City Manager Newsletter By
TRACKDOWN MANAGEMENT
"Providing thread to help stitch together the fabric of the City Management Community"

November 2026 Volume No. 20 | Issue No. 18

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J. Kenneth Brown
(April 22, 1935 – June 15, 2026)



Well respected municipal attorney, Ken Brown, passed away on June 15, 2026, at the age of 91. Ken served as city attorney for the cities of Cerritos, La Cañada Flintridge and San Dimas. He also was city attorney for Lawndale, Signal Hill and Norwalk. Ken served cities for nearly six decades. "He possessed a rare, creative, "win-win," can-do, and no-nonsense approach…" says **Tony Canzoneri**. Tony also says, and we agree, "This world will miss but not forget Ken's kindness, insight, creativity, brilliance, and compassion."

California's Cities from Ranch Cordova to Rancho Santa Margarita

You will find the November 2026 issue of the City Manager Newsletter by Trackdown attached. This is the "Rancho" issue of the newsletter, presenting information on the executive leadership in the cities of Rancho Cordova, Rancho Cucamonga, Rancho Mirage, Rancho Palos Verdes, and Rancho Santa Margarita.

City Managers in this issue include Rancho Cordova City Manager **Micah Runner.** City Managers **Elisa C. Cox** of Rancho Cucamonga, **Isaiah Hagerman** of Rancho Mirage, **Ara Mihranian** of Rancho Palos Verdes, and Dr. **Jennifer M. Cervantez**, Ph.D., of Rancho Santa Margarita.

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California's Cities from Ranch Cordova to Rancho Santa Margarita

Rancho Cordova is a Sacramento County community, originally an area where herdsmen and farm laborers lived. Several names were used for the area and, it is believed that the city got its name from Cordova Vineyard. It was officially dubbed Rancho Cordova when a post office was founded in the community in May 1955. The was mining in the area during the California Gold Rush, and some traces of it can still be found in the community. Vineyards and orchards grew following the mining era and following World War II many young people were looking for places to live and the community grew. Rancho Cordova was incorporated in July 2003. The 2020 population is 79,332. **Micah Runner** is the city manager, and they have two Assistant City Managers, **David Kwong** and **Kim Juran**. **Stacy Leitner** is the City Clerk and Executive Assistant to the City Manager. The Communications and Public Affairs Director is **Maria Chacon Kniestedt** and **Russell Ducharme** is the Neighborhood Services Director. **Darcy Goulart** is the Community Development Director, **Amanda Norton** is the Economic Development Director, and **Megan Siren** is the Director of Community Services. The Public Works Director is **Albert Stricker.**



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Michael G. Colantuono is Managing Shareholder, and currently is City Attorney for the City of Grass Valley, also General Counsel for the North Yuba Water District, Calaveras LAFCO, and the Yuba LAFCO. Michael is a leading expert on California municipal finance and appellate law. He earned a BA from Harvard College and a JD from the University of California, Berkeley School of Law.

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California's Cities from Ranch Cordova to Rancho Santa Margarita



Rancho Cordova City Manager **Micah Runner** succeeded retired City Manager **Cyrus Abhar**. Micah began his city government career as a Senior Project Manager for the City of Sacramento, and as an Economic Development Manager for the city of Rancho Cordova in September 2007. In November 2013, Micah joined the city staff in Stockton as their Economic Development Director. He returned to Rancho Cordova in March 2019 to serve the city as Assistant City Manager. Micah was name city manager starting in January 2022. He has been a member of ICMA since 2015, and he is an ICMA Credentialed Manager. Micah earned a BA in communications from California State University, Sacramento. He received a 10 Year ICMA Service Award in 2025. As a side note, Micah's father **George C. Runner Jr.** served as a Mayor and Council Member for the City of Lancaster (1992-1996) before serving in the California State Legislature.

Cyrus Abhar preceded **Micah Runner** as the Rancho Cordova city manager. He came to the city initially as Interim City Manager following **Dr. Brian Nakamura**'s exit in June 2015. He was hired to be city manager on November 2, 2015, and he served in that position until his retirement at the end of 2022. Cyrus was one of the city's first employees and he held several key positions during his 20-years tenure. He was awarded the APWA Public Works Manager of the Year Award in 2010. He previously worked for the County of Sacramento Department of Transportation.

