

December, 2009

County of Los Angeles
Department of Parks and Recreation



THE GREEN SCENE

Plumbing Supervisor Ron Cox Named
LA County STAR! for November 2009



Left to Right, Back Row: Regional Facilities Agency Deputy Director Hayden Sohm, Chief Deputy Director John Wicker, Construction Division Manager II Gregory Harrington
Front Row: Ron Cox's son Ronnie Cox, Ron's wife Cathy Carrillo-Cox, LA County STAR! Ron Cox, Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe, Department of Parks and Recreation Director Russ Guiney

On Tuesday, November 3, 2009, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors named Department of Parks and Recreation Plumbing Supervisor Ron Cox the November 2009 **LA COUNTY STAR!** in the category of **Service Excellence and Organizational Effectiveness.**

Ron Cox is a proactive and committed employee at the Department of Parks and Recreation. Ron Cox has worked for the Department nearly 20 years and oversees 19 crafts employees. Ron turned a chance meeting with Los Angeles County Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Bill Fujioka into an opportunity to share his ideas on how the Department of Parks and Recreation could make significant operational and cost-saving efficiency improvements if an initial investment was made. Ron's recommendations to the CEO reflect his strong interest in water conservation, water quality and the efficiency of delivery systems. He identified several improvement areas, including swim beach circulation pumps and water-cooled lake pumps.

His shared information and subsequent research resulted in CEO providing more than \$900,000 in efficiency enhancements to the Department of Parks and Recreation's 2008-09 budget. His efforts have led to the installation of approximately 200 waterless urinals

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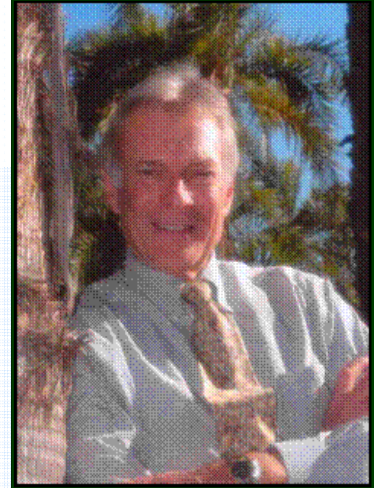
Greetings from the Director

As the holidays are upon us and 2009 draws to a close it is appropriate to look back on the past year and reflect on all that we have to be thankful for and to remember our collective accomplishments.

The best part of this job is working with our fantastic staff. Ron Cox who is featured on the front page of this newsletter is symbolic of all our dedicated, energetic and innovative team members. In January of 2009 many of you came together to our Efficiency Conference. You brought over 400 ideas for how we can do our job better. Ron got the ball rolling with a conversation with the County Chief Executive Officer and you all followed his lead.

It has been a very trying year for many people with financial cutbacks and job losses. We can be very thankful for the jobs we have. And we can be proud that even though our resources have been diminished, you have continued to provide Effective and Caring Service to the people of Los Angeles County. This is reflected each month in the High Five column at the back of the Green Scene and in the Employee of the Month articles.

I'm thankful for all of you and proud of what you do everyday. May you and your families have a happy holiday season. I look forward to working with you to make 2010 even better.



Russ Guiney, Director



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throughout the Department, the implementation of new circulatory chlorination systems at all three of the Departments swim beaches, and water cooled lake pumps — all of which save the Department thousands of dollars in yearly maintenance costs.

Ron also advocated for the implementation of a new web-based software program that will help the Department manage assets and track inventory, labor and material costs associated with facilities. The Maximo program will computerize all work orders that will be dispatched through the call center which will ultimately result in better responses to any emergencies. Ron has taken a leadership role on the acquisition and implementation of the Maximo Program. As a result of his interest and willingness to do whatever it takes to make the Maximo Program a reality in the Department, he was selected as Department-wide Maximo Implementation Project Manager. The Maximo Program has since been implemented and is working wonders for the Department.

Ron never fails to look for alternatives and solutions to systems and processes that can be improved and efficiencies whose savings benefits the Department and can be emulated by other Departments.

