



Remarks by Outgoing Board Chair Yvonne B. Burke

As I reflect on the last sixteen years that I have served as the Supervisor of the Second District, I remember significant accomplishments and many firsts, as well as a number of challenges and triumphs. However, through it all, I have seen this journey as an exceptional opportunity to represent the residents of the Second District, in addition to working with my fellow Board members to best serve our constituency and preservation of our County’s abundance of resources and services; and financial sustainability.

Over the last two years, the County has experienced many significant changes and major accomplishments. One of great significance was the restructuring of the County’s Chief Administration Office (CAO) and the selection of a new Chief Executive Officer. A Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is a definite step in the right direction for the County of Los Angeles to shine.

Some personal highlights of my career include the following:

- The purchase of land in the Baldwin Hills area for parks and recreation development.
- Stringent national standards for oil drilling and related operations in densely-populated urban areas.
- Addressing important issues facing the County’s infrastructure.
- The announcement of the long-awaited remodeling of Hubert Humphrey Medical Clinic.

- Working closely with the Registrar-Recorders’ office and the importance of volunteerism for all three major elections.
- The development of annual programs for foster youth, including the Second District’s “Fishing in the City”; the Multicultural Quinceanera; and the Cinderella Ball.
- The opening of district swimming pools; in addition to the remodeling and new construction of many district aquatic facilities.
- Preserving the operation and maintenance of our County parks.
- The preservation and new construction of County libraries.
- Furthering County efforts to protect the environment.
- The success of former staff that have gone on to become elected public officials and distinguished members of private/public sectors.

In addition, I’d like to extend a warm welcome and sincere congratulations to Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas. I look forward to working closely with him and his staff as he continues the vision of serving the constituents of the Second District. With a number of my former staff remaining in the Second District office for a transitional period of time, I believe Supervisor Ridley-Thomas will experience a smooth transition.



I want to personally thank my Board colleagues for the many years of support they have given me; the many department heads that have provided excellent leadership; the hundreds of thousands of County employees who I relied on over the years to help me carry out my goals; and of course my staff, who all worked so tirelessly to better the quality of life for Los Angeles County citizens.

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EVENT CALENDAR

Los Angeles County Arboretum & Botanic Garden

301 N. Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia 91007

For a list of seminars, workshops and classes, please visit www.arboretum.org or call (626) 821-4623

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles 90036

(323) 857-6000

www.lacma.org

Arts

Through Jan 4 - Francis Alÿs: Fabiola

Through Jan 18 - Contemporary Projects 11: Hard Targets-
Masculinity and Sport

Through Feb 1 - Hearst the Collector

Music

Sundays Live – Every Sunday at 6 p.m.

For more information on LACMA's Music Programs, please call (323) 857-6115

Music Center

135 N. Grand Avenue, Los Angeles 90012

(213) 972-7211

www.musiccenter.org

Walt Disney Concert Hall

www.musiccenter.org

Jan 2 - Salute to Vienna

Jan 17 - World City: Chen Kuai Puppet Theater

Los Angeles Philharmonic

www.laphil.com

(323) 850-2000

December

18-20 - Michael Tilson Thomas: The Thomashefskys

20-21 - 'Twas the Week Before Christmas

21 - Holiday Sing-Along

22 - The Count Basie Orchestra - A Swingin' Christmas

23 - Soweto Gospel Choir

31 - New Year's Eve with Pink Martini

Center Theatre Group

www.centertheatregroup.org

Ahmanson Theatre

Jan 21-March 1 - Minsky's

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

Dec 17-20 - Kirov Ballet & Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre

Dec 24 - 49th Annual L.A. County Holiday Celebration

Jan 12 - American Youth Symphony Annual Benefit Gala

Mark Taper Forum

Jan 15 - Mar 15 - Pippin

Kirk Douglas Theatre

Jan 21-Feb 22 - Taking Over

Los Angeles Opera

(performances in the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion)

www.losangelesopera.com

Jan 10-25 – Mozart's The Magic Flute

Feb 21-March 15 – Wagner's Das Rheingold

Los Angeles Master Chorale

www.lamc.org

Jan 15 - Mendelssohn: Elijah

Feb 22 - Chorus and Organ

Natural History Museum

900 Exposition Boulevard, Los Angeles 90007

For a list of events, please visit www.nhm.org or call (213) 763-DINO



Articles and other submissions to the *County DIGEST* may be edited or otherwise altered for clarity.

