

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.

Snow in forecast for Snoopy House grand opening

For the first time, the iconic Snoopy House display at City Hall will be accompanied by 10 tons of snow to play in at the opening night of this free-to-the-public event this Saturday Dec. 12.

“Snow is definitely a rarity here in sunny Southern California,” said Costa Mesa Mayor Steve Mensinger. “So we are happy to do our part to add a nice winter touch to our annual Snoopy House display for the enjoyment of children and families.”

The 10 tons of snow will be delivered on the opening night Dec. 12 and another 10 tons is scheduled for delivery on Dec. 19, barring weather conditions.

Snoopy House, which features holiday scenes populated by “Peanuts” characters, is a free event available for viewing at City Hall from 5:30 to 9 p.m. nightly from Dec. 12 through Dec. 23.

The tradition started in 1966 when the Jordan family first created the display at their Eastside Costa Mesa home.



Family members and friends put together a series of Christmas scenes that eventually took up most of the front yard, side yard and even the roof of their home. Since its inception, the display attracts an estimated 80,000 visitors annually.

The Snoopy House moved to Costa Mesa City Hall in 2011 when city officials learned the fate of the annual tradition was in jeopardy. The city of Costa Mesa agreed to host the display and provide other assistance and has been doing so every year since.

This partnership with the Jordan family has continued ever since and city personnel partner with Jim Jordan and his wife Linda, who work tirelessly on this labor of love each year. Since its arrival at city hall, additional features including nightly live music and free train rides for children. To complement the Snoopy House, the city also puts on a nightly light show on the façade of City Hall.

In addition to snow, Saturday's opening night will begin with a formal presentation by the mayor and city council members at 5:30 p.m.

Santa will also make special visits to the event each night between 7 to 9 p.m. beginning opening night, Dec. 12, through Dec. 23. Children and their families will have opportunities to receive free photos with Santa.

Several youth nonprofit groups will have booths at the Snoopy House display each night selling beverages and snacks. Visitors to the event can also donate to the city sponsored Spark of Love toy drive.

Learn more about Early College High School

Early College High School is hosting an informational night on Jan. 28, 2016 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the Multi-Purpose Room.

ECHS is for those students interested in an alternative to the typical large high school feel, those that are motivated, encouraged and ready for the challenge college classes bring. If this sounds like you, this program may be what you're looking for. [Click here](#) to see a flier about Early College High School.

After School program launches at Rea Elementary

The R.O.C.K.S After School Program announced that Rea Elementary is an official R.O.C.K.S site.

As of Nov. 16, the site has a total of 19 children registered.

Participants will partake in homework time, games, sports, enrichment activities, and arts and crafts. In addition, once a week, the Fitness Program will lead R.O.C.K.S participants in interactive and fun health, fitness, and nutritional activities to encourage a healthy lifestyle.

Bark Park gets a new part-time staffer

The Parks & Community Services Department announced it has hired a new part-time staff member to who has been assigned solely to the Bark Park.

The staffer works 24 hours a week Monday through Friday. The Bark Park is a heavily-used park which requires daily maintenance and cleaning needs. The maintenance worker is able to fill holes daily to meet safety needs, clean chairs, sweep walkways, monitor public postings, empty trash cans and assess larger maintenance needs.

Having an increased staff presence in the park has also helped with gathering feedback from the regular users in regards to park enhancements as staff moves to create a master plan for overall park improvements.

Tanager Drive landscape renovation completed

Costa Mesa public service crews recently finished the Tanager Drive landscape near the Costa Mesa Country Club main entrance.

The work resulted in the removal and replacement of several hundred feet of tired chain link fencing and the declining woody vines, which blocked views to the Costa Mesa Country Club.

The entrance project, funded by golf course revenues, made a tremendous improvement to the main access for the City's golf course and the clubhouse. The attractive plants, decorative stone treatments, accent lighting, and the new gold lettering of the new entrance quickly highlighted the poor condition of the remaining street-scape along Tanager Drive.