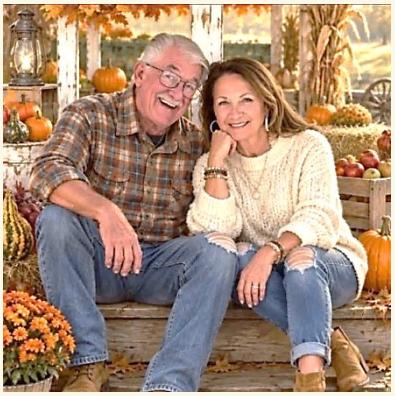
Dr. Brian Nakamura served as the Rancho Cordova city manager for about a year starting in 2014. He previously was the city manager in Chico (2012-2014) and Hemet (2009-2012). He is currently a Professor at Texas A&M University – The Bush School of Government and Public Service.



Ted Gaebler served as the Rancho Cordova city manager for about 11-years (July 2003-February 2014), Ted was the first city manager following the city's incorporation and worked there until his retirement.

California's Cities from Ranch Cordova to Rancho Santa Margarita

Rancho Cucamonga is a San Bernardino County city located in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains and Angeles National Forest. The area came under the Governor of Mexico, and 1839 13,000 acres called "Cucamonga" went to a successful merchant and smuggler of the time. The first winery in California was established on the land. In 1858 Rancho Cucamonga was bought by **John Rains** and his wife. Irrigation to the area was improved and agriculture became the economic base of the community. Olives, peaches, citrus and vineyards covered the area. The railroad coming to town stimulated business opportunities. In 1977, the unincorporated communities of Alta Loma, Cucamonga and Etiwanda incorporated in November as the City of Rancho Cucamonga. The 2020 population of the city is 174,453 and the estimated 2024 population is put at 176,675. Rancho Cucamonga is the 28th most populous city in California. **Elisa C. Cox** is the city manager and Deputy city managers include **Peter Castro**, **Jennifer Hunt Gracia** and **Julie A. Sowles**. Assistant to the City Manager is **Kristen Nelson**. The City Attorney is **Nick Ghirelli**; **Behrang Abadi** the Chief Information Officer; **Maritza Martinez** Public Works Director; **Jevin Kaye** Finance Director; **Jennifer Nakamura** Planning Director; and Building & Safety Director **Zack Neighbors**. The Chief of Police is **Brad Bonnet**; Fire Chief **Mike McCliman**; and Animal Services Director **Veronica Fincher**. The Rancho Cucamonga City Clerk is **Kim Sevy**, Engagement & Special Programs Director **Michael Parmer**, and Organizational Development Director **Jenifer Phillips.**



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Here's a "Proof of Life" bunch.
The next "Proof of Life" lunch is scheduled for **Thursday, December 10, 2026, 11:30 a.m.** at the North Woods Inn Restaurant in La Mirada.

Executive Level Posse Roster:

Wade McKinney, Retired Indian Wells City Manager
Mike Sedell, Retired Simi Valley City Manager
Larry F. Pennell, Retired City Manager, Wasco
Kevin O'Rourke, KOLGS; Retired City Manager
Glenn Southard, Retired CM, Indio & Claremont
Joe Tanner, Retired Vallejo City Manager
Guy Huffaker, Retired Porterville City Manager
Vern Lawson, Retired, City of Lancaster
Robert T. "Bob" Dickey, Retired South Gate DPW
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Lee McDougal, Retired City Manager, Montclair
Mark Scott, Interim City Manager
Doug La Belle, Retired City Manager, Chino Hills
Don Penman, Retired City Manager, Arcadia
Sam Olivito, Retired CCCA Executive Director
Donald Duckworth, Retired City Manager
Richard Rowe, Retired City Manager
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Posse Roster:

