



Each year the California City Management Foundation (CCMF) names a City Manager of the Year, and a **Corporate Sponsor of the Year**. These awards recognize the best in city management and a CCMF sponsor that has significantly supported and helped the California city management community. CCMF President, Santa Clarita City Manager **Ken Striplin** announced Tripepi Smith as the 2021 Corporate Sponsor of the Year Award. **Ryder Smith** is the first to receive the Corporate Sponsor of the Year Award twice. He was recognized with the award in 2013 too. The 2021 City Manager of the Year is the collective California City Managers, who have served above and beyond the call of duty during difficult times.

City Executives in the Cities of Imperial County

There are seven (7) incorporated cities in the County of Imperial. They include: Brawley, Calexico, Calipatria, El Centro, Holtville, Imperial and Westmorland. This issue takes a look at some of the city executives currently serving in these cities.

The Honorable **Ana Beltran**, Mayor of the City of Westmorland is the 2021 President of the Imperial County Division of the League of California Cities. The immediate Past President is the Honorable **Edgard Garcia**, Council Member in El Centro.

This issue does not claim to be comprehensive. It highlights some of the city's professional leadership in Imperial County. We apologize up front to those we may have missed. Not all career profiles as posted for access.

City Executives in the Cities of Imperial County



Imperial Land Company laid out the town site for Brawley in 1902. It was originally named in honor of **J. H. Braly**, who owned the land. When Braly objected to the

use of his name, the town's name was changed to Brawley. The first Brawley post office was established in 1903. The City incorporated in April 1908. At that time, it was a "tent city" involved in railroading and the introduction of agriculture. The population has grown from the original 100 to the 2019 estimate of 26,227. **Tyler Salcido** is the City Manager and **Alma Benavides** is the elected City Clerk. **Lorena Savala** is the Records' Clerk in the City Clerk's office. Tyler became the Interim City Manager in August 2020. He previously served as the City's Finance Director.

Brawley City Manager **Tyler Salcido** joined the City of Brawley staff for the first time in February 2007 after serving as the Controller of a private company in El Centro for nearly 17-years. Tyler returned to the private sector after a short tenure with Brawley in 2007. After working in the private sector, Tyler returned to Brawley in March 2019 as Interim Finance Director. He became Finance Director in May and was appointed Interim City Manager and Finance Director in September 2020. Tyler became City Manager in November 2020. He earned a BS in accounting from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. He was a member of Class 25 of the California Agricultural Leadership Program (1996-1997).

"Please don't smear more blood of that spilled in the past; don't add new shame to the old shame."
--Anonymous



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Denise Ovrom, Former CM retired from **HdL Companies**
Jim Lewis, City Manager, City of Pismo Beach
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City Manager Newsletter by Trackdown Management

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City Executives in the Cities of Imperial County



Karla Sanchez Romero was appointed to the Brawley Director of Finance in 2021. She first became the Interim Finance Director in March 2021. She was appointed City Treasurer in April 2021. She previously served as the Finance Director and City

Treasurer in the City of La Quinta starting in 2016. Karla has more than 20-years in private and public finance experience. She served as the Communications Committee Chair for the Coachella Valley Chapter of CSMFO. Karla was named CSMFO's 2017 Volunteer of the Year. She was the Coachella Valley's CSMFO Chapter Chair from 2016 to 2019. Karla earned a BS and MBA. She mentored many young women with the Ophelia Project. The Ophelia Project Mission is "Empowering and encouraging young teens to increase their sense of self-worth and maximize their potential contribution to society."



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Rancho Mirage was incorporated in 1973. The city has a 2019 estimated population of 18,528. The City Manager is **Isaiah Hagerman**.



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Roxanne Diaz is a member of the Board of Trustees of the California City Management Foundation (CCMF).

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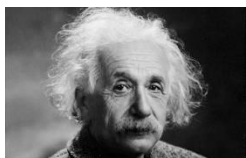
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Bombay Beach is a census-designated place in Imperial County. It is located on the shore of the Salton Sea, and is the community with the lowest elevation in the United States. It is part of the El Centro metropolitan statistical area.



Bombay Beach has become an artisan enclave.



"It would be possible to describe everything scientifically, but it would make no sense; it would be without meaning, as if you described a Beethoven symphony as a variation of wave pressure."