County DIGEST Editorial Offices
Department of Human Resources
3333 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1000 (10th floor)
Los Angeles, CA 90010

(213) 738-2352

(213) 639-0940 FAX

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opportunities with the
County of Los Angeles

Supervisor Antonovich Commemorates Santa Clarita Valley Computer Project

Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich joined members from the County’s Department of Community and Senior Services, the College of the Canyons, the Santa Clarita-Newhall Optimist Club, and members of the community to commemorate the County’s Second Annual Santa Clarita Valley Computer Gateway Project which provided 100 computers to low income families.

Two years ago, the College of the Canyons approached the Santa Clarita Valley Community Service Center to

recycle the college’s older computers to low income residents.



The result was the Santa Clarita Computer Gateway Project.

The United States Department of Commerce reports that over 60% of today’s employment opportunities require computer skills. Unfortunately, many families and young people are unable to access computers – or have the necessary computer skills to compete in the changing job market.

“These computers will provide opportunities for our kids to become better students, citizens, and skilled-workers — ready to compete in the 21st century,” said Supervisor Antonovich.



Fireworks Spectacular Greet the New Year in Marina del Rey

A brilliant display of fireworks will light up the skies over Marina del Rey on Wednesday, December 31, to greet the Year 2009. Beginning at the 30-second countdown to midnight, the fireworks will continue into the opening minutes of the New Year.

Zambelli Fireworks Internationale, which started business in Italy more than 100 years ago, will create the Marina del Rey Fireworks Spectacular. The famous fireworks can be viewed throughout the Marina; however, the best locations for viewing are Fisherman’s Village located at 13755 Fiji Way and Burton Chace Park at 13650 Mindanao Way.

The Zambelli Fireworks Spectacular is presented by Supervisor Don Knabe and the Department of Beaches and Harbors. All County employees are invited to include the Marina del Rey Fireworks as part of their New Year’s Eve celebrations.



RETIREES

Congratulations to the following employees who are joining the ranks of the retired after 40 or more years of service to the people of the County of Los Angeles:

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES: Emmett D. Bennett
HEALTH SERVICES: Dan Brisker, Barbara Swanson
PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES: Joyce Calloway, Stephanie J. Davis

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

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER/WEIGHTS AND MEASURES: Wasfy W. Shindy
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER: Mary Leos, Alta D. Washington
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: Monica Anderson
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE: Constance S. Sullivan
CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES: Doreen N. Gomez
CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES: Carolyn B. Lee, Rachel Martinez
DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Juanita J. Arreguin, Veronica P. Cortez
FIRE: Paul Y. Evans, Elliot J. Moline, Andres Solorzano, Louie Tortora
HEALTH SERVICES: Anna M. Bellino, Ella H. Bipialaka-No, Oscar C. Hicks, Edward R. Jones, William C. McDowell,

Sylvia Rebrovich, Mario Villegas
INTERNAL SERVICES: Charlena Owens
PROBATION: Raymond Albridge, James Koffler, Henry Mendoza
PUBLIC HEALTH: Alonzo Moriel, Martha Rangel
PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES: Annie M. Dixon, Bryan W. Logan, Peter M. Lusterio, Fahmy T. Mikhael, Ngocle T. Nguyen, Nancy N. Pham
PUBLIC WORKS: Clarence D. Thomas
SHERIFF: Susan J. Coleman, Joe L. Garza, Ella. M. Hall, Robert A. Lopez, Ramon P. Romero, Michael W. Smith
SUPERIOR COURT: Helen J. Baugh

Congratulations to the following employees who are joining the ranks of the retired after 25 or more years of service to the people of the County of Los Angeles:

FIRE: James C. Core, John B. Doyle, Tom M. Headrick, Steven J. Linnell
HEALTH SERVICES: Nydia A. Clark, Harriet Emerson, Frances Garcia, Helen Jackson, Margaret Lambey
INTERNAL SERVICES: Gwendolyn D. Wiley
PROBATION: Ronald W. Oram
PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES: Joyce M. Cline, Guadalupe H. Munoz, Veronica L. Nelson
PUBLIC WORKS: Brenda J. Johns
SHERIFF: Jose M. Rodarte

Traffic Relief and Transit Project Measure R Passes

Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky hailed voter passage of County Measure R, an ambitious 30-year investment program aimed at relieving traffic congestion, repairing roads and highways, and extending the County’s subway and light-rail transit lines throughout the region. The current tally Countywide stands at 67.3% - 32.7%, but Third District voters approved the measure 72.9% – 27.1%, with support especially high in areas where traffic congestion is most acute. Here’s how Third District communities voted:

- Agoura: 63.6% - 34.6%
- Agoura Hills: 60.4% - 39.6%
- Beverly Hills: 74.7% - 25.2%
- Calabasas: 64.2% - 35.8%
- Hidden Hills: 60.6% - 39.4%
- Los Angeles: 72% - 28%
- Malibu: 69.2% - 30.8%
- Malibu Heights: 68.6% - 31.4%
- San Fernando: 70.9% - 29.1%
- Santa Monica: 77.3% - 22.7%
- Topanga: 73.7% - 26.3%
- West Hills (uninc.): 62% - 38%
- W. Hollywood: 83.6% - 16.4%
- Westlake Village: 59.9% - 40.1%

For full details on how Measure R will work, the projects it funds and the communities it serves, visit www.metro.net.



Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky speaks at a pre-election “Yes on R” rally, flanked from the left by L.A. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Assemblymember Mike Feuer, and Councilmembers Bill Rosendahl and Wendy Greuel.

Supervisor Molina Congratulates County Nurse Dolores Tarin on National Guard Promotion to Colonel

Supervisor Gloria Molina is pleased to announce that Dolores Tarin—a County nurse with the Department of Health Services’ Environmental Health Division—has been promoted to the rank of Colonel within the Army Nurse Corps of the National Guard, of which she has been an active member for the past 23 years. A member of the Montebello American Legion, Colonel Tarin has served as Chief of Nursing Services, 349th Combat Support Hospital 90201 (headquartered in Bell, California) since August 2006.

“We want to commend Colonel Tarin for her service to our nation and for representing the County’s First District so ably,” Supervisor Molina said. “Colonel Tarin’s years of dedication to the National Guard make her a great role model both for our youth and for our entire County family, and she rightly has earned our respect.”



*U.S. Army National Guard
Colonel Dolores Tarin*

Colonel Tarin entered the U.S. Army Reserve in 1985 at the rank of first lieutenant working as a medical-surgical nurse and a public health nurse. From January 1989 to July 1989, she served in Honduras as a medical program outreach officer in charge of humanitarian missions. There, she provided support for American soldiers on training missions, as well as medical care for Honduran nationals.

From December 1990 to July 1991, Colonel Tarin served in Operation Desert Storm in Iraq—and by the end of that year, she had graduated from the Army’s Perioperative Nurse Program. She ultimately advanced to head nurse in charge of the operating room section and then served from 2004 to 2006 as Chief of Professional Services.

Colonel Tarin first began employment with the County of Los Angeles in February 1976 where she currently works as a nurse and medical programs consultant within the Department of Health Services’ Environmental Health Division. There she reviews medical operations and risk management issues for all 160 detention facilities in the County.

Savings Bonds Make Great Holiday Gifts

County employees who are early holiday shoppers may want to consider purchasing U.S. Savings Bonds. These are great gifts for people of all ages, especially during the holiday season.



County employees may purchase bonds as a one-time gift, the traditional fixed-rate Series EE Bonds for as little as \$25 for a \$50 bond. There also is the option of purchasing the inflation-indexed Series I Bond starting at \$50. These are gifts that keep on giving and with interest. U.S. Savings Bonds are a safe investment and are protected by the U.S. government.