Gregory Korduner, Retired City Manager, Huntington Park
Rod B. Butler, Jurupa Valley, City Manager
Rita Geldert, Retired City Manager, Vista
Dale Geldert, Retired CDF Director, State of CA
Dr. Carlos A. Urrutia, Retired City Manager, Rocklin
Ray Taylor, Retired City Manager, Westlake Village
Denise Ovrom, Former CM retired from **HdL Companies**
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Cynthia Kurtz, Interim City Manager, Pasadena
Ron Molendyk, Retired City Manager, Lake Elsinore
Kevin Duggan, Retired City Manager, Mountain View
Gary Milliman, Retired City Manager, Brookings, Oregon
Jim Lewis, City Manager, City of Atascadero
Donald Jeffers, Retired City Manager, Huntington Park
Wayne Wedin, Retired City Manager, Brea
Karen Herrera, Retired Deputy City Manager, Duarte
David Jenkins, Retired City Manager, & CC So. Lake Tahoe
Laura Behjan, Retired Simi Valley, City Manager

Contributor Roster:

Robert & Karen Flores, Retired El Cajon, residents

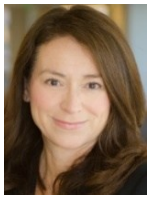
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Roxanne Diaz *is a former member of the Board of Trustees of the California City Management Foundation (CCMF*

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California's Cities from Ranch Cordova to Rancho Santa Margarita



Ms. Elisa C. Cox was appointed city manager for the city of Rancho Cucamonga in December 2025, following the retirement of City Manager **John Gillison**. Elisa is an ICMA Credentialed Manager, and she is available as an ICMA Coach. She began her public service career as a cashier at the local city pool, and then as a Recreation Coordinator for the City of Arcadia in July 2003. Elisa joined the Sierra Madre city staff as a Recreation Supervisor in August 2005. She worked for Sierra Madre until July 2016, working her way up in the city organization from Deputy Director of Community & Personnel Services (February 2006-July 2008), Director of Community & Personnel Services (July 2008-June 2012), Director of Human Resources (July 2012-September 2014), and Assistant City Manager (October 2014-July 2016). She joined the Rancho Cucamonga city staff as Deputy City Manager in August 2016, and she was promoted to Assistant City Manager in May 2022. Elisa earned a BA from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo and an MBA from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. She is currently serving as a member of the ICMA Executive Board. Elisa served as the President of Cal-ICMA in 2023-2024. In 2023 she received a 20 Year ICMA Service Award.

Rancho Cucamonga has had some "long-tenured" city manager who have earned reputations for being highly professionals. **Lauren M. Wasserman** took the city manager position shortly after the city incorporated in late 1977. He left the post 11 years later, serving from 1978 to 1989. Lauren was a Long Beach intern in 1963 and worked as an Administrative Assistant in Lakewood from 1965 to 1968, when he went to work for the city of San Dimas. He was appointed City Administrator in Montclair in 1970 before he joined Rancho Cucamonga in 1978. He worked for San Bernardino in 1989 and the County of San Diego as Director of Planning & Land Use from 1989 to 1994. Lauren worked as the Encinitas city manager from 1994 until his retirement in 1999. Lauren passed away September 1, 2021. He was a BA and MS graduate of California State University, Long Beach.

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"Democracy is our worst form of government. except for all the others that have been tried from time to time." ---Winston Churchill



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California's Cities from Ranch Cordova to Rancho Santa Margarita

In 1968, **Jack Lam** was hired by Alameda County to work as a Planning Aide, beginning his storied career. Jack took a Housing Intern position with the Oakland Redevelopment Agency in 1971, and later that year he rejoined Alameda County as a full-time Planning Aide. He worked in El Cerrito as an Associate Planner, and in 1975, Jack took a similar job with Antioch. In 1976, Jack became the Director of Community Development for Lompoc. In 1978, he joined then-City Manager **Lauren M. Wasserman**'s staff in the "startup" city of Rancho Cucamonga as Deputy Executive Director of Community Development. Jack was selected in 1988 to serve as the Rancho Cucamonga Assistant City Manager, and in March 1989 he was appointed City Manager. Jack served there for 22 years, until his retirement in August 2011. Upon his retirement, Jack recommended, **John Gillison**, to succeed him. Jack earned a BA from the University of California, Berkeley and an MA from San Francisco State University. He received a 40 Year ICMA Service Award in 2015, including 22 years as the Rancho Cucamonga city manager.