---**Albert Einstein**

City Executives in the Cities of Imperial County



Calexico is in southern Imperial County and is linked economically to the Mexican City of Mexicali, the capital of the Mexican State of Baja California. Calexico began as a small tent village founded in 1899, and eventually incorporated in 1908. The original proposed names of the city were *Santo Tomas* or *Thomasville*. The name "Calexico" is a portmanteau of California and Mexico. The first U.S. post office in Calexico opened in 1902. The 2019 estimated population is 39,825. **Miguel Figueroa** is the City Manager and **Gabriela T. Garcia** is the City Clerk.



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Former Artesia City Manager **Jim L. Barisic** founded **Brandywine** in 1994. Jim and two of his sons **Brett Whitehead**, and **David Barisic** direct **Brandywine Homes**.

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Miguel Figueroa, a native of El Centro, served as the Executive Director of the Calexico New River Committee, Inc. from September 2006 to August 2013. He then joined the staff with the County of Imperial Workforce Development Board as an Administrative Analyst in August 2013. He was promoted to Director in December 2014. Miguel went to work for the City of Calexico in September 2017 as Assistant City Manager, Economic Development Director and Public Information Officer. Following the departure of City Manager **David B. Dale**, Miguel was appointed City Manager starting in August 2020. He earned a BS from California State University, Long Beach and an MPA from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University.



Karla E. Lobatos is the City of Calexico Finance Director since May 2018. She began her accounting career in 2008 as an Accountant for a helpline crisis program. She then works as a Staff Accountant for a private sector firm, and she held a couple different positions with the El Centro Regional Medical Center starting in July 2015. Karla earned a BA in accounting from La Universidad Autónoma de Baja California.



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City Executives in the Cities of Imperial County

Calipatria was previously named "Date City." The Imperial Valley Farm Lands Association founded the town as Date City in 1914. The first Calipatria post office was opened in 1914. At an elevation of 180 feet below sea level, Calipatria is the lowest elevation incorporated city in the western hemisphere. The city claims to have the tallest flagpole at 184 feet. That means the flag flies at sea level; actually the U.S. flag flies above sea level. The 2019 estimated population of Calipatria is 7,114. **Romualdo "Rom" Medina** is the City Manager and **Catherine J. Hoff** is the City Clerk.



Romualdo "Rom" Medina is the owner of R. J. Medina Construction. He has served as the Calipatria City Manager for more than 15-years, according to the city web page. In 2020 Rom received a 20-year ICMA Service Award. Rom earned an AA from Imperial Valley College, a BA from San Diego State University, and an MPA from National University. He is active in the community including the Calipatria Lions Club, Calipatria Chamber of Commerce, the Calipatria Little League Basketball Program, and St. Patrick Parish Council. Dom served as a member of the Calipatria Unified School District Board of Trustees from December 1987 to December 1995. He also served on the Imperial Community College District Board of Trustees for 20-years from 1995 to 2015.



"Baseball is almost the only orderly thing in a very unordered world. If you get three strikes, even the best lawyer in the world can't get you off."

—**Bill Veeck**

City Executives in the Cities of Imperial County

El Centro is the county seat and the largest city in Imperial County. El Centro is the largest U.S. city to lie entirely below sea level (-42 feet). In 1906 **W. F. Holt** and **C. A. Barker** purchased the property on which El Centro was eventually built. The railroad established a station in the town and named the place Cabarker. The first post office in El Centro opened in 1905. El Centro incorporated in April 1908. The 2019 estimated population is 44,079. **Marcela Piedra** is the City Manager, **Norma Wyles** is the City Clerk, and **Teri Brownlee** is the Human Resources Director.

City Manager **Marcela Piedra** previously worked for the County of Imperial in the Economic Development Department and as a Small Business Advisor for the Imperial Valley Small Business Development Center. She went to work for the city in 2002 and served as the El Centro Deputy City Manager from 2016 to 2018 when she was appointed to her current post. Executive Recruiter search firm *Bob Murray & Associates* conducted the city manager recruitment. Marcela has lived in the Imperial Valley for more than 30-years. She is a Calexico High School graduate. Marcela earned an MBA from the University of Phoenix.



Adriana Nava is the City of El Centro Community Services Director. Adriana began her working career as an Associate Planner with a private sector company in December 2007. She left that position to join the El Centro city staff as an Associate Planner in January 2014. Adriana was selected to be the Community Services Director in 2018. She is a Calexico High School graduate. Adriana earned a BA in political economy from the University of California, Berkeley, and an MPA from California State University, San Diego.



