

Police officials warn of public health risks associated with needle exchange program

The Costa Mesa Police Department has concluded that a proposal by the Orange County Needle Exchange Program (OCNEP) to distribute syringes in the Westside of Costa Mesa has the potential to increase discarded needles in the city and present a safety risk to residents and others.

According to the Department of Public Health website, the Orange County Needle Exchange Program has submitted an application to operate its needle exchange program daily in Costa Mesa from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in an area bounded by (N) West 18th Street, (E) Monrovia Avenue, (S) West 16th Street, (W) the outer border of Armstrong Petroleum.

The Costa Mesa Police Department submitted a response to the California Department of Public Health opposing the program.

[Click here to read the response.](#)

Members of the public who are interested in more information or commenting on this program can visit the California Department of Public Health's application page [here](#).

Responses can be sent to this email address SEPApplication@cdph.ca.gov.

[Click here to read the full application by the Orange County Needle Exchange Program.](#)

Costa Mesa police officers conduct compliance checks

The Costa Mesa Police Department collaborated with the Orange County Probation Department last week to conduct compliance checks on offenders subject to Post-Release Community Supervision (PRCS), per the State Prison Realignment Assembly Bill 109.

These checks were designed to locate and audit the activity of local criminal offenders residing within the City of Costa Mesa who are under the supervision of OC Probation.

Officers completed 27 residential home checks of offenders and contacted 43 individuals, 23 of which were and classified as PRCS/Probation offenders and five of which were on formal probation with gang terms.

The compliance checks resulted in eight offenders being arrested for violations of the conditions of their probation and/or new criminal law violations, and two other individuals being cited for having an open container in public.

Four new officers welcomed to Costa Mesa Police Department

at Monday ceremony

Costa Mesa Police Chief Rob Sharpnack welcomed four new members of the Police Department on Monday during an official badge-pinning and swearing-in ceremony outside his office.

“Obviously this is an awesome day for the department,” Chief Sharpnack said. “This really sets the momentum for the next year. The spirit of police work, teamwork and excellence is continuing to grow here in this department.”

Joining the department this week are Officers Frank Nguyen and Bunnath Phot both of whom are lateral transfers from Fullerton Police Department.

Also, welcomed on Monday were two recent graduates from the Sheriff Academy, Eric Molina and Mark Garcia.

Nguyen has a degree in criminal justice from Cal State Fullerton and has worked for Fullerton PD for the last 10 years. He has earned a MADD Award for DUI arrests and in 2010 received an award from the Chief of Police for exemplary service.

Phot is currently attending Cal State Fullerton and is working on a degree in kinesiology. He has been a Marine Corps reserve since 2012 and has worked for Fullerton Police Department since 2014.

Molina grew up in Costa Mesa and is an Estancia High graduate. He served as a Police Explorer for five years and later as a part-time aide in the traffic bureau. He has completed course work at Golden West college.

Garcia is a 2013 graduate from the University of California Riverside with bachelor's in sociology. He also volunteers in the evening hours after work helping children with psychological challenges.

Chinese city leaders visit Costa Mesa to learn more about CERT

City and Fire Department leaders were pleased this week to host a contingent of Chinese government leaders from the city of Chengdu, who visited Costa Mesa as part of a multi-week, fact-finding mission on the best practices of Community Emergency Response Teams or CERT.

Brenda Emrick, the city's CERT manager who has visited Chengdu several times last year for training purposes, said the group was in the United States on a study tour sponsored by The Asia Foundation.

Welcoming the group to Costa Mesa along with Emrick was Mayor Steve Mensinger, CEO Tom Hatch, Police Chief Rob Sharpnack and CERT leaders from the State of California and the cities of Huntington Beach, Long Beach, Downey and Irvine as well as members of The Asia Foundation.

Chen Liuting, who represented The Asia Foundation, said the visitors from Chengdu were all emergency managers who had prior training from the Federal Emergency Management Association. She said the city of Chengdu in the Sichuan Province of China has a population of 13 million people.

"It is a big city with lots of responsibilities," she said. "That's why there are here to learn more about CERT."

The past two weeks the group has been studying at the University of Maryland, before winding up in Costa Mesa on Tuesday and Wednesday. During their visit to Costa Mesa, the group got a tour of the city's Emergency Operations Center as well as a visit to Orange Coast College to learn about campus-based CERT.

