

Vol. II, July 2005

Just When You Thought...

Just When You Thought You Knew Everything About OC

- 1. The County maintains approximately 300 miles of roads within unincorporated OC, enough to stretch from San Clemente to Las Vegas.
- 2. There are four million tons of incounty waste buried at Orange County landfills annually, which is equivalent to:
 - A. 40,000 full-grown blue whales B. 727,000 adult African bull elephants
 - C.145 trillion white-footed field mice
- 3. Orange County residents generate enough refuse to fill a major league stadium every five months.
- 4. The two summits of Old Saddleback Mountain are Santiago and Modjeska peaks; Santiago is the taller one.
- 5. The oldest surviving California building is the Serra Chapel at Mission San Juan Capistrano. The oldest portion dates back to 1778.
- 6. Several Orange County communities once had different names: A. Orange was known as Richland.
 - B. Huntington Beach was Pacific
 - C. Seal Beach was Bay City.

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OC Veterans Help Fellow Vets

The Fourth of July is a time to celebrate America's freedom and to acknowledge those who have fought and continue to fight worldwide to ensure democracy. They are the few who protect the many.

While proud Americans waved flags on the Fourth

and saluted the men and women of the Armed Forces, one County operation is dedicated to yearround service to Orange County's veterans.

"There's а great sense of pride in helping to protect and defend your country and a greater sense of pride in helping to extend said

Melendez, County Veterans Service Officer. "The veterans we help truly believe in what they did while serving and it's our duty to assist them and make sure that they receive all the military benefits they rightly deserve."

Melendez and eight of his Claims staff members are veterans themselves who served in various wars and/or during hostile times. Together, they represent more than 100 years of military service.

"Because we are vets, we really understand where our clients are coming from," said Michael Kissamitakis, Veterans Claims Officer III. "Most don't like to talk to non-vets about their military experiences. They feel comfort-

> able talking to us, however, because we have been in their shoes. I truly enjoy my job and believe that there is nothing better than helping a fellow veteran and his or her family."



Army Lt. Col Richard D. Wandke, a Veterans Services volunteer, is picfreedom tured as a captain in 1969 throughout the world," when he received the Dis-Ronald tinguished Service Cross.

The County's Veterans Services Office, located at 1300 South Grand Ave. in Santa is part of the Ana, Housing and Community Services Department and has 18 em-

ployees who assist veterans and their dependents. Staff works collaboratively with nationally chartered veterans organizations, the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) and others to ensure that veterans and their families receive the entitlements they have earned through their military service.

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- D. Brea was Randolph.E. La Palma was once Dairyland.
- The first woman elected to County office was Justine Whitney, who was elected County Recorder in 1914; she served until 1936.
- 8. The three lakes in Laguna Canyon are the only historical fresh bodies of water in Orange County. The culvert that connects two of these lakes will be removed so that the lakes can be re-joined into one larger lake.
- Between 1953 and 1957, eight new cities were incorporated in Orange County: Buena Park, Costa Mesa, Cypress, Fountain Valley, Garden Grove, La Palma, Stanton, and Westminster.
- There is a total of 199 traffic signals in the unincorporated areas of Orange County.
- More than 43 million people visited Orange County in 2004.
 That's equal to the population of Spain.
- 12. Visitors spent \$7.3 billion in Orange County in 2004. That's an average of \$168 per person.
- 13. In 2004, 76 percent of visitors arrived by car and 22 percent by plane. That may be because 57 percent of visitors were from Southern California.
- Orange County has approximately 5,000 restaurants. That's one restaurant for every 620 residents.
- 15. Ten different reality shows have been filmed in Orange County: The OC, MTV's Laguna Beach: The Real OC, The Bachelor, Extreme Makeover: Home Edition, Merge, Switched, How Clean Is Your House?, Wife Swap, Trading Spaces: Family, and Date My Mom
- The Laguna Canyon Roadway traverses the Laguna Coast Wil-

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Michael Kissamitakis (right), Veterans Claims Officer III, confers with veteran David Santana, an Army artillery retiree.

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"We officially became a County operation in 1946 at the end of World War II. Our office serves approximately 400,000 clients including veterans, widows, and children of veterans," said Douglas Boeckler, Assistant County Veterans Service Officer. "It's our job to sit down with them, assess their situation, be their advocate and help them file their claims with the DVA. Our activities go beyond just daily work. We form bonds with each person we help."

According to the DVA, there are 25 million veterans in the United States and nearly three of every four served during a war or an official period of hostility. About a quarter of the nation's population -- approximately 70 million people -- is potentially eligible for veterans' benefits and services. This includes veterans, family members and survivors. Some vets do not even realize that they are entitled to benefits.

The Orange County Veterans Service Office provides vets with a variety of services and, in most cases, helps them attain monetary compensation for their injuries, disabilities, diseases and other service-related problems.

