

# County DIGEST



DECEMBER 1997

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

## A Chairman Looks Back

By Zev Yaroslavsky

Having just concluded my first term as Chairman of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and turned over the gavel to Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, I want to take this opportunity to compliment and thank my four colleagues for a most cooperative and productive year.

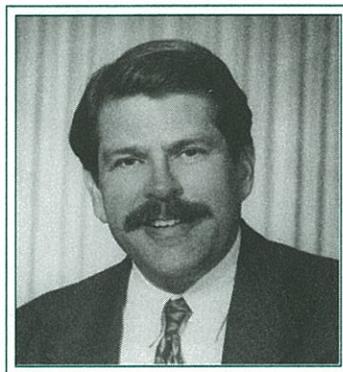
I take no small amount of pride and satisfaction in what we have accomplished together over the past 12 months. What I have seen during that time is a growing collegiality, a readiness to engage the tough issues, a willingness to "think outside the box" in search of solutions, and an eagerness to break out of the old partisan and ideological alignments as we forge a new policy consensus.

It has been productive, and it has been fun.

Among our signal achievements this year, in the fiscal and budget area, we can point to a substantially improved financial condition thanks to the Board's fiscal discipline and our County departments' cooperation. We have greatly improved our cash flow, and in June, won Wall Street's confidence with the first bond-rating upgrade in many years. We have increased our budget oversight of the Sheriff's Department and District Attorney's office, and established a regular schedule for management audits of County departments.

We have nearly concluded our labor negotiations, approving the first raises County employees have seen in at least three years. Following the passage of Prop. 218 last November - which could

have blown a \$60 million hole in the County's budget by wiping out existing assessments for fire protection and library



service - the voters signaled their confidence in the County with 70% or more approval of two ballot propositions to restore the lost funding.

In the justice and law enforcement area, we successfully opened our new state-of-the-art Twin Towers Correctional Facility in January, adding 1800 new jail beds to our system, and we've made progress in computerizing our jail information system. We have tightened oversight of County gun dealers in an effort to reduce gun-related violence, and our Human Relations Commission has launched a series of hate-crime summit meetings aimed at reining in an epidemic of intolerance in our communities.

In the health field, our Board continues to set the pace for innovative and forward-looking policymaking. In November, we made the fiscally and programmati-

cally sound decision to rebuild the venerable County-USC Medical Center at a 600-bed capacity. Through diligent and effective advocacy efforts in Washington, we averted significant Medicaid funding cuts, and garnered additional hospital funding under a federal program aimed at assisting hospitals which serve predominantly poor patients. We have expanded our public-private partnerships with community clinics, and joined state and federal initiatives to boost access for child health services.

In the public health arena, we have revamped and strengthened our restaurant inspection program, and stepped up slum-housing health and safety code enforcement. We are reviewing our AIDS program with an eye toward improving access to new and effective drugs, and a comprehensive UCLA study has given us a dynamic new blueprint to restructure and reform our Public Health programs.

In the area of social services, we have engaged welfare reform full-on, successfully softening the potential impact on legal immigrants, winning approval at the state level for many of our proposals, and mounting a promising "welfare-to-work" program aimed at speeding our clients' transition from welfare roll to payroll. We established a new Public Authority for in-home supportive services to assist our elderly or disabled clients in living independently. We have reformed our program for placing minors under dependency or probation supervision in

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appropriate group home settings.

In the area of disaster preparedness, we have successfully readied our flood-control system for winter "El Nino" storms in a manner that both respects the environment and saves County taxpayers the cost of excessive mitigation measures later on. We have also formed a public-private partnership to install emergency-relief medical supply modules throughout the County to assist in times of natural disasters.

Finally, in a variety of areas, Los Angeles County continues to set a national pace for innovative leadership and open government.

- Our Board offices and most of our County departments are fully on-line with information and assistance through the World Wide Web - see the County home page at <<http://www.co.la.ca.us>> - including detailed information on County lobbyists and their clients.

- We are the first local government in the country to win court approval to proceed with our lawsuit seeking to recover hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars spent on treating smoking-related illnesses.

