The City of Costa Mesa is Better than Ever

The Costa Mesa Chamber of Commerce honored the City of Costa Mesa with its prestigious Pillar of the City Award at the annual 2021 State of the City address.

The city was recognized for its many accomplishments, resiliency and dedication to the business community and public safety amid a worldwide pandemic.

The award was presented at the Chamber of Commerce's State of the City luncheon held at the Rene and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall on Thursday July 15 before an audience of 230 attendees. Mayor John Stephens, Mayor Pro-Tem Andrea Marr and Council Members Loren Gameros, Manuel Chavez, Arlis Reynolds and Jeff Harlan presented the City's many accomplishments to a crowd of business leaders.





The award was presented by Chamber of Commerce CEO Carla Valenzuela and President Emeritus Tom Johnson and City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison received the award on the City's behalf.



"Many thanks to the Chamber for recognizing our hard work with this Pillar of the City Award," said Mayor Stephens. "As we

all get back to our normal lives, I’m proud to say the State of the City in Costa Mesa is better than ever. We are now well positioned to meet our challenges.”

The Chamber singled out the City for numerous accomplishments. Costa Mesa was the first city in Orange County to issue a state of emergency, which enabled the City to receive federal stimulus dollars and get a head start on managing the pandemic. It is one of only two cities to balance its budget without the use of reserves.

“Despite the pandemic, we were able to continue our AAA credit rating and balance the city’s budget,” Farrell Harrison said. “We built major capital projects including our new Norma Hertzog Community Center, the new Lions Park Playground and our permanent 72-bed Bridge Shelter in which we leveraged a regional partnership with Newport Beach and the County securing $4 million in grant funds.”

City leaders held more than 20 meetings with approximately 40 local businesses and opened a call center with 10 volunteers as part of the Costa Mesa’s BAC (Business Assistance Collaborative) initiative.

The City issued over 80 permits for businesses to conduct retail and dining outdoors. To further help businesses, the City gave $2 million to over 450 small businesses through its City-funded small business grant program.

Costa Mesa hired two more police officers, and seven new firefighter vacancies were filled. Public safety responded to a combined 140,000 calls for service. Fire crews conducted more than 1,000 inspections and plan checks, and fire strike teams were called out to help fight 15 wildfires throughout the region and state. The Police Department managed a dozen rallies and protests amid the most civil unrest experienced in decades.

A new Rental Assistance Program was created to provide

$387,000 in relief to 124 families in need. And through the Cares Act Funding, City leaders were able to give out an additional $3 million to aid struggling local businesses.

During the pandemic, the City still housed over 200 individuals previously suffering from homelessness and worked closely with the Power of One Foundation to provide meals to the needy.

Costa Mesa also partnered with the County of Orange and 360 Clinic to provide a mass testing site at the Fairgrounds and a vaccine Super Pod to serve the community.

Nearly 11,000 business licenses were issued. And the City was instrumental in the deal that resulted in defense contractor Anduril to sign a lease for The Press site, the largest real estate deal in Orange County at 600,000 square feet.

Costa Mesa is one of four cities in the nation and the only one in Orange County to be awarded LEED Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.

After the retail cannabis Measure Q received approval in November with 65% of the votes, the City Council is prepared to start the new business program yielding up to $3 million or more in new revenue for the City and 150 well-paying jobs.

For a list of many of the City’s accomplishments last year please click on the following link