"Some vets or their surviving family are not aware of our services and don't even realize what they are entitled to," said John Parent, Supervising Veterans Claims Officer. "I remember interviewing the daughter of a vet regarding her mother's eligibility for DVA bene-After several discussions and further investigation, I discovered that the widow was eligible to receive Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). This compensation will allow her to receive \$881 monthly, a retroactive payment of \$7,929 and a lump sum burial allowance of \$1,500."

Lt. Col. Richard D. Wandke, a Veterans Services volunteer, is just one of the many heroes who fought for freedom. As a captain he received the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary

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derness Park, one of the county's regional park jewels. Much of the existing overhead utility lines will be under grounded within the Park, which will improve the views for motorists and bicyclists.

- 17. Movies recently filmed in the county include *Miss Congeniality* 2, *Big Momma's House, Dodgeball, Cellular, and Elizabethtown.*
- There are 6,542 bus stops in Orange County where 210,000 riders board OCTA buses on weekdays
- 19. The average weight of a Metrolink train is 450 tons, equivalent to 98 large SUVs.
- 20. In 2004, Orange County residents generated about 7.1 pounds of refuse per person per day.
- 21. Several new bridges will be constructed along the Laguna Canyon Roadway, each with architectural enhancements to evoke an earlier, less hectic time of the county's history. If you look closely, you might see the vestiges of the old stagecoach station rumored to be somewhere in the canyon.
- 22. More than 95,000 cubic yards of asphalt and concrete were used to pave the County's bikeway surfaces. This is enough material to completely cover the 175 acres of Yorba Regional Park.
- 23. There are 383 miles of regional trails and bikeways -- long enough to stretch from Los Angeles to Sacramento.
- 24. If laid side-by-side, regional trail and bikeway miles would cover 464 acres -- five times the size of Disneyland.
- 25. Laguna Canyon Road was originally a stagecoach route in the 1800s. A 1901 topographic map shows the road westerly of the Laguna lakes where it is being reconstructed today.

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heroism while commanding his company on a search and destroy mission southwest of a landing zone in the Republic of Vietnam.

His unit sustained heavy casualties, yet Wandke rallied his men to force the enemy to break off its assault temporarily. He directed his troops to withdraw from the area and establish a safe haven for the wounded. Wandke, who was injured himself, stayed behind to protect the dead and critically wounded. For three, harrowing hours he directed artillery fire on the hostiles and with his individual weapon prevented the enemy from overrunning his position.

Wandke was the Legion of Valor

National Commander from 1994 to1995. He was also the Chaplain for a number of years and currently lives in Southern California

"...O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave."

"Each time I hear the words of the national anthem, I get choked up and goose bumps," said Wandke. "No matter where I may be, I stand up, place my hand on my heart and honor the flag and our great country. The words to the song make me think of the Revolutionary War and the patriotic spirit that survives today. I'm also proud that the County's Veterans Services is available to serve these men and women who bravely served us."

Internal Audit Receives Award

The Internal Audit Department has received the "Recognition of Commitment to Quality Award" from the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA). The department will be presented with a plaque at the IIA's International Conference, July 12, in Chicago.

According to IIA, this award is designed to recognize internal audit departments worldwide that demonstrate achievements and dedication to continued improvement in their internal audit activities. The OC department is only the second government agency to receive honors in IIA's history.

"This is a tremendous honor for our department," said Peter Hughes, Director, Internal Audit Department. "It symbolized the hard work and dedication of my staff and the continued support we receive from the Board of Supervisors."

The purpose of the Internal Audit Department is to assist the County in safeguarding its resources. The department provides a broad array of audit services to its primary client, the Board of Supervisors. It was established in 1995 by Board resolution as a separate department, independent from the Auditor-Controller and reports directly to the Board.





Measure M Funds Provide Transportation Solutions

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) has approved \$208 million in Measure M and federal funds for 509 transportation improvement projects over the next five years in all 34 Orange County cities and the unincorporated areas. OCTA's Combined Transportation Funding Program (CTFP) will provide money for Orange County interchanges, intersections, highways, road expansions, signal improvements, street maintenance and other alternative travel modes.

OCTA is governed by an 18-member board of directors which includes the five County Supervisors. Third District Supervisor Bill Campbell serves as chairman of both boards.

Measure M is the half-cent sales tax originally approved by voters in 1990 for transportation improvements. Measure M funding will stop in 2011 unless it's extended by a two-thirds majority voter approval. It provides funding for OCTA's CTFP program that consists of seven project categories that target specific transportation issues including the following:

- Regional Interchange Program funds projects that improve freeway-to-freeway and street-to-freeway interchanges.
- Intersection Improvement Program funds projects that improve congested intersections in the county.
- **Signal Improvement Program** funds projects that improve signal systems including signal coordination, signal timing and traffic detection.
- **Transportation Demand Management** funds projects that encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation.
- Master Plan of Arterial Highways funds projects that improve highways so future traffic demands are met.
- Growth Management Area funds projects that improve regional roads.
- Arterial Highway Rehabilitation Program funds projects that improve streets and provide maintenance. The County's Resources and Development Management Department (RDMD) spearheads the projects in unincorporated Orange County and for cities that contract with RDMD for services. The department ensures the quality of design, materials and construction methods for public infrastructure such as streets, bridges, traffic signals, slopes, and storm drains.