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City Executives in the Cities of Imperial County



Holtville was previously known
as Holton. The community
was founded in by Swiss-
German settlers in the 1880s.
The City of Holtville, originally
called Holton, was founded in
1903 by **W. F. Holt**. The name
was changed to Holtville at a request by the U.
S. Postal Service because the name Holton
sounded too much like Colton, the regional
headquarters of the Southern Pacific Railroad at
the time. Holtville incorporated in July 1908. The
2019 population for Holtville is 6,621. Former
Finance Manager **Nicholas "Nick" D. Wells** is the
City Manager. **Kariza Preciado** is the Finance
Supervisor, and **Haley Dowsey** is the Personnel
Manager.

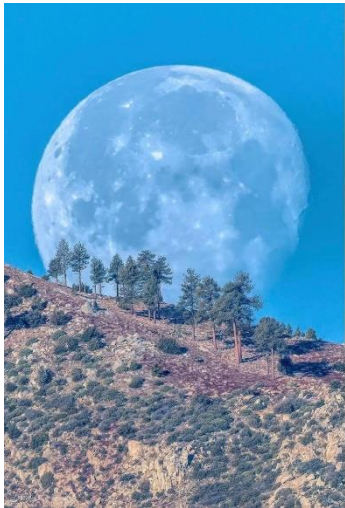
Nick Wells served as the Controller for a sales
company from 2004 to 2006, and then worked
as the Controller for a private sector design and
engineering company (2006-2011). Nick was
hired as the City of Holtville Finance Manager in
June 2011. He was elevated to the City
Manager position in 2014. Nick earned a BS in
agri-business and accounting from California
State University, Fresno.



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Coachella Valley Photo by **Lisa Kaplowitz**PUBLIC
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City Executives in the Cities of Imperial County

Imperial is a city in Imperial County. Imperial was in line to be the county seat until it was changed to El Centro. Imperial's first post office opened in 1901. The city was created by the Imperial Land Company and named by **George Chaffey**. The city incorporated in July 1904. The 2019 estimated population is 18,120. **Dennis Morita** is the City Manager, **Alexis L. Brown** is the Assistant City Manager, and **Debra Jackson** is the City Clerk. **Laura Gutierrez** is the Administrative Services Director.



Dennis Morita was appointed Imperial Interim City Manager following the departure of City Manager **Stefan Chatwin** for the City of Fairfield. He became City Manager July 1, 2020. Dennis previously served as City Attorney in Imperial for some 42-years. He graduated from Central Union High School and earned a BA from the University of California, Los Angeles (**UCLA**), and a law degree from the Loyola of Los Angeles Law School.

Imperial Assistant City Manager **Alexis L. Brown** previously served as the Director of Marketing & Events for the Imperial Chamber of Commerce (June 2012-July 2013). She joined the Imperial city staff in 2013, and she was appointed Assistant City Manager starting in January 2020. Alexis earned a BA in business administration and management from DeVry University.



Archive picture of the retiring **Lloyd de Llamas** of **HdL Companies** and "tired" **Jack Simpson**.

City Executives in the Cities of Imperial County



Westmorland was originally called "Westmoreland." The first post office opened in 1909 but closed in 1912. It reopened in 1919. It was renamed "Westmorland" in

1936, after the city incorporated in June 1934 as Westmorland. Between the 1920s and 1950s, the city was the location for illegal gaming establishments and a number of brothels. Westmorland is below sea level and sits near a number of active seismic faults. In 1987 the Superstition Hills seismic event caused serious damage in Westmorland and throughout the Imperial Valley. The 2019 estimated population of the city is 2,254. **Joel Hamby** is the Director of Development, **Terri Nava** is the elected City Treasurer and **Darlene Berber** serves as the elected City Clerk. **Justina Cruz**, a former Council Member, is listed on the city's web site as the Public Works Director.



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Debbie Smith, Executive Director

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Retired Wasco City Manager **Larry F. Pennell**, husband to retired professional County Clerk **Denise Pennell**, is out and about on his new hip. He is nearly independent again, walking on his own, and driving again. Congratulations Larry!



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City Executives in the Cities of Imperial County

There are a few unincorporated communities in Imperial County that need mention, including: Bard, Heber, Niland, Ocotillo, Palo Verde, Salton City, Seeley, Winterhaven, Desert Shore, Seeley and Bombay Beach. The Imperial Valley is divided between the United States and Mexico so the valley is heavily influenced by Mexican culture. Approximately 80% of the county's population is Hispanic.