The trip also included workplace seminar as well as a visit to South Coast Plaza for lunch at Lawry's and dinner at Maggiano's.

Costa Mesa public safety staff honored at annual chamber barbecue lunch

Costa Mesa's public safety employees were treated to a free lunchtime barbecue at the OC Fair & Event Center care of the Costa Mesa Chamber of Commerce that included live music and performances from the Orange Coast College cheerleaders.

About 200 people attended this year's Public Safety Recognition Barbecue on Thursday Oct. 8, including 90 police, fire and dispatch personnel.

Guests were served up dishes of chicken, tri-tip steak, mashed

potatoes, vegetables and salad.

The community and civic leaders in attendance which included City Council Members Katrina Foley and Sandy Genis, OC Fair & Event Center CEO Kathy Kramer, Orange Coast College President Dennis Harkins, Costa Mesa Police Chief Rob Sharpnack and Fire Chief Dan Stefano.

“It was an honor to attend today’s Public Safety Recognition Barbecue,” Chief Sharpnack said. “On behalf of the CMPD staff, I want to thank the Chamber of Commerce for their generosity and others in attendance for their support of public safety personnel. We are proud to serve the Chamber of Commerce membership and look forward to collaborating in the future to make Costa Mesa an even greater city in which to live, work, and visit.”

Chamber of Commerce CEO Eileen Benjamin said the chamber is proud to honor the city’s protectors.

“The men and women of our Fire, Police and Communications departments keep our community safe and are willing to put their lives at risk for us every workday,” said Benjamin, who emceed the event along with Chamber President Tom Johnson. “This event is a small way to demonstrate our appreciation. It is wonderful to see many supporters joining together to show gratitude to these fine guardians. The people of Costa Mesa are inspiring in so many ways.”

In addition to the OC Fair & Event Center donating the venue, the Orange County Marketplace donated the catering and other supporters were Care Ambulance, Harbor Center and ICI Development, Metro Pro Towing and The Triangle. Longtime Chamber Board of Director member Patty Mason was also instrumental in supporting this event, and the music was provided by the Mike Donahue band.

Costa Mesa Police Lt. Joyce LaPointe is latest to receive CEO Leadership Award

At the September Meet and Greet, City CEO Tom Hatch presented the CEO Leadership Award to Lt. Joyce LaPointe in recognition of her to work dealing with the city's quality of life challenges, including coming up with solutions in regards to homeless and transient population issues.

"What I admire about Joyce is that she is always quick to point out that what she does is part of a larger team effort," said CEO Hatch. "I appreciate her leadership skills and value the hard work she has done throughout the years and most recently her efforts to solve our homeless challenges."

LaPointe is a 19-year veteran of the Costa Mesa Police Department. She started her career at Costa Mesa as a police officer in 1997 and was promoted to the rank of Corporal in 2002, Sergeant in 2007 and the rank of Lieutenant in 2015, when she became the first female to hold that rank in the department's history.

As an officer LaPointe has extensive field experience including patrol, field training, bike patrol, traffic investigation, defensive tactics instructor, and tactical flight officer. Joyce is the recipient of the Mothers against Drunk Drivers Century Award, a Life Saving Merit and recently helped with a child birth in the field.

During her eight years as a sergeant, Joyce had the opportunity to manage several Patrol Teams, the Field Officers Training Program, Jail Operations and the Force Tactics Training Team.

Currently, she is the Area 1 Commander, who oversees Patrol Operations in south end of Costa Mesa. She also manages the Field Officers Training Program, the Force Tactics Training Team, Community Service Officers, Park Rangers, and Bike Detail Team.

Prior to joining Costa Mesa PD, she worked at Costa Mesa High School as the Athletic Trainer and Campus Security. A native of Mt. View California, LaPointe graduated from Southbay Christian High School in 1986 and then attended Vanguard University on an Athletic Scholarship, where she received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Kinesiology.

In addition to LaPointe, the CEO welcomed several new members to the Costa Mesa team, including, Development Services Intern Katelyn Walsh, Parks and Community Services Recreation Leaders Victor Acosta, Fernando Barajas-Valladares, Jessie Cerda and Denzel Muldrew.

From the Police Department, Hatch welcomed new Officer Cory Montgomery and Crime Scene Specialist Brittany Godoy. Not in attendance but also recognized were Officer Nick Dempkowski and Police Aide Jeremiah Stanley.