Unincorporated areas throughout the county that have benefited from Measure M include:

- The widening of Alton Parkway from Irvine Blvd. to Commercenter Drive, which will provide a continuous roadway linkage between the I-5 on the south and the Foothill Transportation Corridor on the north.
- The widening of Ortega Highway, which will eliminate a bottleneck and create a four-lane road to replace the existing two lanes.

Orange County freeways receive 43 percent of Measure M funds to keep traffic flowing. Streets and roads receive 32 percent for enhancements, maintenance and rehabilitation. The final 25 percent is designated for transit upgrades and used to stabilize bus fares for seniors and people with disabilities. Measure M funding also includes \$340 million to begin a state-of-the-art, high-capacity, urban rail system in central Orange County.

Orange County's 43 percent has widened the Santa Ana Freeway (I-5), the San Diego Freeway (I-405), the El Toro "Y," the Costa Mesa Freeway (SR-55) and the Riverside Freeway (SR-91). Work to widen I-5 from Buena Park to the Los Angeles county border will start early next year with a scheduled completion date of late 2009. Construction crews are progressing with the Garden Grove Freeway widening. Primarily funded by Measure M, the \$500-million improvement project will be completed November 2006 and will significantly improve travel for commuters.

Measure M was created to develop a diverse transportation system that would relieve congestion on existing freeways, streets and roads. It was also expected to ensure future mobility throughout the county.

Employees Sponsor "Independence From Hunger" Food Drive

Imagine living in a car, in a run-down motel or under a bridge. Your shoes have holes and your clothes are tattered. The burning sensation in your stomach is hunger. You are homeless.

There are 34,898 homeless people living in Orange County. Many of them work full-time, yet the average income earned by the homeless (less than \$10 an hour) is often insufficient to pay the high cost of housing in Orange County. Most homeless remain hidden because they are trying to maintain their dignity while struggling to survive. Many working families are forced to choose between buying enough groceries for the month and keeping a roof over their heads.

Bill Campbell, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, this month is reviving the Countywide food drive. Although the event used to be held annually, it has been on hold for nearly seven years. This year's drive will be held July 18 - 29. The Housing and Community Services Department's Homeless Prevention Division, in collaboration with Community Action Partnership of Orange County and Second Harvest Food Bank, hope to

collect thousands of pounds of food to feed the poor and destitute throughout the county. Food donated by County employees will help supply food to more than 400 charitable organizations that reach the hungry including homeless shelters, soup kitchens, senior centers, rehabilitation centers and homes for abused children.

"Because of their commitment to public service, County employees are very responsive to the needs of others. The food drive is a great way for County employees to give back to the community," said Chairman Campbell. "Those less fortunate in the county will directly benefit from the generosity of this event."

Barrels will be located throughout County buildings and will serve as collection locations for the non-perishable food items. The Board of Supervisors will recognize the agencies that have the highest levels of participation.

"During the summer months, food banks tend to run low because schools are out for break," said Karen Roper, Executive Director of the Housing and Community Services Department's Office on Aging and Homeless Prevention Division. "It's the perfect time for the County to hold its food drive. Employee donations will stock the two major food banks in Orange County during this time that's typically slow in donations."



Barrels will be located throughout County buildings and will serve as collection sites for this month's food drive. Each barrel holds nearly 100 pounds of canned food.

For more information about the food drive, contact Mary Bishop at 714.567.5162.

Suggested items to donate:

- High protein foods such as canned meat, tuna, beef stew, peanut butter, macaroni and cheese, beans and lentils
- Staple dry goods such as rice, pastas and dry cereals
- Canned goods including fruit, juices, vegetables, soups and spaghetti sauce
- Baby food, formula and cereal, diapers and other baby care products
- Ready-to-eat items for the homeless such as individually packed products
- Personal care items such as sunscreen, toothpaste, toothbrushes, toilet tissue and deodorant



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County Connection is distributed monthly by the County Executive Officer Thomas G. Mauk. The newsletter is published by CEO Media Relations. All suggestions and comments may be emailed to ask.the.ceo@ocgov.com or faxed to 714.796.8426.



35 Years

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Resources & Development Management Department

Carol Graeber

Resources & Development Management Department

Mike Hess

Resources & Development Management Department

Gerald Schubert

Resources & Development Management Department

30 Years

Max Andersen

Resources & Development Management Department

Tuey Lee

Social Services Agency

Rodger Woodruff

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25 Years

Roger Bram

Social Services Agency

Mario Chavez

Sheriff-Coroner

Nick Chrisos

County Counsel

Kathryn Douglas

Sheriff-Coroner

Louise Ferguson

Probation

Katherine Foley

Auditor-Controller

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