John R. Gillison retired as Rancho Cucamonga city manager in December 2025 after serving in that position since September 2011. John began his public service career in September 1989 as an Administrative Intern with the city of Walnut, and he was hired as a full-time Administrative Assistant in Walnut in September 1990. From September 1991 to July 2000, John worked as a Management Analyst for the City of Cerritos. He joined the Pomona city staff in July 2000, and in July 2001 he took the position of Assistant to the City Manager. He became the Pomona Deputy City Manager in December 2002. John was appointed Sierra Madre city manager in March 2005 and served there until March 2007. He joined the Rancho Cucamonga city staff as Deputy City Manager in April 2007 and became Assistant City Manager in December 2009. John earned a BA and MPA from California State University, Fullerton and a Western State University law degree. He was President of the City Managers' Department of the League of California Cities in 2021-2022, John received 35 Year ICMA Service Award in 2024.

California's Cities from Ranch Cordova to Rancho Santa Margarita

Rancho Mirage was nicknamed "Playground of the Presidents" and the "Golf Capital of the World." Starts to develop the area were slowed by the Great Depression in 1929, and the onset of World War II brought development to a halt. It was 1946 before developers began buying and selling following the end of the war. **Walter and Leonore Annenberg** built a winter home on 200-acres in Rancho Mirage that was completed in 1966 and named "Sunnylands." It includes a 25,000-square-foot home designed by architect **A. Quincy Jones** a nine-hole golf course, swimming pools and lush grounds. Over the years, the compound has served as a private sanctuary and meeting location for eight United States Presidents from **Dwight D. Eisenhower** to **Barack Obama**. **Queen Elizabeth II** of British royalty stayed there, as did celebrities like **Frank Sinatra** and **Barbara Sinatra**, who were married there in July 1976, **Bob & Dolores Hope**, **Fred Astaire**, **Ginger Rogers**, **Bing Crosby**, **Gregory Peck**, **Sammy Davis Jr.**, **Kirk Douglas**, **Mary Martin**, **George Burns**, **Barbara Walter**, **Diane Sawyer**, **Peter Jennings**, **Arnold Palmer**, **Warren Buffett** and others. In 2001, the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians opened the Agua Caliente Casino at Bob Hope Drive and Interstate Highway 10. Rancho Mirage was incorporated in August 1973. The 2020 population is 16,999 and the 2024 estimate in 18,001. **Isaiah Hagerman** is the city manager and **Kristie Ramos** is the City Clerk. **Ryan Stendell** is the Rancho Mirage Assistant City Manager and Public Works Director. **Kofi Antobam** is the Director of Administrative Services, **Majna Dukic** is the Director of Development Services and **Gabe Codding** is the Director of Marketing. **Colin D. Kirkpatrick** is the City Attorney, and the Library Director is **Aaron Espinosa**.

During the 1950s, **William J. Probert** began his local government career working for the city San Gabriel. He was the MMASC President in 1955-1956. William was the first consultant city manager for Irwindale in 1957 when it incorporated in August that year, and he was the first city manager for Rancho Mirage when it incorporated in August 1973. He served in the position until late 1977. William was a Trustee with the Coachella Valley Mosquito Abatement District.

Joe Gonsalves said: "Lobbyist are like parachutes. you don't need them often but when you do, they had better work."

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Anthony Gonsalves is President of the firm. **Jason Gonsalves** is a Member of the California City Management Foundation (CCMF) Board of Trustees.

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Rancho Mirage City Manager **Isaiah Hagerman** worked six years in public accounting with a private finance consulting firm (2006-2012) before joining the Rancho Mirage city staff as Finance Director in November 2012. In October 2015 he was selected to serve as the Director of Administrative Services, and he became the Assistant City Manager in May 2018. In May 2018, he was appointed to succeed **Randal Bynder** as the Rancho Mirage city manager following Randal's retirement. Isaiah earned a BS in accounting from the University of Redlands. He is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA).