In the way of promotions, Hatch congratulated Marian Traylor, who was promoted to Deputy City Clerk, Denise Baldacci now a Recreation Leader III, Briana Delfin And Enyelber Franco Recreation Specialists And Joseph Mendoza and Delgado Salazar – Recreation Leader II.

Hatch also thanked retiring city employees Maintenance Services Manager Bruce Hartley, Fire Protection Analyst Dave Hollister, Police Officer Matthew Olin and Senior Records Technician Teresa Peterson-Goerke.

Costa Mesa police join the fight to combat human trafficking in county

Speaking to a crowd of about 150 spectators in front of City Hall, Police Chief Rob Sharpnack announced that Costa Mesa will join other law enforcement and social services agencies in the Orange County Human Trafficking Task Force to crack down on sex trade criminals who are leaving a wake of young victims throughout the county.

“It’s truly an honor for the Costa Mesa Police Department to join this effort,” Chief Sharpnack said as he urged members of the public to report incidents of human trafficking that they may witness through the National Hotline number at 1-888-3737-888. “You can be the one to help a victim find safety and new hope.”

Sharpnack announced that human trafficking is on the increase in Orange County and Costa Mesa Police will assign one full-time officer to the human trafficking detail.

“It’s the second largest criminal enterprise in the world and it is the fastest growing,” Chief Sharpnack said.

<https://youtu.be/xEoN2Rc4ZLI>

Chief Sharpnack was joined by Mayor Steve Mensinger, Anaheim Police Deputy Chief Julian Harvey, Director of Victim

Assistance Programs for Community Services Programs Lita Mercado and District Attorney Tony Rackaukus at a press conference in front of City Hall on Friday morning Sept. 9.

Also in attendance were Councilmembers Katrina Foley and Jim Righeimer and many law enforcement personnel from throughout the county.

“Costa Mesa will do everything in our power to combat human trafficking in our city, as well as support this important regional effort” Mayor Mensinger said.

Mercado’s group, the Community Services Programs based in Santa Ana, cofounded the task force in 2004, which consists of law enforcement personnel from Anaheim, Costa Mesa, Santa Ana, Irvine, the California Highway Patrol, the OC Sheriff, the FBI, Homeland Security, the U.S. Attorney and OC District Attorney office.

Since 2004, the task force has worked to identify the origin of the victims and how they wound up being part of this tragic trend. Only a little more than 20 percent come from Orange County, though much of the trafficking occurs here with the pimps using Beach and Harbor Boulevards as major corridors.

The task force aided and provided assistance to 580 sex and labor trafficking victims.

In addition the task force not only goes after the pimps who brutalize these young victims and exploit them as sex slaves, but also those who pay to have sex with them.

“We now have the purchasers of sex in our sights,” Anaheim Deputy Chief Harvey said. “We will be looking for you and you will go to jail.”

District Attorney Rackaukus also noted there was an uptick in violence against those kept captive and he provided gruesome details of some of the injuries these young women, and in some

cases children, receive. He said that his office has experienced more and more gang members, many from the Fresno area, taking part in these illegal activities and he vowed to put the perpetrators behind bars.

"We are working to get them the longest sentences possible so we can put them out of business," he said.

[Click here](#) for more information and links to data on the OC Human Trafficking Task Force website. And [click here](#) for more information on Community Service Programs.

Chief Sharpnack welcomes newest officer to the department at swearing-in ceremony

Police Chief Rob Sharpnack on Monday Aug. 29 welcomed Nicholas Dempkowski to the force, the latest police officer to leave another department and join Costa Mesa's men and women in blue.

"This is yet another bright spot for Costa Mesa PD," Sharpnack said as he introduced officer Dempkowski. "Nick is going to be a great addition to our department. He is committed to public service and law enforcement and we are glad to have him aboard."

Attending the swearing in ceremony were Mayor Steve Mensinger and City CEO Tom Hatch as well as several staff members from the Police and Fire Departments and City Hall.

Dempkowski comes to Costa Mesa by way of Fullerton, where he joined that force in 2013 and trained as a K9 officer.

Prior to that, he worked as a reserve officer for the Long Beach Police Department after graduating from the Fullerton College Police Academy. He also has a background in off-road racing.

In addition to Officer Dempkowski, Sharpnack introduced new academy graduate Cory Montgomery as well as three new hires for Communications/Dispatch division, Erin Cedillo, Nydia Robles and Jennifer Rosenberg.