To purchase Bonds, contact Ruben Rivero, CEO/Workplace Programs, at (213) 974-2523 or via e-mail at rivero@ceo.lacounty.gov.



49TH ANNUAL

L.A. COUNTY

HOLIDAY
CELEBRATION

The nation's largest multi-cultural holiday show!
Featuring 1,500 music & dance performers.

**SEE IT FREE AT THE MUSIC CENTER.
WATCH IT LIVE ON KCET.**

Please bring canned or packaged goods to
support the L.A. Regional Food Bank.

3:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 24, 2008

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion

at the Music Center (free parking)

213.972.3099

Full performance schedule & great holiday recipes available at

www.holidaycelebration.org

Sponsored by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

Produced by

Los Angeles
County
Arts
Commission

Tips for Keeping Pets Safe This Holiday Season

The holiday season, a joy-filled time for many people, poses some risks for pets. Here are a few tips from the County of Los Angeles Department of Animal Care and Control to keep you and your pets safe during the holidays:

- Never feed or let pets eat chocolate or other candies. Chocolate is poisonous to dogs and cats and can cause vomiting, diarrhea, and even death. If you suspect your pet has eaten chocolate, get him or her to a veterinarian right away for treatment.
- Shiny ornaments on Christmas trees can be attractive to curious pets. Dogs and cats can suffer serious and even fatal injuries by chewing and swallowing pieces of tree ornaments. Make sure your pets cannot reach any ornaments in your home.
- Many people add special liquid preservatives to the water in Christmas tree stands. Some of these products are harmful to pets that might take a drink from the water. Be sure to ask if a Christmas tree preservative is “pet safe” before you buy it.
- Keep holiday seasonal plants and flowers away from your pets. Many plants, such as Poinsettias, Christmas Candles, English Holly, Christmas Berry, Christmas Rose and Mistletoe are poisonous to dogs and cats.
- Gift-wrappings can also pose risks to dogs and cats. Your pets may chew on wrapping paper or ribbon, and these can be harmful if swallowed. Also, do not let your pets play in or around trash bags used to discard holiday wrappings.
- Electrical wiring can prove tempting for cats to play with and dogs to chew on. Your pet can suffer a severe shock or become electrocuted by touching the electrical current in the line. Make sure your pets cannot reach or climb onto areas that put wiring in their reach.
- Turkey is a particular favorite during the holiday season, but the bones easily splinter and should not be given to pets. Bone splinters can puncture an animal’s gastrointestinal tract, causing serious internal injury, which could result in death.
- Keep your pets away from alcoholic drinks. The holiday season traditionally features a wide variety of specialty drinks such as eggnog. These are not good for family pets. Do not let anyone offer a “sample” of their favorite libation to your pet.
- Remember your pet during the holiday season. Be sure to pick out a new tag or other present for your pet. It makes them feel like part of the family, includes them in the festivities and gives them something to do while family members are opening presents. Pet stores feature a wide variety of specially designed toys for your dogs and cat.

The County of Los Angeles Department of Animal Care and Control wishes you and your pets a safe and happy holiday season!



Supervisor Antonovich Hosts the 12th Annual Holiday Party for County Foster Children

Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich hosted the 12th Annual Holiday Party for the County's foster children at Six Flags Magic Mountain in Valencia. Christmas music provided background as caregivers, foster parents and children were greeted with food, presents, holiday cheer, and a free day inside the amusement park.



“The holiday season can be difficult for these children and this party really brightens their spirits,” said Supervisor Antonovich. “We need families to adopt and provide loving homes for these wonderful children.”



There are currently 17,000 children in County foster care, with approximately 600 waiting to be adopted. These children are waiting for families to give them the love and support they need with the opportunity to grow up in stable and loving homes.

**To adopt a foster child,
please call (888) 811-1121.**

Supervisor Knabe Attends the 12th Annual “Art of Rancho” Art Show

Supervisor Don Knabe, The Rancho Los Amigos Foundation, and The Amigos Fund recently hosted the art show's 12th anniversary at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center.