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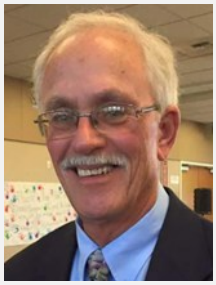
California's Cities from Ranch Cordova to Rancho Santa Margarita

Former Rancho Mirage city manager include **Isaiah Hagerman**'s predecessor **Randal "Randy" Byner**, who was city manager from 2012 to May 18, 2018; **Patrick "Pat" M. Pratt**, who worked for the city 33 years and served as city manager 21 years; and **Carl Alvin Hatfield Jr.** (March 1985 – October 1990). Randy, who was a city employee for 32 years, clocked out for the last time on May 18, 2018. Randy rose through the ranks of the city's planning department to become the Community Development Director in 2006. He succeeded the longtime City Manager **Pat Pratt** when Pat retired in 2012. Pat first joined the Rancho Mirage city staff in January 1976 as an Administrative Assistant to the Senior Planner. He worked in the private sector from March 1979 to February 1982, when he returned to working for the city of Rancho Mirage as Community Services Coordinator. Pat was promoted to Director of Administrative Services in February 1984 and in June 1985 he was named Assistant City Manager. Pat was appointed city manager for Rancho Mirage in November 1990, and he retired in February 2013 after more than two decades in the position at the age of 60. He earned a BA from Bowling Green State University. In 2009, Pat received a 30 Year ICMA Service Award. *[Trackdown note: We enjoyed seeing Pat at conferences.]*



Never to be Forgotten

Former "Proof of Life" participants who have passed away.



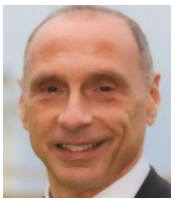
Retired City Manager Joe Goeden traveled from Sacramento to attend a Southern California "Proof of Life" lunch.

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Bob Williams
William "Bill" Holt
Lauren Wasserman
Ray Harris
Frank G. Tripepi
Howard Chambers
Mary Strenn
Joe Goeden
Roy Pederson
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Keene Wilson
Ronald R. "Ron" Bates
Lou Shepard

California's Cities from Ranch Cordova to Rancho Santa Margarita

Rancho Palos Verdes is located on the Palos Verdes Peninsula and the Palos Verdes Hills on the Pacific Coast in Los Angeles County. In the late 1880s much of the land was leased to Japanese farmers. Japanese families grew beans, peas and tomatoes, and on the northern slopes, barley, hay and grain. **Frank Vanderlip**, the "Father of Palos Verdes," started the interest among developers to build and improve the area. In the 1970s, interest in the California coastline increased. The construction of the Palos Verdes Bay Club, and homes in the area built a community. The city of Rancho Palos Verdes was incorporated in September 1973. The 2020 population is set at 42,287. The Portuguese Bend area of the city has experience landslide slippage that includes more than 260 acres. In 2023 and 2024 focus on the ground failure and movement required the Southern California Gas company to suspend services to 135 homes. As of February 2025, land movement has slowed and by May 2025 gas utility service was restored to a majority of the homes previously suspended.

Ara Mihranian, an urban planning veteran and longtime city of Rancho Palos Verdes employee, is the City Manager, and **Teri Takaoka** is the City Clerk. **Catherine Jun** is Deputy City Manager, **Vina D. Ramos** is the Director of Finance, **Brandy Forbes** is the Director of Community Development, and **Daniel Trautner** is the Director of Recreation and Parks.



Ara M. Mihranian began his tenure as the Rancho Palos Verdes city manager on September 30, 2019. After serving as an Associate Planner for the city of Malibu, he joined the Rancho Palos Verdes city staff in 1998 as an Associate Planner and began his promotional venture through various positions. After working as the Senior and Principal Planner, he was appointed Deputy Director of Community Development in 2010, Community Development Director in 2016-2019, Interim City Manager in November 2019, and he was hired as City Manager in February 2020. Ara earned a BA from Arizona State University.