Administrative Services Deputy Director Debbie Martin leaves to join the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk



Nearly 100 people gathered recently at a luncheon to bid former Parks and Recreation Administration Deputy Director Debbie Martin a fond farewell and good luck as she moves on to become the Chief Deputy Director for the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk's Office. Director Russ Guiney and Chief Deputy John Wicker were present at the luncheon and addressed Ms. Martin and the crowd. Mr. Guiney shared his thoughts about Ms. Martin and recalled fondly two years ago when he and Mr. Wicker interviewed Ms. Martin for the Parks and Recreation position, "I told John that Debbie was so qualified that I knew we wouldn't have her long, and I was right," Mr. Guiney said, and continued, "But if I had to do it all over again knowing that we would

only have you for two years, Debbie, I would, because you have done so much for our Department."

Equal sentiments were shared by Ms. Martin's Regional Operations Managers Jeremy Gray, Bob Maycumber and Kandy Hays, all of whom had glowing remarks for their boss. Ms. Martin's colleagues Deputy Directors Kathleen Ritner, Hayden Sohm and Joe Mendoza also nice things about their time working with Ms. Martin, with Mr. Sohm pointing out that his past track record with administration was broken when meeting Ms. Martin, who made his job easier and more pleasant. The crowd met Mr. Sohm's comment with rousing laughter.

Both Mr. Wicker and Mr. Guiney acknowledged that Ms. Martin is truly a shining star in the county, reiterated by Mr. Guiney when he stated, "I truly believe the next time we are at a luncheon for you is when you become the Director of a Department."



Debbie Martin and Contract Management Section Chief Kandy Hays



Chief Deputy Director John Wicker, Debbie Martin and Director Russ Guiney



Budget and Fiscal Division Head Robert Maycumber and Debbie Martin



Information Technology Division Head Jeremy Gray and Debbie Martin

September 2009 Department Employee Award Winners



Left to Right: Joe Mendoza, Carl Dye and John Wicker

Permanent Employee of the month- Carl Dye

Mr. Dye is a Grounds Maintenance Worker II at Mona Park who shows great pride in his work. He shows tremendous leadership skills and teamwork while on duty. Even on his days off, he is known to call his supervisor to make sure he is informed of any issues for the day. He works great with all divisions that he comes in contact with including plumbers, general maintenance, recreation staff, and the travel crews. He ensures that the staff has all proper safety equipment and tools for the day. Mr. Dye is an asset to the County because of his work ethic and positive attitude.

Temporary Employee of the month

Nicholas Baldwin is a Student Professional Worker with the Research and Trails Planning Section. Mr. Baldwin consistently demonstrates an exceptionally high-quality and professional level of work product. He is focused on understanding the intent, requirements, components, goals and deliverables on a variety of projects which are often of Agency-wide significance. He is a self-starter, resourceful and mindful of any budgets or restraints. Through his responsiveness and efficiency, he has successfully executed the duties of a true Student Professional Worker.



Left to Right: Larry Hensley, Nicholas Baldwin and John Wicker

Temporary Employee of the month Erin Rhodes (North Agency)

Currently Ms. Rhodes is responsible for many programs at George Lane Park and also has added responsibilities and Acton and Apollo Park. One of her accomplishments is the implementation of a fundamental writing class that teaches students in the surrounding communities basic grammar and how to write research papers. Erin is very passionate and devoted to her work.



Left to Right: Kathleen Ritner, Erin Rhodes, Regina Bradley and John Wicker

Facility of the Month- Sunshine Park

In recent months, Sunshine Park has gone through an impressive transformation. New recreational facilities consist of a new playground, a splash pad with shade canopy, and a new exercise area for adults. Additions to the landscape and improved maintenance have played a large role in the appearance of the park. Additional trees and shrubs make for a greener, friendlier looking park. Sunshine Park also experiences a great amount of community involvement. Despite recent cutbacks, teens and other volunteers pitch in and help to maintain the regular recreation programs that the community cherishes.



Sunshine Park Playground

Health and Safety Holiday Tips



The holidays are a time to celebrate with family and friends, give thanks, and reflect. They are also a time to pay special attention to your health and safety. Give the gift of health and safety to yourself and others by following these holiday tips.