Dozens of Rancho artists participated this year along with family, friends and art lovers from throughout the County of Los Angeles. At Rancho, the County's professional and support staff are world-renowned for offering hope to people whose lives have been shattered by a disabling illness or injury.



“The Art of Rancho is a constant reminder that regardless of our challenges, we can truly realize the power of our dreams,” said Supervisor Knabe.

A Special Message from Supervisor Yaroslavsky Regarding the November Wildfires

As we were finalizing the November newsletter, Southern California was struck by some of the most devastating wildfires in the region’s history. In my Third District, the Sayre Fire erupted on the edge of the Angeles National Forest in the foothill community of Sylmar on Friday, November 14, at 10:29 p.m.

Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) to help cover the County’s operational firefighting costs.

The Office of Emergency Management is coordinating with the City of Los Angeles and other participating agencies on the operation of a Local Assistance Center (LAC) for residents affected by

American Red Cross of Greater Los Angeles: (888) 737-4306
LA County Department of Mental Health Hotline: (800) 854-7771

In addition, the Los Angeles County Assessor has established a property tax relief Web page to assist homeowners in obtaining property tax reductions for



Supervisor Yaroslavsky surveys damage at Oakridge.



Remains of Oakridge Mobile Home Park, 11/15/08.

The fire ultimately consumed more than 10,000 acres. More than 600 structures were destroyed, including 480 of 608 modular homes in the Oakridge Mobile Home Park, nine additional homes, 104 outbuildings (more than 40 of them at the County’s Olive View/UCLA Medical Center) and 10 commercial buildings. Fifteen more homes were damaged. Four firefighters and one civilian were injured; there are no known deaths at this time.

Joint Federal Emergency Management Agency/Office of Emergency Services inspection teams are conducting a survey of damage to public and private properties. We have received a federal disaster declaration, which renders the County eligible for financial assistance (75%) as authorized by the Fire

the Sayre Fire, which opened on Thursday, November 20, at the following location:

Sylmar Recreation Center
13109 Borden Avenue
Sylmar, CA 91342

Operating hours: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

For information on the operation of the LAC, please contact: Yvette Countee, Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management, at (323) 980-2253 – or via email at ycountee@ceooem.lacounty.gov.

Area residents needing additional information and special assistance in the wake of the Sayre Fire may call: 2-1-1 LA County: 2-1-1 or (800) 339-6993.

damaged or destroyed properties. Property owners in the fire damaged areas are also encouraged to contact the Assessor with any questions or concerns. Manufactured and mobile home owners can call (213) 974-3119, select option 2; all others should call the Assessor’s North District Office in Sylmar at (818) 833-6173.

Personally, I will not soon forget the devastation I witnessed as I toured the area a day after the fire broke out. The number of homes lost and families displaced exceeds even that suffered in the notorious Bel-Air Fire, still arguably the worst fire in the city’s history, which occurred almost exactly 47 years ago on November 6, 1961. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all those who suffered losses in the Sayre Fire, and as always, my office stands ready to assist you.

ENRICHING LIVES...

County Bids Goodbye to Retiring Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke





County of Los Angeles

Strategic Plan



County Vision

"Enriching Lives"

Our **purpose** is to improve the quality of life in Los Angeles County by providing responsive, efficient and high quality public services that promote the self-sufficiency, well-being and prosperity of individuals, families, businesses and communities.

Our **philosophy** of teamwork and collaboration is anchored in our **shared values**:

- **A can-do attitude** - we approach each challenge believing that, together, a solution can be achieved.
- **Accountability** - we accept responsibility for the decisions we make and the actions we take.
- **Compassion** - we treat those we serve and each other in a kind and caring manner.
- **Commitment** - we always go the extra mile to achieve our mission.
- **Integrity** - we act consistent with our values.
- **Professionalism** - we perform to a high standard of excellence.
- **Respect for diversity** - we value the uniqueness of every individual and their perspective.
- **Responsiveness** - we take the action needed in a timely manner.

Our **position** as the premier organization for those working in the public interest is established by:

- A capability to undertake programs that have public value;
- An aspiration to be recognized through our achievements as the model for civic innovation; and a pledge to always work to earn the public trust.