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California's Cities from Ranch Cordova to Rancho Santa Margarita



Leonard "Len" G. Wood was the first Rancho Palos Verdes city manager. After Len left Rancho Palos Verdes in 1980, he took the Claremont city manager position and served there until 1988. Len founded a consulting and training firm he named the *Len Wood & Associates* and Training Shoppe. Len served as interim city manager for the cities of La Palma, Signal Hill, Colton, Goleta and Hemet. Len was born in San Pedro on May 13, 1943. He passed away on Tuesday, November 17, 2020, at the age of 77.

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California's Cities from Ranch Cordova to Rancho Santa Margarita

Following **Len Wood**, **Donald F. Guluzzy** (1981-1986) served for more than five years before leaving to manage the San Mateo County Harbor District. Former Delano city manager **Dennis McDuffie** took the Rancho Palos Verdes position in 1986. **Paul Bussey** was city manager in 1990 to 1998, and **Les Evan**, the city's Public Works Director took the city manager job in July 1998. **Carolyn Lehr** was city manager from March 2007 to January 31, 2015. **Doug Willmore** preceded **Ara Mihranian**, serving in the job from March 1, 2015, until November 22, 2019. Deputy City Manager **Carolynn Petru** served as acting city manager for about a month in 2015.



"Amy, life happens to every one of us every day…All you do is you just take the hand you're dealt that day and live that life that you get."
---Vince Gill to his wife Amy Grant



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California's Cities from Ranch Cordova to Rancho Santa Margarita

Rancho Santa Margarita, with 20 characters in its name, is the longest city name in the State of California. In 1810, the Trabuco Adobe was built near the Mission San Juan Capistrano outpost between Trabuco Creek and Tijeras Creek. When Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821, three major lands grants were created: Rancho Mission Viejo, Rancho Trabuco and Rancho Santa Margarita. In 1882, **James L. Flood** and **Jerome O'Neill** purchased and combined these ranchos into a working cattle empire. In 1940, the ranch was divided between the two families. The Flood family took the lower porting, which became the Marine Corps' Camp Pendleton in San Diego County, while the O'Neill family retained the upper portion in Orange County. The O'Neill family descendant began developing the land and a planned development was designed as "A Small City with the Soul of a Small Village."

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Rancho Santa Margarita incorporated in January 2000. Its 2020 population is 47,949. The city manager for the city is Dr. **Jennifer M. Cervantez**, Ph.D. **Cheryl Kuta** is the Assistant City Manager and Director of Development Services. **Amy Diaz** is City Clerk, and the Director of Finance is **Stefanie Turner**. **Joe Parco** is the Director of Public Works, and **Wendi Redington** is the Community Services Manager. **Laura Lopez** is the Public Information Officer and Assistant to the City Manager.



City Manager **Dr. Jennifer M. Cervantez, Ph.D.**, was a Staff Analyst with the League of California Cities from 1998 to 2000. She took a Management Assistant job with Santa Ana in July 2000, and she worked there until 2002, when she was hired to be the Assistant to the City Manager in La Habra. She was promoted to Assistant City Manager in 2008. Jennifer was appointed Rancho Santa Margarita city manager in 2012. Jennifer earned a BA from California State University, and an MPA from Claremont University.

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JAIME ROJAS, JR.
CHIEF COMMUNICATOR

Jaime's entrepreneurship is in his DNA. His first business started in high school designing T-shirts for his high school's sports teams, student clubs & surrounding Catholic high schools. He has more than 25 years of local, state & federal experience in public affairs, public relations & marketing. A native Angelino, he also bleeds Dodgers' Blue. He attended Loyola High & **USC**, earning a Trojan MPA. He was a White House Intern under President Bill Clinton, worked for companies including UPS, Lucent Technologies, and Jaime was CEO/President of the CA Hispanic Chambers of Commerce.

Jaime has taught @ **USC**'s Sol Price School of Public Administration. He wrote two books on the U.S. Constitution & Latino Republicans in 2011 & 2016.
His biggest joy is raising his lacrosse crazed teenager.