We again apologize for those we did not list this time around. Please send your comments and suggestions. We appreciate your readership.***



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Fran Mancia may be reached at 559-288-7296. Fran is a member of the Board of Trustees of the California City Management Foundation (CCMF).



Tyler Simpson Pouncéy with his mother Samantha and brother Koa and sister Lei Lei sporting their University of Michigan shirts on 2021 National College Decision Day. Tyler was accepted for enrollment at: NYU; University of Colorado, Boulder; Indiana University, Bloomington; SDSU; North Texas University; and California State Universities, as well as, the University of Michigan, where he is committed.



<http://brandywine-homes.com/>

Brandywine Homes is a residential homebuilder based in Irvine that specializes in challenging infill development. Founded in 1994, the family-owned and operated company has built or developed almost 600 homes in 21 small- and mid-sized infill communities, revitalizing and improving some of Southern California's oldest and most established neighborhoods. Brandywine builds homes that respect and complement the heritage, values and architectural integrity of existing neighborhoods and the people who live there.



James Barisic, the company founder is a former Artesia City Manager, beginning his local government career as an Administrative Intern in Paramount. He also served as Assistant City Manager in Cerritos. Jim is a Vietnam veteran.

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Brett Whitehead is President of the Irvine-based **Brandywine Homes**. The 27-year-old family-owned company has developed in small and mid-sized communities in places like Garden Grove and Stanton.



Alex Hernandez, President,
Homebuilding Division

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Company President **Brett Whitehead** has said: "We stayed true to our strengths – building infill homes that truly reflect local demand – and as a result, we are healthy, well-funded and positioned for solid growth."



A couple of retirees: **Bruce Leach** retired from the City of Santa Monica, and **Gonzalo Vazquez** retired from the City of Cypress. They are pictured here with Bruce's wife **Fran Leach**. They were colleagues in the City of Bellflower in the 1980s.



Picking Up the Pieces: Shohreh Dupuis has been selected to be the next City Manager in the City of Laguna Beach. She is currently the Assistant City Manager, and will succeed City Manager **John Pietig** who retires in June. Shohreh came to Laguna Beach in April 2016 after

serving as a Deputy Public Works Director in the City of Irvine (2008-2016) and Transit Manager in Anaheim (2006-2008). She began her public service career as a Transportation Authority Manager for the County of Orange (1990-2005). She earned a BS in applied



mathematics from the University of California, Irvine. Lincoln City Manager **Jennifer Hanson** is the new General Manager for the Nevada Irrigation District (NID). She was selected from a large field of qualified candidates. She



has been the Lincoln City Manager since April 2019. She joined the Lincoln city staff in May 2014 as the Maintenance Services Manager, and in April 2015 she was promoted to Public Services Director. Jennifer previously worked for a civil engineering firm on storm water and transportation projects. She began her public service career working for the California Department of Transportation in 1999. Jennifer earned a BS in geology from the University of the Pacific. After more than 11-years in Yreka, City Manager **Steven W. Baker** (63) will retire at the end of June. Steve was appointed Yreka City Manager in February 2010. Prior to that he served as the City Manager in Suisun City between June 1988 and December 2004. Steve earned a BA in political science from the University of California, Davis. Upland City Manager **Rosemary Hoerning**, after