County Mission

To enrich lives through effective and caring service

Strategic Plan Goals

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Service Excellence | 5. Children and Families' Well-Being |
| 2. Workforce Excellence | 6. Community Services |
| 3. Organizational Effectiveness | 7. Health and Mental Health |
| 4. Fiscal Responsibility | 8. Public Safety |

Gloria Molina Supervisor First District	Mark Ridley-Thomas Supervisor Second District	Zev Yaroslavsky Supervisor Third District	Don Knabe Supervisor Fourth District	Michael D. Antonovich Supervisor Fifth District
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Supervisor Molina Cracks Down on Graffiti Vandals

Supervisor Gloria Molina announced that the County of Los Angeles is getting tough on graffiti vandals who target unincorporated neighborhoods.

“Now, we can require convicted minors to do community service, participate in a youth counseling program, and consistently attend school,” Supervisor Molina said. “Plus, we can require their parents and legal guardians to pay restitution and complete the Parent Project Program.”

Other new rules mandate that:

- Adult graffiti offenders can be subject to a civil citation issued by the Sheriff’s Department and administered through the County Ombudsman for fines up to \$1,000. First Offense—\$250; Second Offense—\$550; Third Offense—\$750; Fourth Offense—\$1,000, along with a non-compliance fee. If there is any financial hardship, then community service could be considered in lieu of the fine.

- The County can declare itself a “graffiti victim” in unincorporated areas and recover costs for graffiti clean-up—including enforcement, removal, and damages.
- The cost of graffiti abatement has been reassessed to \$522 to reflect the true cost to taxpayers for removal, repair, or replacement of defaced property—and to \$665 for enforcement per incident in County areas.
- The County can collect unpaid costs through liens or special assessments against the property of the graffiti offender or the parent/guardian of an offending minor.

So far, at least 280 vandals have been arrested, and, of these, 176 were minors. Twenty-five parents have graduated from the Parent Project. This approach already has been so successful that the Los Angeles County Quality and Productivity Commission awarded our Vandalism Enforcement Team with a “Top Ten Award.” In addition, the team also received an LA COUNTY STARS! award for the month of October.



Members of the Pico Rivera Vandalism Enforcement Team—who successfully administered Supervisor Molina’s Graffiti Abatement Pilot Project—receive a Top 10 Award from the Los Angeles County Quality and Productivity Commission.

Photo Gallery Opens at Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration

A photo gallery featuring dramatic scenic shots of the County of Los Angeles is officially open at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration. The exhibit was formally unveiled recently at a brief ceremony conducted by Supervisor Don Knabe.

The photos by local photographer Stephen Coleman are in the hallway of the Third Floor of the County government headquarters, located at 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles. The gallery, the first of its kind at the Hall of Administration, is planned to

be a permanent exhibit of local works highlighting the County. Coleman has agreed to loan 22 photos to the County for a year. The photos include ocean, desert, mountain and city scenes.



The Hall of Administration Exhibition



Photography by Stephen Coleman

The gallery was created at the suggestion of Supervisor Knabe, who met Coleman as a television news cameraman and was impressed with his photographs. “Stephen’s work is stunning and captures the beauty and diversity of our great County. The composition, colors, and angles of the photos are just incredible,” said Supervisor Knabe.

Coleman said his love of photography began in high school when a teacher loaned him a camera. “I fell in love with the joy of experiencing the world and capturing the world’s beauty and essence through the art of photography.”

Supervisor Antonovich Greets 2009 Rose Parade Royal Court

Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich welcomed the 2009 Rose Parade Court to his office for breakfast before honoring them at the Board of Supervisors meeting.

The 120th Annual Rose Parade, themed “Hats Off To Entertainment,” will take place January 1, 2009 with Grand Marshal Cloris Leachman leading the way for majestic floral floats, high-stepping equestrian units, and spirited marching bands. The Tournament of Roses and the Pasadena Police Department expect approximately one million spectators.