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Recommended read by Prof. Steve Harding

The Future of American Democracy and the role of the local public administrator.
An alternative graduate curriculum specific to local governance and management to follow.

https://our-civic-culture.com/2026/11/04/the-future-of-american-democracy/

Stephen G. Harding, former city manager
https://our-civic-culture.com/



Picking Up the Pieces: After only 8 months on the job, Hollister city manager **Ana Cortez** was fired on October 21, 2026. She was dismissed for convenience rather than cause. Airport Director and Acting Planning Director **Jeff Crechriou** in serving as the interim city manager. Facing a $7 million general fund deficit and a $9.6 million water fund deficit, Ana issued administrative leave and layoff notices to 37 city workers, including the Hollister Police Department and public works. The city has rescinded the layoffs, though the deficits remain unresolved.

Armen Avazian is the new city of San Fernando Director of Public Works. Armen previously work as the Principal Civil Engineer for the city of Glendale. He worked for Glendale more than 18 years. Armen takes the Public Works Department at a time City Manager **Kanika Kith** is planning to leave San Fernando to become the Rosemead city manager starting December 7.

Indio City Manager **Jonathan Nicks** is the new city manager for the city of Bell Gardens. He will assume the Bell Gardens city manager position on January 4, 2027. Jon was appointed Indio city manager in May, succeeding retired City Manager **Bryan Montgomery**. Jon had served two years as the Indio Assistant City Manager.

Former Ojai and La Cañada Flintridge Assistant City Manager **Carl Alameda** was hired to serve as the Town Manager for Kearny, Arizona, using the name "**Alex Alameda**." Following his appointment in Kearny on October 28, 2026, it was discovered that he is facing 34 felony counts alleging he stole nearly $200,000 in insurance claim proceeds intended for the city of La Cañada Flintridge. He has been placed on paid investigative leave by the Town of Kearny. He has not been convicted of any crime and is presumed innocent until proven guilty.



Two of the best;
Angela and Mike Touhey.
Mike is a former Mayor and Council Member for the City of West Covina. Mike is the owner of Rockview Dairy #29. He is past President of the Rotary Club of West Covina Sunrise.

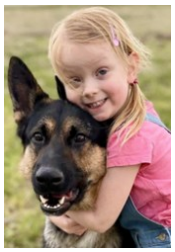
Calistoga hired 65-year-old **Mitchell Celaya III** as city manager in October 2026. Mitch served as the Calistoga Chief of Police for a dozen years (2012-2024). He was the University of California, Berkeley Police Chief from 1982 until 2012. After leaving the Calistoga police department, Mitch was Assistant City Manager in 2024-2025, and Acting/Interim City Manager from 2025-2026, following the resignation of former City Manager **Laura Snideman**.

Former Downey Chief Building Official (1997-2010), **Linda Haines**, a former President of the Downey Soroptimist International group, was the Soroptimist International of Americans, Camino Real Region, Governor from July 2012 to June 2014. Linda worked in the departments of building and safety in the cities of Fullerton (1984-1990), Cypress (1991-2010), Downey (1997-2010) and as Interim Building Official for Oceanside (2011-2012). Following her retirement she now operates her own Haines Code Consulting firm since July 2014. Linda is a Lakewood resident.

Matt West is the new city manager for the city of Garden Grove. Matt previously served as the Assistant City Manager. He formally assumed his new job on November 3, 2026, succeeding retired city manager **Lisa Kim**. Matt worked for the City of Tustin from 2002 to 2024, advancing through a number of administrative roles. He left Tustin as Deputy City Manager. Matt earned a BS from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

Long Beach City Manager **Tom Modica** introduced **Tendaji K. Jamal** as the city's next Director of Technology and Innovation, replacing Director **Lea Eriksen**. Lea left the city in April to be the Senior Assistant City Manager for the City of Culver City. Tendaji is the Chief Information Technology Officer for Pasadena City College.

Cathedral City appointed the city's first Poet Laureate, **Clare Chu** is the first Cathedral City Poet Laureate. The position is honorary and voluntary and recognizes Clare's literary voice and decades of experience as an arts scholar. She is an accomplished art curator, dealer, lecturer and writer. Clare has curated major exhibitions, including at the Los Angeles County Museum of Arts. The city manager for the City of Cathedral City is **Andrew "Andy" Firestine**.