- The Frank Gehry-designed Walt Disney Concert Hall project, the jewel in the crown of our Music Center complex, has attained 80% of its fundraising goal, virtually assuring timely completion of the world's finest symphony hall.

This was a great year for our County. I truly feel we turned a corner on the road to stabilizing our finances and delivering services. It couldn't have been done without you.

Thank you for a spectacular year of achievement, and I look forward to continued success in working with my colleagues under the chairmanship of Supervisor Burke over the next year.

## Dianne L. Nelson

### Always In The Spirit Of Giving

Having worked for the County for 25 years, it was no surprise that many of her friends and co-workers gathered at the Board of Supervisors' meeting room to witness a milestone. After all, Dianne L. Nelson was selected as the November 1997 County Employee of the Month.

The honoree, who is presently a Supervising Administrative Assistant III with the Disbursements Division of the Auditor-Controller, received a scroll of commendation and a pin from the Chairman of the Board. In exchange, she presented the Board with a homemade cake.

"This is what I call a County Employee of the Month," said Supervisor Yaroslavsky as he accepted the cake on behalf of the Board.

Nelson's work revolves around what all working men and women expect - a paycheck. She provides supervision to the Auditor-Controller's payroll operations which issues semi-monthly payments to the County's 80,000 employees. She is also responsible for planning, organizing and supervising three units; consulting with the systems groups that support the payroll operation; and coordinating work with other departments, outside agencies and unions.

Knowing the complexity of the payroll process and the skills needed to perform such a task, Nelson developed training materials and conducted four payroll training classes for 29 County departments' personnel and payroll staff. She continues to assist County departments to correctly pay and answer questions from their employees by helping them resolve

payroll problems relating to over- and underpayment, credit union deductions, social security contributions, federal and state tax withholdings and garnishments.

To further improve the process, Nelson developed the annual payment processing specifications for the automated Early Separation Program System that saved the manual processing of about 30,000 payments over the life of the program. She also helped develop a system for

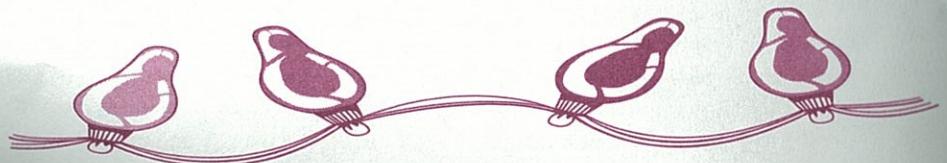
improving customer service by shortening set-up time from at least several days to just several minutes allowing quicker recovery of garnishments.

Nelson's achievements are not limited to that of the County. She is an active member of her community working as a volunteer with the Los Angeles Community Outreach Program and the First African Methodist Episcopal Church's Benevolence Program, both providing assistance to high school students and less fortunate families respectively. She also considers an achievement the fact that her two children are attending college. When away from work and community service, Nelson enjoys dancing and reading.

Dianne L. Nelson lives in Carson with her son. She received an Associate of Arts degree in Business Administration from the Los Angeles Trade Technical College.

Asked what advice she has to offer new County employees, she said "to apply themselves and to put their best effort forward."

Congratulations!



# Department of Public Works

*Public Service...that Works!*

Have you ever driven down a major street in Los Angeles County and noticed that if you maintain the posted speed, you are likely to hit all green lights? Have you and your family enjoyed the over 90 miles of bike trails in the County along the beaches and rivers? If you live near the San Gabriel River, you must have noticed workers in orange shirts and hard hats busy removing overgrown vegetation. By the way, the work has recently been completed in preparation for expected rains.

If you said no to all of the preceding, then here's a suggestion -- the next time you drive in an unincorporated area of the County, take notice of the striping on the streets, painted curbs, light standards, traffic signals and posted signs to guide or caution traffic. These and other provisions are courtesy of the professional efforts by the dedicated employees from the Department of Public Works.

The department was created in 1985 when the Board of Supervisors merged the County's Road Department, Flood Control District and a portion of the County Engineer. More recently, the Internal Services Department's capital projects function was added.