He also congratulated several police officers for the great restraint they showed during an incident on Friday night, where a man armed with a knife was trying to commit suicide-by-cop. The man was detained safely, despite making threatening gestures toward police.

Sharpnack noted this is a particularly proud time for him as he rebuilds the department with the best and the brightest and bulks up staffing in speciality areas like detectives and community policing.

He thanked the efforts of recruiters such as Sgt. Jerry Hildeman and training assistant Jody Gonzalez for their efforts in bringing in top talent and he commended his officers for doing great work, even in the lean times.

"We have not dropped our service levels at all," Sharpnack said. "We continue to provide a high level of service to the residents of Costa Mesa."

Chiefs Take Part in Motor Home Madness Demolition Derby at the Fair

On Thursday Aug. 11, Costa Mesa Fire Chief Dan Stefano and Chief Rob Sharpnack participated in the Motor Home Madness Demolition Derby at the 2016 Orange County Fair.

The pair were also joined by Newport Beach Police Chief Jon Lewis. The money raised at the event goes to fund breast cancer awareness.

The first to enter the race was Chief Sharpnack.

Just after 8 p.m. Sharpnack, No. 44 (our department's designated number) entered the arena in a painted black and white RV, with the words police and SWAT painted on the sides and with police lights mounted on the top.

As the crowd cheered and began to get excited No. 51 Chief Stefano entered. Making his way around the arena, Stefano entered in a red and gold RV with flashing lights making a few laps round before parking on the opposite side of Sharpnack.

Before the event began all participants exited their RV's and ran around the arena waving their arms and getting the crowd pumped up. Stefano ran around with two fire extinguishers,

which set the crowd off.

Unfortunately, Sharpnack and Stefano got knocked out the first half, but it was an exciting event that offered a fun and light-hearted vibe drew in thousands of spectators.

In the Spotlight: CMPD Officer Lance Healey

Costa Mesa Police Officer Lance Healey was the recipient of June's CEO Leadership Award.

Our video team spent some time with Healey, who helps run the Police Department's highly successful Pre-Academy, to get an idea of what his workday is like. Click on the video below for more:

Three more officers join Costa Mesa Police Department's rising ranks

Police Chief Rob Sharpnack praised yet another "bright spot" in the department's rebuilding efforts as he introduced two promising new officers and one new reserve officer in a swearing-in and badge-pinning ceremony Monday morning July 11.

The two officers were much-coveted lateral hires, bringing in valuable experience and leadership to a growing police department.

Kristofer Moore comes to Costa Mesa via the San Bernardino Sheriff Department and Denny Bak moved from the Fullerton Police Department. In addition, the chief announced the addition of Reserve Officer Cory Estes, who comes by way of the Los Angeles Police Department, where he is currently a field training officer.

Chief Sharpnack said he was especially proud of the new, young and enthusiastic talent that makes up a big portion of the Costa Mesa police force and the success of the department's training programs.

"Throughout the county, a number of executives and law enforcement leaders have talked about the excellence and energy this agency has shown," Sharpnack said, referring to the department's success in enforcing high-profile criminal cases. "We are at the tip of the spear when it comes to technology and advanced training."

City CEO Tom Hatch, Mayor Steve Mensinger and Councilwoman Katrina Foley also attended the ceremony and personally welcomed the new officers aboard.

"There are a lot of people here who have worked hard to make this a great organization," Hatch told the officers. "We are the best police department in Orange County."

Bak grew up in Laguna Beach and attended UCI, where he graduated in 2005 with a bachelor's degree in economics. He attended the Rio Hondo Police Academy in 2008 and was hired by the Irvine Police Department in 2009. In 2010, he was

recognized as Auto Theft Officer of the Year. In 2011 and 2012, Bak earned MADD awards for DUI enforcement along with the MADD Hero Award in 2012.

In 2013, Bak joined the Fullerton Police Department, serving as a patrol officer and field training officer. He is also Drug Recognition Expert and Firearms Instructor and helps prepare new recruits for the police academy. Bak also earned MADD awards there as well in 2013 and 2015.

Moore has been with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department since 2014 and attended the department's basic academy, where he graduated top of the class. He was assigned to the custodial environment at West Valley Detention Center. Over the past two years, Moore has been exposed to a variety of custody assignments and training opportunities.

A state champion and All American swimmer in high school and college, Moore served as an ocean lifeguard for the city of San Clemente from 2006 to 2014, where he was awarded both the Unsung Hero and the Lifeguard of the Year awards.