Stay Healthy

- Moderation is key! Denying yourself food during the holidays will only tempt you more. Instead, take a small portion to keep you satisfied
- If you overeat at one meal, get back on track at your next meal with healthier fare, like fruits and veggies
- Go easy on alcohol. Too much alcohol will only add to your stress. Remember that most holiday drinks, like beers, mixers, or eggnog, can have a lot of sugar. Balance things out by drinking water
- Don't make all your holiday gatherings about food. Find fun, festive local events like caroling, concerts, or holiday plays around your area
- Dress warmly. Wearing layers of clothing as well as gloves, scarves, and earmuffs will protect you from the winter chills and common colds
- Sleep! Getting the recommended 7 to 8 hours of sleep is critical in maintaining a healthy immune system

Shopping Tips

- Shop with someone, especially at night
- Don't carry large sums of money and do not display it
- Be sure your car is in good working condition and keep at least 1/4 tank of gas in it at all times
- Tell someone where you are going and when you plan to be back
- Park in a well-lighted area, as close to the entrance as possible
- Put all packages in the trunk, not on the floor where they're visible
- Stay out of holiday debt. Know your spending limit. Expensive gifts won't guarantee a happy holiday
- Make a shopping list. Staying organized will help you avoid any oversights or last-minute panic

Prevent Fires

- Check or install smoke detectors on each level of your home, preferably outside each bedroom
- Use a sturdy fireplace screen to keep sparks inside the hearth
- Use the fireplace only when you are at home, and extinguish the fire when you leave the house
- Make sure all extension cords are in good condition. Never run them under a carpet

Safe Food Handling

- Fully cook meats and poultry, and thoroughly wash raw vegetables and fruits. Bacteria are often present in raw foods
- Wash your hands frequently, and make sure children do the same
- Never put a spoon used to taste food back into the pot without washing it
- Keep raw foods and cooked foods (and their utensils) separate during preparation
- Thaw meat in the refrigerator, not on the counter

Coping with Holiday Stress

- Don't get too ambitious. Are you in charge of making a seven-course holiday meal? Ask for lots of help, and don't hesitate to cut it down to four courses. If you're wrapping presents, ask your kids to help out
- Stay flexible. Too many people approach the holidays with a fixed vision of how everything should go
- If you're traveling, give yourself plenty of time to get there
- Exercise also boosts your mood! Take the edge off the stress of the holidays or dull weather with a brisk walk around a park

HIGH FIVE!

For Those Who Go Above and Beyond...

A large limb of an oak tree fell blocking Walnut Creek and the trail. I called your field office and I was transferred to **Grace Perez**, who was wonderful and contacted **Ralph Beltran**. The next thing I know Ralph is at my door wanting to know where the tree limb was located. His crew had the creek trail cleared the next day. A heartfelt thank you to all involved and I am so impressed with the quick response to this situation.

*Sue Fetters
Covina, CA*

Thank you a lot for creating the **Junior Golf Program**. I had lots of fun playing golf. You made golf very fun for me and I hope to go next year. The putting tournament was really fun and I like the range. I hit 125 yards!!

*Ethan Torres
La Verne, CA*

Thank you so much for the **Junior Golf Program**. This is my children's second year participating and they thoroughly enjoy it. It is truly a fantastic program run by a wonderful group of people. All of the coaches are awesome! I also thought it was very inspiring to see female coaches this summer; they were great role models for my girls.

*Jennifer Yamaguchi
Norwalk, CA*

This year my young son had the opportunity to take golf lessons through the **L.A. County Junior Golf Program**. In short order, **Tim Smith and all the coaches** on his staff were able to get my child excited about playing a new sport. Everyone on the staff has been friendly, kind and encouraging to my son, and he has become smitten with the golf bug. It has now even become a family affair. My husband decided to take up lessons at Altadena Golf Course and has even brought a few friends along who wanted to learn! We look forward to many rounds on L.A. County's wonderful public golf courses. Hats off to you and your staff for such a terrific program!

*Keith & Julie Hartley
Torrance, CA*

GIVE Someone a HIGH FIVE!

Do you know someone in our Department who deserves special recognition? Maybe you were on a tight deadline and that person helped you meet it. Maybe you were having a tough work day and that person helped you beat it. You know who those people are, the ones who go above and beyond. Help us recognize them. Email their name and a short paragraph of why they deserve a High Five! to iperius@parks.lacounty.gov and we'll do our best to include them in the High Five! column of The Green Scene.



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