Today, the department is responsible for the planning, design, construction, operation, maintenance and repair of:

- 4,800 miles of city and County streets and highways
- 170,000 traffic signs and 1,325 signalized intersections, 500 bridges and inspection of another 1,100
- a full range of road services including pothole patching and tree trimming
- 4,600 miles of sewer lines
- 1,100 miles of water mains
- overseeing five County-owned general aviation airports

In addition, the department plays a key role in enhancing our communities in the following areas:

## **Environment**

The annual Christmas Tree Recycling Program turns trees into compost while the Household Hazardous Waste Roundups help residents discard old paint, used oil, herbicides and other items that cannot be eliminated through regular trash collections. Environmental educational programs for elementary schools focus on the three Rs -- reduce, reuse and recycle.

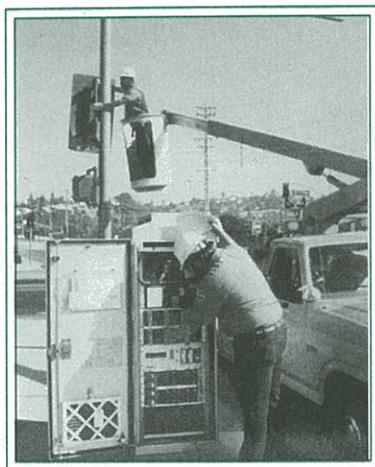
The department complies with Assembly Bill 939 which mandates local governments to reduce landfill solid waste disposal by 50 percent by the year 2000 and serves as the Principal Permittee and partner with 85 County cities in meeting the requirements of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program. NPDES is aimed at eliminating pollution in storm water within the County.

## **Transit**

From bicycles to paratransit, the department has an important role in specialized transportation programs. It administers dial-a-ride paratransit programs providing transportation services for the elderly and the disabled. Recreational transportation, i.e., beach buses and other special event transportation such as the Hollywood Bowl Shuttle Service is provided for eligible groups. Jointly with other agencies, the department also maintains 90 miles of public bicycle trails located primarily along beaches and rivers which have proven to be a popular recreational resource for County residents.

## **Building Regulation**

The department issues over 21,000 construction permits yearly for unincorporated areas and contract cities.



**Traffic signal controls get a ground level service check while a signal is positioned to be mounted.**

1998

## Noontime Parenting Seminars

11:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.  
HHOA Conference Room 739

January 15  
"Surviving Your Child's Teen Years"

February 19  
"Teen Safety"

March 19  
"Teen Relationships"

April 16  
**WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD**

May 21  
"College Expenses"

June 18  
"Swimming Programs"

The Noontime Parenting Seminars are sponsored by the Countywide Child Care Program of the Department of Human Resources. For more information on these and other child care inquiries, call Kathy Malaske-Samu at (213) 974-2440 or Nina McNeil at (213) 974-2398.



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Eleven districts and 12 branch offices provide enforcement for residential and commercial buildings, plumbing, mechanical and electrical codes and land development oversight which includes geology, soils engineering and mapping standards. They also oversee infrastructure installation by developers of sewers, storm drains, street lighting and water mains.

**Contract Services**

The department makes available to local cities on a cost basis essentially any service it provides for unincorporated areas. The services range from a specific request for a one-time project to ongoing routine work, regulatory administration and capital improvement recommendations. The department also serves as City Engineer for nine contract cities and as Building Official for 19 contract cities.

**Flood Control**

Thanks to *El Nino*, almost everyone is aware of the department's flood control operation. Crews have been busy clearing vegetation from 95 soft-bottomed locations within the County's 450-mile open channel system. The result will improve the channel's capacity and ability to move storm water runoff swiftly and safely.

Ninety percent of the storm water from the San Gabriel River and the Rio Hondo Channel System is captured and returned to the underground water supply through spreading grounds. This averages 330,000 acre-feet of water annually, water for future household use. An acre foot of water is equal to a football field covered with one foot of water, enough to supply a family of two for one year!