More Pieces Picked Up: **Scott Mowl** is a Recreation Supervisor for the City of Bellflower. He is a *Bellflower High School* graduate, and he earned an AA from Cerritos Community College and a BA in Parks and Recreation Management from Northern Arizona University. Scott began working for Bellflower in 1986. The City of Bellflower recently honored Scott for his 40 years of public service. He is currently the front lines-manager at *T. Mayne Thompson Park* and the *Bellflower Aquatic Center*. **Ryan Smoot** has been the Bellflower city manager since January 2024 following the retirement of City Manager **Jeffrey L. Stewart**.

San Diego Mesa College alumnus, **Scott Hammond** is the Vice President for Business Development and Governmental Affairs, for *Erickson-Hall Construction Co*., a Southern California-based construction management and general contracting firm. Scott has served in this position since September 2022. Scott was a good friend to the late-**Frank G. Tripepi**, a retired city manager and **Willdan** executive.

Sacramento Assistant City Manager **Katie Dignan** resigned for personal reasons after only eight weeks on the job. She was one of four Sacramento assistant city managers reporting to City Manager **Maraskeshia Smith**. Katie started with the Sacramento city staff on July 13, 2026, and she resigned from the position September 2, 2026. **Megan Van Voorhis** is the Interim Assistant City Manager temporarily replacing Katie. Katie previously worked with the Peace Corps (2001-2005), New Orleans (2011-2018) and Oakland (2018-2020).

Please take a few minutes to look at the *Trackdown Management* Facebook page:
https://www.facebook.com/trackdownmanagement



SHORTS: Assistant City Manager **Matthew Hawkesworth** has served as interim Pasadena city manager since former City Manager **Miguel Márquez** left in April 2026, and while the executive search firm, the Byers Group, works with the City Council to find a new city manager.

Marla Livengood, League of California Cities Regional Public Affairs Manager for the Central Valley Division, earned a BS in agricultural economics from California State University, Fresno.

Bonnie Paige, who returned to Stockton City Hall last month as Interim City Clerk following the resignation of City Clerk **Katherin Rolands**, who resigned less than six weeks after taking the position.

Retired Lakewood Community Relations Manager **Sheryl Musicant Stewart,** wife of retired Bellflower city manager **Jeff Stewart**, earned an MA in political science from The George Washington University.

Former Mammoth Lakes Town Manager (2013-2024), **Daniel C. Holler** currently lives in his hometown of Cody, Wyoming. **Rob Patterson** is currently the Town Manager.

Coalinga Chief of Police **Jose Garza** is retiring after nearly 50-years in law enforcement, and the city is conducting an open recruitment process to find his replacement.

Paso Robles Fire Chief **Jonathan Stornetta** is retiring at the end of the year, ending a 35-year career in fire and emergency services.

Fran Mancia, known throughout California's local and state government officials, Is a resident of the town of Cool, California, an unincorporated rural community in El Dorado County.

Former Hayward Assistant City Manager, **Regina Youngblood** is the new City of Carson Director of Human Resources and Risk Management.

Long-time Norwalk City Clerk **Theresa M. Devoy** has worked for the city more than 35-years.

Sean McGlynn, who served as the city manager in Santa Rosa for nearly seven years, has been the Escondido city manager since June 29, 2021, succeeding retired city manager **Jeffrey Epp**.

Deirdre Coyne has become the new City of Sausalito City Clerk on August 2, 2026, after serving as Interim City Clerk following the departure of former City Clerk **Walfred Solorzano**, who left to become the Interim City Clerk for the city of Lodi.

Pamela Foster took the city administrator office in Bishop in September 2025, where the city council has asked the city attorney to draft an ordinance to move the local governance system to a formal Council-City Manager form of government.

James Connor currently serves as the Interim City Manager for the City of Willits where City Manager **Brian Bender** left the city with a separation agreement in 2025, and **Rod Wilburn** and **Bob Perrault** previously served as Interim City Managers.



Replacing City Manager **Peggy Ducey** in January 2024, **Isaac Whippy** is the city manager for the city of Fort Bragg and the Director of Finance.***