Estes was hired by the Los Angeles Police Department in 2008 and attended that department's basic academy. Over the past several years, Estes has been assigned to the Hollywood Division, West Traffic, and Harbor Division. He has worked collaterally in plain clothes-undercover, bike patrol and special enforcement assignments. Currently, he serves as a Field Training Officer in the Harbor Division.

Estes grew up in Long Beach and attended UCI, where he earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and social behavior.

After having badges pinned on them by family members, the three officers were sworn in by Costa Mesa City Clerk Brenda Green. See video below:

http://cityofcostamesanews.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/MVI_

The ultimate sacrifice of those on the 'Honor Roll' will never be forgotten

By Robert N. Sharpnack
Chief of Police

For many Californians, the term "Honor Roll" conjures up images of academic excellence and the proud feelings associated with seeing your name included on a prestigious list.



For those of us in law enforcement, the "Honor Roll" is not a list on which we want to find our names. Although this list also gives rise to feelings of pride, it is the list of California peace officers killed in the line of duty.

So far in 2016, 33 names of officers who lost their lives throughout the United States were added to the national Honor Roll.

Each year, the California Peace Officers' Memorial Foundation holds a ceremony to honor the men and women in law enforcement who have made the ultimate sacrifice and joined the list that year. The numbers vary from year to year, but since 2001, the names of 159 California Police Officers have been added to the Peace Officers' Memorial Monument in Capitol Park in Sacramento and are included in the Honor Roll on the Foundation's website.

Those names are also included in the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington DC and are joined by thousands of others. These brave men and women are honored each year in our nation's capital during National Police Week that runs from May 15 to Saturday May 21.

According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, on average, one law enforcement officer is killed in the line of duty somewhere in the United States every 61 hours. Since the first known line-of-duty death in 1791, more than 20,000 U.S. law enforcement officers have made the ultimate sacrifice.

In remembrance, we honor the sacrifice of two of our fallen family members: James D. "Dave" Ketchum and John W. "Mike" Libolt, who through noble commitment to duty, made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our community.

Both officers were killed on March 10, 1987 when their helicopter collided with a Newport Beach copter while pursuing a suspect in a stolen car. Ketchum and Libolt were both 15-year veterans and became the first Costa Mesa police officers killed in the line of duty in the department's history

The good work that we do day in and day out does not frequently end up in the paper. It is not considered news because it is what we chose to do – protect and serve our respective communities.

None of us wants to be included on the "Honor Roll" for our

service, but recognize that the Honor Roll is there to remind us that each year, there are those of us who will make the ultimate sacrifice in service to our communities.

The risk of this sacrifice keeps many from entering the law enforcement profession. Those of us who chose law enforcement start each day with a desire to serve and protect our communities by putting the safety of others before our own. We are husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, brothers and sisters. We are coaches, counselors, mediators and mentors.

We dedicate ourselves to fighting crime and drugs to create a safe community for those we serve. We help at-risk youth in schools, parents in crisis and connect the homeless and mentally ill with services. We show up when you call 911 to help you in a time need or an emergency.

We do these things with the understanding that it's part of our job and we proud to serve our community.

On a related note, we are proud of records specialist Tina Foster's brother, Niagara County Sheriff's Deputy Joe Tortorella, who received a Medal of Valor award this week from President Obama.

Below are links about the award and the actual incident. His heroic actions truly made the difference that day.

<http://www.wgrz.com/news/local/deputy-tortorella-receives-medal-of-valor-from-president-obama/196825976>

<http://www.buffalonews.com/city-region/wheatfield/acting-on-his-instincts-a-sheriffs-deputy-prevented-a-tragedy-20150504>

We are fortunate to work in a community where the overwhelming majority of our population trusts and supports what we do. This support is earned by your tireless efforts to protect our citizens, enforce our laws, and keep our community safe in

accordance with the core values of Teamwork, Integrity, Professionalism, and Service.

The men and women of our Department care deeply for Costa Mesa and demonstrate that care through various community engagement efforts – many of which are done on our own time.

We also strive to decrease crime and ensure a high quality of life through proactive and intelligence based policing strategies. We are grateful to serve a community that supports its Police Department and to not have to struggle with the challenges that plague many other cities.

I encourage members of the community to show that support during National Police Week by shining a blue light to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their community and to show our local heroes how much they are supported by those they serve.