Pictured from left to right are: Princess Lauren Nicole Valenzuela of Temple City; Princess Mary “Molly” Patricia Novell of Sierra Madre; Princess Quinn Olivia Young of La Canada; Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich; Queen Courtney Lee of Arcadia; Princess Jasmine Janae Jenkins of Pasadena; Princess Bridget Kathleen McDonald of Pasadena; and Princess Mary Elizabeth Gaule of Altadena.

Christmas Tree Recycling Program from Public Works

Recycle your Christmas tree this year after the festivities end. This will help preserve our natural resources and reduce waste. Follow these quick and easy steps to have your Christmas tree recycled into compost, mulch, or ground cover. Remove all items from your tree (e.g., water containers, tree stands, ornaments, tinsel, and nails).

1. Place your tree at curbside on your regular collection day from December 26 through January 19.
2. Watch as your tree is collected for recycling by your neighborhood waste hauler.

Here are other ideas that can make a huge difference in the amount of trash that gets generated during the holiday season. Remember, many of these ideas work well the whole year through!

- Use old newspapers to wrap your presents. Or, place your presents in gift bags, which can be reused.
- Recycle household items you no longer need and use them to create personalized, homemade gifts for your loved ones.
- Save postage and trees by e-mailing holiday greetings to family and friends instead of sending them a card in the mail. Or, use holiday cards and gift tags printed on recycled paper.
- Reuse Styrofoam® packing “peanuts” or donate them to your local packaging or shipping company, which you can find by visiting www.Earth911.org.
- Set your table with linens and china instead of disposable plates and plastic cups, and utensils.
- Purchase rechargeable batteries rather than disposable ones.
- Replace larger, old-fashioned lights with energy-efficient mini lights. Save energy by putting your lights on a timer or turning them on only when someone is around to enjoy them.
- Save gift boxes, ribbon, and bows for the next holiday season.

Visit www.888CleanLA.com or call 1(888)CLEAN LA for more information on the Christmas tree recycling guidelines for your area of residence.



Holiday Shopping Tips from the Department of Consumer Affairs

These tips will help you avoid holiday shopping problems and New Year's budget blues

- Prepare a holiday budget and stick to it. Avoid overspending by paying with cash.
- If you pay with a credit card, use just one. If you pay by credit card, you get legal protections if you don't receive what you ordered or if products are defective. Read the terms of your credit card agreement.
- Ask about refund policies before you buy. Some stores offer a full refund, while others offer only a store credit or no refund at all.
- Save receipts. You'll need them for returns and exchanges.
- When buying sale items, check your receipt before you leave the cash register. Make sure you were not charged the regular price.
- When buying on the Internet, make sure the Web site is secure before entering your personal or financial information. Secure Web sites begin with "https://" rather than just "http://." They also display a locked padlock at the bottom of the screen.
- Read a contract and understand it before you sign. Check the interest rate and the total cost of the item including interest. Ask yourself if the interest rate is reasonable and whether you can afford the item.
- Don't be a victim of identity theft. Do not give personal information over the telephone or on the Internet unless you contacted that person or business. Do not write your address, phone number, Social Security, or driver's license numbers on credit card receipts. Before giving personal or financial information to a business, ask how they will use it and if it will remain confidential.
- A new law this year gives consumers the right to redeem any retailer gift card for cash if it has a cash value of less than \$10. Donated gift cards are exempt. The law forbids nearly all service fees on retailer gift cards. In California, most gift cards don't expire no matter what the fine print says. (These rules do not apply to bank gift cards, which are issued by American Express, Discover, MasterCard, and Visa and can be used at most stores.)
- Layaway is again becoming popular in stores. If you buy an item by layaway, get a full receipt with a description of the item, total price, amount of the down payment, amount and due dates of payments, length of the hold and the store's refund policy.
- Many phony charities use names that sound like the real charities. Don't let them fool you, research before you donate.