The installation of wrought iron fencing and a pedestrian access gate was finished off with a creative blend of water efficient plants in a meandering design. As the plant material becomes acclimated and begins to grow, the colorful blend of succulent plants with their wide variety of forms and textures will keep the small slope stable and provide an attractive frontage to the golf course.

ARTventure gets rave reviews

The opening reception of ARTventure, the Cultural Arts Committee's new signature event, took place on Friday evening Nov. 13 at the Cisco Home showroom in the SoCo Collection.

The evening included an exhibition of nearly 150 pieces of art that were displayed on and around unique furnishings, fixtures and home design elements.

Prizes were awarded to the artists by judge Kirby Piazza, in front of the more than 650 event attendees. The second day drew in a crowd of nearly 400 art lovers and included two live culinary demonstrations by Bistro Papillote and St. Patisserie, four musical performances including a flamenco guitarist, a jazz duo, a youth string quartet and a duo of dueling guitarists. An edgy graffiti artist demonstration ended the day.

The final day of the event was geared towards youth and families and included a saxophone soloist performance, four dance performances by Halo Dance for Autism Foundation, a techy robotics demo provided by Strategic Kids, a performance by the All American Boys Chorus and an afternoon with the author segment that featured child author Ryan Rector. About 300 people visited the event on this final day.

Seniors share life stories with friends and families

Fridays at the Costa Mesa Senior Center are a lively and busy time with volunteers, staff and patrons going about their daily activities.

This particular Friday, Oct. 16 is no different. In addition to the usual ballroom, card playing and fitness classes, there is, however, a special presentation taking place in the Grand Hall 2 room; a Guided Autobiography: Family and Friends Storytelling event.

Hosted by the Costa Mesa Senior Center and Volunteer Action for Aging, an organization centered on engaging seniors through volunteerism, this was the grand finale of a month-long adventure of reflection, writing, remembrance and most of all storytelling.

Costa Mesa Senior Center was given the opportunity to participate in this rare occasion. The Guided Autobiography is described as "a semi-structured process for life review that incorporates individual and group experiences with autobiographical writing."

Participants attended a two-hour class every week for a month. Through guided instruction, in-class exercises and homework, the participants created their own stories; their autobiographies. The process was simple: show up, write and share, but the outcome was so much more. A written legacy for families, written stories from the heart and a month-long class that influenced, enriched and helped a population to remember, to share with others and for many, to share publicly.

During the grand finale, a Guided Autobiography: Family and Friends Storytelling event, one-by-one people like Patty, Marilyn, Rueha, Rochelle, and mother and daughter duo Mary and Barbara told their story. There were stories of life, death, family, marriage, adoption and triumph.

Every story was different and every story was compelling. More importantly, everyone had a story.

Remembering the olive colored skin tone and dark black hair of her mother, "I remember the day mother dyed a bleach streak in

her dark hair,” Patty mentions. She begins to get teary eyed as she remembers the way this made her feel.

And as one presenter stated, “Everyone has a story to tell, here is mine.”

City is gearing up for new ARTventure weekend event beginning Nov. 13

The City’s Cultural Arts Committee and Parks and Community Services Department have set the stage for a unique, three-day arts event that will feature more than 100 pieces of art submitted by local community members.

The artwork will be displayed alongside one-of-a-kind pieces of furniture and vibrant home décor inside of the Cisco Home Showroom located in the SoCo Collection design center.

“This inaugural ARTventure event is primed to become an annual signature event that highlights and signifies why Costa Mesa is known as the City of the Arts,” said Justin Martin, the city’s supervisor of Parks and Community Services, which is overseeing the event.

The new ARTventure event, founded by the city’s Cultural Arts Committee, is free to the public and will run Friday, Nov. 13 through Sunday, Nov. 15.

This one-of-a-kind juried exhibition of art will showcase the work of local artists in a non-traditional gallery style format that pairs individual artwork with furniture, fixtures, home décor and unique design elements.

Accepted submissions include a variety of media, including oil, watercolor and acrylic paintings, graphite drawings, metal sculpture, fashion, photography, fiber art, mixed media as well as literary art.



To enhance the atmosphere of the event there will be live entertainment featuring strolling vocal and instrumental musicians, dance performances, and literary and culinary demonstrations. Youth performances and youth art coming from K-12 Costa Mesa schools will also be part of the event.