being placed on administrative leave for less than a month, resigned her position. She was promoted to City Manager from the Director of Public Works position in February 2020. She went to work as the Director of Public Works in August 2011. She previously works for the City of Redlands. Since 2011 eight City Manager and Interim City Managers have served in Upland, including: **Robb Quincey**, **Stephen Dunn**, **Martin Lomeli**, **Rod Butler**, **Martin Thouvenell**, **Bill Manis**, **Jeannette Vagnozzi** and Rosemary. Former Assistant City Manager **Stephen Parker** has been appointed Acting City Manager. South Pasadena, after rescinding its initial job offer to a prospective City Manager, hosted a public forum April 28 to introduce new City Manager appointment **Armine Chaparyan**. Armine previously served as the Assistant City Manager in the City of San Gabriel. She joined the San Gabriel city staff as its Community Development Director in 2014. Before that she served as the Redevelopment Manager in Santa Clarita and as a Senior Project Manager in the City of Ontario. Armine grew up in the area and graduated from John Muir High School in Pasadena. She earned an MPA from the University of Southern California (**USC**). Fullerton City Manager **Ken Domer** has lost the support of a majority of the City Council (3-2). Mayor **Bruce Whitaker** and two new Council Members **Nick Dunlap** and **Fred Jung** voted to appointed former Orange County Human Resources Officer **Steve Danley** as Acting City Manager. Ken began his public service career working for the State of California in the California Environmental Protection Agency and the Office of Governor **Pete Wilson** (1991-1995). He then worked in various positions for the County of Orange (1996-2005). Ken served as the City Manager in Villa Park from May 2005 to December 2008. He then worked as the Assistant City Administrator in the City of Placentia (2008-2013), when he was hired as the Assistant City Manager in Huntington Beach (2013-2017). Ken was appointed Fullerton City Manager in July 2017. He earned a BA and MPA from the University of Southern California (**USC**). Ken received a 20-year ICMA Service Award in 2020.



Millikan High School in Long Beach, California



More Pieces Picked Up: Malibu City Manager **Reva Feldman** has stepped down. Reva joined the Malibu city staff in 2005 as Assistant City Manager and Administrative

Services Director. She was appointed to replace veteran City Manager **Jim Thorsen** in May 2016 following his retirement. Her employment agreement was set to expire in May 2022. She is a past President of the City Managers Department of the League of California Cities (2019-2020), and she was awarded the 2019 City Manager of the Year Award by the California City Management Foundation (CCMF). With City Manager **Bryan Montgomery** leaving to become the Indio City Manager, **Josh McMurray** has been appointed Interim City Manager in the City of Oakley. Josh has been serving as the Oakley Community Development Director. Bryan has served as Oakley City Manager since 2005. He previously was the City Manager in Mesquite, Nevada. Josh has been with Oakley since 2008, originally as Planning Manager. Desert Hot Springs City Manager **Charles Maynard** announced his resignation in November, 2020. Deputy City Manager **Luke Rainey** has been confirmed as the new Desert Hot Springs City Manager. Luke first joined the Desert Hot Springs city staff as the Information Technology Manager in 2007. Luke became the Deputy City Manager in May 2017. He had previously worked for the Morongo Casino Resort & Spa as an Information Technology Analyst. Luke earned a BA from San Francisco State University and an MPA from California State University, San Bernardino. Los Altos Hills City Manager **Carl Cahill** (57) announced his retirement. He came to the Town of Los Altos Hills in October, 1999 as the Planning Director. Carl was appointed City Manager in February 2006. Before joining the Los Altos Hills city staff, Carl served as the City Planner in Pittsburg, California. He earned a BA from Montclair State University and an MPA from California State University, East Bay. Los Altos Hills City Council Member **Linda Swan** and her husband **John Swan** have conducted a campaign to have Carl fired. In 2019 Carl received a 20-year ICMA Service Award.



Willdan Founder, the late **Dan Heil** and his wife Linda. Picture was taken in the 1980s.



Restored original 1969 Dodge Charger. Photo was taken at Ray-A-Motives in Bellflower owned and operated by Council Member **Ray Dunton**.

With the planned retirement of City Manager **Martin Bernal**, the City of Santa Cruz has launch a nationwide search for their next City Manager. Community input is sought for a successful search. Executive recruiters of Teri Black & Company have been retained to help the city conduct the search for their next City Manager. It is anticipated that the new City Manager will be appointed in August, 2021. Interim City Manager **Fran Robustelli** has been appointed City Manager in the City of San Leandro. She has served as Interim City Manager since December, taking over then for former City Manager **Jeff Kay**, who left to become the City Manager in Healdsburg. Other finalists include **Sean Charpentier**, who worked in Palo Alto, and **Terrence Moore**, who worked in College Park, Georgia. It is anitcipated that Fran will be confirmed as City Manager next month. Former Los Altos City Manager **Christopher Jordan** was offered the City Manager position in the City of South Pasadena, but the city rescinded the job offer "in light of expressed community opposition and concern." Chris previoulsy left the City Manager positions in Los Altos and in West Linn, Oregon with contract severenge settlement agreements. Former South Pasadena City Manager **Stephanie DeWolfe** retired from the city in September. Retired Irvine City Manager **Sean Joyce**, a former South Pasadena City Manager, has been serving as Interim City Manager, though his agreement expired March 31, 2021. The new leading candidate for the South Pasadena City Manager position is **Arminé Chaparyan**, the Assistant City Manager and Community Development Director for the City of San Gabriel. She previously worked for the Cities of Ontario and Santa Clarita. She earned a BA from the University of California, Los Angeles (**UCLA**) and an MPA from the University of Southern California (**USC**).

