aguilar also credited the Senior Center staff for the time and work they put in arranging the event.

City completes review of sport leagues

Four adult and one youth sports league will have limited access to Costa Mesa fields beginning in the fall of 2016, after they failed to meet the city's new local residential participation guidelines.

In July of 2015, the Costa Mesa City Council adopted a new Field Use and Allocation Policy to provide a clear and concise set of rules and regulations regarding field usage.

Paperwork submitted by the five sports leagues failed to meet the guidelines set forth by the new field use policy.

In accordance with the policy, various users of both youth and adult sports must meet certain requirements in order to use the fields, one of which is verification of local residency and proof that a percentage of those who participate reside in the school district boundaries and/or attend a public or private school within the Newport-Mesa School District boundaries. Using this criteria, sports leagues are placed into six different groups that have priority for field use.

Youth sports groups that either pay coaches and administrators or hold tryouts instead of letting all children play have to meet a higher percentage of local resident participation than youth leagues that are largely recreational in nature.

"The policy was created to ensure that Costa Mesa residents and children who play in recreational programs are at the top of the list when it comes to who gets to use our fields and resources," said Travis Karlen, the manager of the city's Parks and Community Services.

Further, by making these field usage changes effective by next fall of 2016, the city is giving these sports leagues ample time to find other options.

“We are letting these groups know they are out of compliance now so that they have enough time to look for other fields for their participants to use,” Karlen said.

To ensure the leagues complied with the policy, city staff worked diligently in requesting rosters and verification documents from each organization to confirm that each one met the required percentage of local residency for the appropriate group classification.

While the original deadline to submit residency verification was Aug. 31, 2015, the deadline was extended to Oct. 30, 2015 to give applicants more time to meet the requirements.

All groups will be notified of the audit results and those who did not meet the guidelines will be given every opportunity to submit the proper paperwork for future consideration.

City staff and ambassadors will continue to enforce the Field Use and Allocation Policy and audits during the spring 2016 season and in subsequent seasons.

Fountain Valley Council postpones plans for new freeway sign

At its meeting Tuesday, the Fountain Valley City Council decided to postpone its consideration of a multi-story electronic billboard that Clear Channel Outdoor would like to

erect on the border of Costa Mesa near the intersection of the 405 Freeway and Santa Ana River.

Costa Mesa residents are concerned about the sign and expressed their point of view at a Fountain Valley Planning Commission meeting in August. The commission did not approve the sign and the council will have its chance tonight.

The Fountain Valley City Council will meet at City Hall at 6 p.m. City Hall is located at 10200 Slater Avenue Fountain Valley. To view Fountain Valley City Council agendas [click here](#).

Mike Tucker presented with CEO Leadership Award for December

At December's Meet and Greet at City Hall, Costa Mesa CEO Tom Hatch presented code enforcement officer Mike Tucker with the CEO Leadership Award for December.

Tucker was hired in January of 2000 as an Equipment Mechanic II.

In April of 2009, he transferred to a Senior Maintenance worker position and in September of 2012, he was promoted to Code Enforcement Officer and assigned to the Community Improvement Division. Tucker was given projects that were designed to address high priority concerns within the City's residential zones with the goal of achieving a higher quality of life for the City's residents. One such project was located

in the Mission/Mendoza area at the north end of the City.

Tucker, along with his team members, took a wider view of this residential neighborhood to determine what steps were needed outside of the normal code enforcement processes to achieve the City's goal. This led to an organized effort by property owners, tenants and City staff to address substandard conditions, property maintenance issues and capital improvements.

Continuing with this theme, Tucker was re-assigned to his current project, which is to combat the negative impacts of group homes in our residential neighborhoods.

This issue is new to code enforcement, but Tucker took on the task and self-educated himself about this industry. He has become our leading expert on this topic and continuously shares his knowledge with the rest of the team.

This is a high priority for the residents of Costa Mesa and with Tucker's can-do attitude, the code enforcement division has been successful in reducing those impacts.

In addition, CEO Hatch welcomed 17 new employees and recognized seven employees who had been recently promoted and two retirees, crime prevention specialist Kelly Vucinic and animal control officer Art Beames.