



Ask the CEO



LEADERSHIP ISSUES

As some of you are aware, we recently had a graduation ceremony for the members of the fourth Leadership Academy. Additionally, I have had opportunities to visit various Departments and program areas. As I've expressed earlier, I continue to be impressed with your efforts and dedication collectively and individually. Your dedication energizes me, and the Hall of Administration staff and I appreciate it.

One of the issues that comes up from time to time is how our daily efforts translate to Board action and policy direction. Your work often results in the need for policy direction in the form of budget issues, written policy changes and/or general direction from this office and/or the Board of Supervisors. The fundamental value of our "industry" is that elected officials (the Board of Supervisors) determine and set the policy, and we implement it. We are very fortunate in Orange County that the Board also seeks and respects our input on policy matters as a part of its discussion and determination.

So we have had a number of is-

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Fighting Fire With County Teamwork



PHOTO COURTESY OF ORANGE COUNTY FIRE AUTHORITY

The recent Sierra fire burned more than 10,000 acres and threatened homes in the communities of Orange Hills and Anaheim Hills.

The Sierra fire began in the Cleveland National Forest during the early hours of Feb. 6, and Santa Ana winds fanned the flames toward communities in Anaheim Hills and Orange Hills. A short time later that morning, the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at Loma Ridge was activated to support the Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) in battling the fire.

The County's EOC is maintained in a constant state of readiness by the Sheriff's Department Emergency Management Bureau. In emergencies involving earth-

quakes, tsunamis, civil disturbances, energy crises, nuclear power plant emergencies, terrorism and acts of war, the Sheriff-Coroner is designated as the Operational Area Coordinator (OAS)/ Director of Emergency Services (DES).

During a fire, mass casualty incident or hazardous material release, the Fire Services Director is designated as the OA Coordinator/DES. For the Sierra fire, OCFA served as the lead agency and smoothly worked with Sheriff's Department and

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sues lately where that model has worked well as the Board has set policy. These include:

1. Adoption of the Strategic Financial Plan – 2006/2007
2. Establishment of the Dana Point Harbor Department
3. Implementation of a Harbors, Beaches and Parks Strategic Planning process
4. Efforts to advance the South County courthouse project
5. Adoption of the new mental health strategic plan (recognized by the State)
6. Prudent fiscal management

And we've had a few issues where the model has broken down, such as with Planning Department budget issues and code enforcement reporting and activity. Set-backs challenge each of us to find a better way to serve our community.

Our challenge together is to continually monitor and strengthen the Decision-making model ... and that starts with each of you and builds to Board action on agenda items. In that regard, I need everyone's help in the following ways:

1. Pay attention to detail.
2. Talk to our employees; they know what's going on.
3. Develop action plans - even daily or small ones.
4. Keep each other informed – no surprises, and
5. Take reasonable risks and make something good happen.

Thank you for your consideration and your day-to-day efforts on behalf of the citizens of the County and the Orange County Board of Supervisors.

Enjoy your weekend!

Teamwork

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numerous other public agencies to direct emergency response. In another shining example of teamwork, Public Information Officers (PIOs) from various County agencies responded to the call for assistance with drafting press releases to keep the public informed.

County department PIOs who staffed the EOC included:
 Angela Burrell, Resources & Development Management Department (RDMD)
 Wida Karim, RDMD
 Pat Markley, County Executive Office
 Chip Monaco, RDMD
 Brett Rowley, Registrar of Voters
 Howard Sutter, Health Care Agency

Jesse Guillen, Child Support Services and Courtney Wiercioch, John Wayne Airport, served as backups in case additional PIO overnight shift was needed. Orange County Fire

Authority PIO Stephen Miller and Sheriff's Department PIOs Jim Amormino, Jon Fleischman, Sergeant Bob Sima and Professional Services Reserve Adam Probolsky served as primary PIOs for the event.

Over the two-day EOC activation, 14 press releases advised the public about the latest status of the fire, evacuation areas, Red Cross shelter locations, animal shelter locations, road closures and school closures.