All About Us

Employees of the County of Los Angeles



LA COUNTY STARS! October - December 2008 Recipients



October 2008

Service Excellence:
Office of the Public Defender's
Ann Marie Braco



Workforce Excellence:
Sheriff's Department in
collaboration with the
Probation Department
Pico Rivera Vandalism
Enforcement Team

Team members are:
Anthony Romo
Ray Castaneda
Gil Dominguez
Mario Chairez
Tim Schulz
Julie Longoria

November 2008

Service Excellence: Department of Mental Health's TAY Navigation Team

Team members are: Terri Boykins, Kimberly Hairston, Diann Kaainoa, Sarah Governale, Tonya Jewell, Dina Moss, Ronnie Thomas, Adrienne Gee, Robbie Montgomery, Zarine Ovakimyan, Rachel Huang, Andrew Onaghise, Rhumel Grady, Gwendolyn Davis, Sylvia Wang



LA COUNTY STARS! is an exciting new Countywide employee recognition program which replaces the Employee of the Month Program in order to expand the opportunity to recognize and celebrate exceptional achievements of County employees and to promote and reward performance consistent with the organizational goal categories of the Countywide Strategic Plan, Shared Values and Collaboration.

For more information, please contact the Department of Human Resources at (213) 738-2352 or go to the Web site at <http://stars.lacounty.gov/>

December 2008

**Service Excellence:
Office of the Assessor's
Proactive Proposition 8 Joint Special Projects Team**

*Team members are: Rex Hartline, Dan Kinoshita, Lisa Gibbs,
Nicholas Murray, Guillermo Araujo, Paul Jones, Robin Apanay,
Ernesto Bobadilla, Mario Olivo, Anquonette Barlow,
Pelagio Dela Cruz, Johnny Del Rosario*



Share It



Thieves Use Fake County of Los Angeles Look Alike Checks to Scam Victims Out of Thousands of Dollars

As fake check scams proliferate and get more sophisticated in nature, more and more unsuspecting consumers are losing thousands of dollars to this financially harmful scam. A current scam targeting seniors across Southern California uses fake checks that appear to be from the County of Los Angeles to lure victims into wiring money to thieves in Canada.

One vigilant consumer asked the Department of the Auditor-Controller to verify the legitimacy of a County check he received. Auditor-Controller staff determined that the check was counterfeit. Further investigation discovered the existence of an elaborate fake check scam.

Here is how the scam works. The victim, usually a senior citizen, receives an official-looking “final notice” claiming to be from “Canada Customs and Revenue Agency.” The notice tells the victim that he won a lottery prize, and urges him to call immediately to claim his winnings. When the victim calls, the “official” tells him that he has to pay a customs fee. To reassure the victim, the thief offers to mail him a check, and asks him to deposit the check in his bank account and wire the funds back to claim his prize.

The victim then receives a check that looks like it was issued by the County of Los Angeles. Convinced this is the real thing, the victim deposits the check and wires the money via MoneyGram to British Columbia, Canada. Days later, the victim’s bank tells him that the check bounced and he needs to pay the money. The victim, of course, never gets the prize.

Los Angeles County officials say that fake check scams are on the rise. “Recent surveys show that fake check scams rank on the top five consumer scams,” said Pastor Herrera, Jr., Director of the Department of Consumer Affairs. “Consumers must protect themselves against these scams because once they wire money to thieves it is virtually impossible to get it back.”

Herrera offers these tips for consumers to spot and avoid fake check scams:

- Never wire money to strangers. There is no reason for someone to pay you by check and ask you to wire back some of the money.
- Fake checks look real. Even some bank tellers are fooled by some fake checks. However, just because the bank accepts the fake check and releases the funds, it doesn’t mean the check is good. It can take weeks for the bank to find out and tell you that the check is bad.
- You are responsible for fake checks you deposit. When a fake check bounces, the bank will deduct money from your account or even sue you to recover the funds. If you deposit a check you know is fake, you can be prosecuted.
- It is very hard to get your money back. Thieves often live in other countries, out of the reach of U.S. authorities. Your best protection is not to send them money no matter what they promise you.
- If it sounds too good to be true, it is. Don’t believe promises that you won a lottery or drawing you never entered.

Victims and people who need information on fake check scams can call the Department of Consumer Affairs at (800) 593-8222, 500 W. Temple St., Room B-6, Los Angeles, CA 90012, Web site: dca.lacounty.gov.



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