Friday's event begins at 5:45 p.m. with a welcome from city leaders and members of the Cultural Arts Committee. Awards covering several categories will be presented to selected winning artists. Food and beverage will be part of the festivities as well as entertainment by the Irvine Jazz Trio.

Saturday and Sunday's event will both begin at 11 a.m. and run until 5 p.m. Saturday's event will feature displayed artwork as well as culinary demonstrations by Bistro Papillote and ST Patisserie, and a special musical performance by Ruben Gonzalez of Pasion Gitano, provided in thanks to the Segerstrom Center for the Arts.

Sunday is family day and will feature displayed art, demonstrations from the Strategic Kids Lego Engineering and

Robotics Team from Davis Elementary School, an interactive animation station with special guest animator Lynn Okimura, a performance by the All-American Boys Chorus and an afternoon reading and discussion with 10-year-old child author Ryan Rector.



Ryan Rector

All submitted entries will be screened, juried and displayed at the Cisco Home venue. The art will then be judged by Kirby Piazza, Costa Mesa High School's ACE Academy Visual and Performing Arts chair.

In addition to Cisco Home, the SoCo Collection design center and the Segerstrom Center for the Arts are sponsors of the event.

The SoCo Collection center is located at 3303 Hyland Ave, Costa Mesa.

Fair Board unanimously OKs going forward with Arlington Drive bio-swale and bike trail project

The OC Fair Board of Directors voted 9-0 at the October meeting to begin the process to enter into a partnership with the city of Costa Mesa to construct a new vegetated bio-swale and multi-purpose bike and pedestrian trail along the southerly portion of Arlington Drive.

The board was given a presentation by Public Services Director Ernesto Munoz, who outlined how the city's Engineering Division will work together with Kabbara Engineering and the OC Fair & Event Center to complete the project, which will require the removal of approximately 70,000 square feet of asphalt concrete on Arlington Drive.

The \$3.2 million project will serve to beautify Arlington Drive and provide a biological filtration system for water runoff to the Upper Newport Bay.

To pay for the project, the City of Costa Mesa received a grant for \$1.69 million and the OC Fair & Event Center will provide an additional \$1 million. In addition, the Costa Mesa City Council allocated \$510,000 for the work.

"This project will result in significant benefits to the OC Fair & Event Center and the overall community by installing much needed amenities along this unimproved section of Arlington Drive," Munoz said. "It is exciting to take part in this partnership between the City and the OC Fair & Event Center to achieve common environmental as well as aesthetic goals."

The collaboration between the City, the OC Fair & Event

Center, and Kabbara Engineering will now continue in the development of construction documents.

Presentations of the upcoming improvements will be made to various stakeholders, including the Newport Mesa Unified School District as well as the Mesa Del Mar Community in early 2016.

Construction is anticipated to begin in the fall of 2016.

A train rolls in to the Senior Center

A new train has steamed its way in to the doors of the Senior Center.

No, it's not your typical railway locomotive. It's a fun and interactive game featuring those small rectangular domino tiles; better known as dominoes and the name of the game is Mexican Train.

A rather new addition to the Costa Mesa Senior Center, Wednesday's from 1 to 4 p.m., you will likely bump into Guy Richards the class leader, Pat Bingo, Daisy Howard, Frances Sorensen, Margarete Stevenson and Robert Garlbraith to name a few, ready for a fun few hours of Mexican Train.

Daisy and Pat sit at a table together sharing smiles and laughter coupled with moments of intense concentration.

"You just stole my move, " Daisy says with a laugh. "I'm fighting to get rid of my tiles."

Mexican Train is an interactive game, encouraging the participants to use elements of strategy, critical thinking

and development of a master plan in their moves. Usually the tables are full with the maximum four players at play, but this particular Wednesday, Oct., 21 there are only five players.

A fun-packed and thought-provoking game, Mexican train offers a quiet place with friends, analysis and evaluation coupled with laughter and smiles.

For questions on the Mexican train class or any other classes contact the Senior Center at 949-645-2356.