"Do not pray for an easy life. Pray for the strength to endure a difficult one."
--Martial Artist **Bruce Lee**



Still More Pieces Picked Up: Los Banos City Manager **Alex C. Terrazas** was terminated at the end of March 2021. He had served as the Los Banos City Manager since June 2016.

Previous to that he was the Assistant to the Town Manager in Truckee. Alex earned a BA and MA from California State University, Sacramento. Alex was awarded the 2018-2019 California City Management Foundation (CCMF) scholarship to the February 2019 Harvard Kennedy School's "Leadership Decision Making: Optimizing Organizational Performance" program. Alex served on the Technical Review Board of the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG). Los Banos Chief of Police **Gary Brizzee** was appointed to serve as Interim City Manager during the time a new City Manager is recruited and hired.



No reason was given for the termination. **Jennifer Macarthy** is the new Deputy City Manager in the City of Chico. Jennifer previously served as the Deputy County Administrative Officer in Butte County. She also worked for Butte County from 2004 to

2016 as the Deputy Administrative Officer for Community and Economic Development. Jennifer earned a BA in economics from Santa Clara University. Oakley City Manager **Bryan H. Montgomery** will be the new City Manager in the City of Indio. Bryan became the Oakley City Manager in December 2005 after he served as the City Manager in Mesquite, Nevada (1998-2005). Bryan began his public service career as an Intern in Provo, Utah. He then worked as Assistant City Manager in Alamogordo, New Mexico (1994-1997), and as City Administrator in Rupert, Idaho (1997-1998). Bryan taught courses at Los Medanos College in Pittsburg, and at San Francisco State University. He earned a BA and MPA from Brigham Young University. In 2018 Bryan received a 25-year ICMA Service Award and he was honored with the ICMA Award for Community Equity and Inclusion. Retired Arroyo Grande Chief of Police **Beau Pryor** passed away of April 21, 2021 at the age of 50. No cause of death has been reported. He retired in 2020. City Manager **Whitney McDonald** said that the City Council and staff send their "deepest condolences to the Pryor family." Chief Pryor served on the Arroyo Grande police force for 26-years. During that time, he was the Department's first full-time motorcycle traffic officer, a Special Response Team member and field training officer. He was selected to serve as Chief of Police in 2017.

SHORTS: *Former Malibu City Clerk **Heather Glaser** started as the Mountain View City Clerk of April 19, 2021. *South Gate Administrative Services Director **Jackie Acosta** was recently thrilled at a Los Angeles Dodger game when Dodger third baseman **Justin Turner** tossed her a ball. *Retired veteran City Manager **Harry Peacock** has changed his email address to: hrpeacock41@gmail.com *San Diego City Attorney **Mara Elliott** was named 2020 Public Lawyer of the Year for the California Lawyers Association. *Former League of California Cities staffer and Willdan marketing executive **Cheryl Weaver Lopez** currently lives in Phoenix, Arizona. *Gustine City Manager **Douglas Dunford** is a former Gustine (2011-2017), Livingston (2020-2011) and Escalon (2002-2010) Chief of Police, and Doug was a Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputy from 1978 to 1989. *Retired Santa Monica Chief Operating Officer and Assistant City Manager **Katie E. Lichtig** previously served as City Manager in Malibu (2001-2006) and San Luis Obispo (2010-2017). *Lake Forest Deputy City Manager **Brett Channing** served as the President of MMASC in 2012-2013.

Letters and Notes from Our Readers:

Thanks so much for the detailed coverage of the women in leadership roles in Yountville. Our women leaders were thrilled to be included and recognized in your women in local government profiles. Thanks again for highlighting their importance and contributions.

Steven Rogers,
Town of Yountville
Town Manager

I appreciate all the information and the updates that are posted by Trackdown. I don't know if you are aware, but Alex Terrazas has left the City Manager position in Los Banos. I believe it occurred April 5th.

Doug Dunford, City Manager, Gustine

Nice piece on Manny. He did have an infectious laugh!

--**Mike Sakamoto,** Retired City Manager