Flood control preparations began months ago with the checking or cleaning of 75,000 catch and 114 debris basins; 2,400 miles of storm drains; 450 miles of open channels; and 15 dams. This year, the County's oldest dam, Devil's Gate in Pasadena's Arroyo Seco, was in full operation after undergoing earthquake improvements.

Whether clearing flood control channels of vegetation, road repairs or water conservation, there is little that the Department of Public Works conducts that does not affect the lives of the County's nearly 10 million residents.

# December Retirees

Congratulations to the following employees who are joining the ranks of the retired after 30 or more years of service to the people of Los Angeles County:

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES:** Mary R. La Motte, Elaine R. Parran

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY:** Marva J. Alford, Vivian L. Curtis

**FIRE:** Bruce D. Collins, Donald A. Pierpont, Frederick P. Rhoads, Larry I. Rockwell, Edward R. McFall, John C. Olver

**HEALTH SERVICES:** Joe Dolittle, Daniel Garner, Lillie Glosson, Margaret Hernandez, Sharyn Y. Kobashigawa, Howard I. Rambach, Jacquelyne L. Reese, Barbara J. Scott

**INTERNAL SERVICES:** Walter L. Adger

**MUNICIPAL COURTS:** Fusaye Yamada  
**PROBATION:** Barry Archie, Ulysses C. Baham, Jr., Dennis T. Dyer, Brenda C. Kelner, Trula J. Worthy-Clayton

**PUBLIC LIBRARY:** Consuelo Lopez

**PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES:** Ramona Balsach, Walter P. Hollowell, Jr.

**SHERIFF:** Edward B. Kirste, Thomas D. Lynch, Jon C. Olesen, Melinda A. Hearne, Susan A. Leatherwood, J. W. Whitmarsh, Thomas A. Gahry

**SUPERIOR COURTS:** Phyllis Shilaos

Congratulations to the following employees who are retiring after serving the people of Los Angeles County for more than 25 years:

**ASSESSOR:** Harold D. Eshelman

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:** Jose O. Montemayor

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES:** Earnestine Butler, Joseph M. Kalajkovic, Lola A. Snyder

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY:** Robert M. Sponheim

**FIRE:** Walter A. Kimbrough, Jr., Paul H. Lampe

**HEALTH SERVICES:** Juana Bocalbos, Mae F. Crowder, Sueko Nagamine, Claudine Sanders, Mary M. Seif, Barbara J. Selico, Elisa B. Sobrepena, Mary C. Walch, Jeanette W. Washington, Ethel L. Stell, John E. Foley, Jr.

**INTERNAL SERVICES:** Robert Reedom

**MENTAL HEALTH:** Rita O. Neill

**PARKS AND RECREATION:** Andrew Locklin

**PROBATION:** June A. Galipeau, Kathryn P. Wallace, Robert B. Bellusci

**PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES:** Felicisimo Monsod, Phyllis M. Smith, Rosario Villanueva

**PUBLIC WORKS:** Kay F. Bauer

**SHERIFF:** Barbara Y. Johnson, Ronald E. Merys, William C. Miller, Joseph G. Raffa, Lillie A. Norman, James E. Vogts III

The LA County Arts Commission marks the holiday season with its gift to the community-at-large: six hours of music and dance by LA County-based artists. The presentation, produced by the County in cooperation with KCET, runs from 3:00 to 9:00 p.m., Wednesday, December 24 in the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion of the Music Center in downtown Los Angeles. **Admission and parking are free.** No reservations are necessary. Doors open at 2:30 p.m.

For detailed information, call the Holiday Celebration Hotline at (213) 974-1396 or visit the Commission's Web site at [www.lacountyarts.org](http://www.lacountyarts.org).

## Members of the Board

Yvonne Brathwaite Burke  
Chair  
Second District

Gloria Molina  
First District

Zev Yaroslavsky  
Third District

Don Knabe  
Fourth District

Michael D. Antonovich  
Fifth District

Michael J. Henry  
Director of Personnel

Sandra A. Hoodye  
Ombudsman/Community Liaison

John S. Mina  
Staff