"The Sierra fire was a great example of teamwork and cooperation between the Orange County Fire Authority, the Sheriff's Department and numerous other public agencies to protect the public," said CEO Tom Mauk. "County employees often play a critical role during many different types of emergencies and I commend these employees for showing the true spirit of public service."

HCS Praised by Journal for Section 8 Success

The January issue of *Housing and Development Reporter* praised Housing and Community Services' Orange County Housing Authority for its recent success with online applications during the Section 8 open enrollment in November. In collaboration with County agencies, the Housing Choice Voucher Rental Assistance Program (also known as Section 8) was able to assist Orange County residents with online applications for the first time.

More than 20,000 local residents applied for rental assistance during a one-month period. This was a record number that was attributed to outreach from County and City agencies and community organizations. About 60 percent of the applications were submitted online through the County's web site.

The new application process was planned and organized in consultation with community groups and the County's webmaster.

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Section 8

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“We want to thank the County IT team, Social Services Agency, Health Care Agency and the Office on Aging for their assistance,” said John Hambuch, OCHA Manager. “A crucial part of developing the online application was soliciting opinions from other agencies and community groups about the design of the form and the process.”

The new online application had four steps that allowed applicants to review and submit information before moving on to the next step. This helped avoid “start overs” due to missing or insufficient information. Applicants were able to complete an online form directly at the web site or they could download an application in a PDF format. Applicants were encouraged to first download the file, print it out, and complete the paper form in hard copy to make the online submission easier.

“We had tremendous success with our outreach which couldn’t be done without the help of the County libraries,” said Hambuch. “They were super in allowing Internet access and help to our applicants.”

Nearly 300 community, nonprofit and governmental agencies helped to contact low-income families which might be eligible. Several groups assisted their clients or members in completing the forms. Hard copy applications were also available from 31 participating Cities.

Best-Selling eAudiobooks Available At Your Home Computer

County Library patrons can now check out popular eAudiobooks from the comfort of their own homes. Thanks to a new service launched in January by the Orange County Public Library (OCPL), its 1.4 million patrons can now download eAudiobooks directly to their home computers, MP3 players or CDs whenever they want.

“Everyone who loves to listen to books on tape or CD will enjoy the flexibility this service allows them,” said Assistant County Librarian Helen Fried.

“Commuters love it since they can download the book directly to their personal MP3 players or CDs and listen while commuting. Children and teens will also find this media useful for

recreational reading as well as school assignments.”

download the free compatible software available online at www.ocpl.org.

Patrons may then browse through a collection of nearly 100 titles ranging from classics such as “Moby Dick” and “1984” to works of fiction and children’s tales. Download times vary depending on the Internet connection used; however, most fast-paced Internet access allows an eAudiobook to be downloaded in less than five minutes.



Brandi Solarte, Circulation Coordinator for OCPL, demonstrates an eAudiobook download at the West Garden Grove Public Library.

To use this service, Orange County residents must first obtain a library card from one of the 32 public library branches and then

Once an eAudiobook is checked out, it automatically expires after two weeks from the computer or MP3 player where it was downloaded. This does not

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eAudiobooks*(Continued from page 3)*

include burned CDs. One type of eAudiobook allows an unlimited number of patrons to check it out at once while other eAudiobooks only allow one user at a time.

During the development stages of this project, the OCPL underwent a year-long study to determine whether Orange County residents would rather check out eAudiobooks or eBooks (downloadable text) from the library. The study included surveys and consumer requests. It also involved collecting usage rates from vendors and other libraries.

The study determined that eAudiobooks are more widely used.

“We are very careful with how we utilize taxpayers’ dollars,” said Fried. “Our services directly affect Orange County residents, so our biggest concern is providing what the public needs. This is just one aspect of that. We are still in the book business.”

For residents who do not own a computer or have Internet access, the Public Library also offers the Playaway. This hand-held device is small enough to fit in your pocket and is available pre-loaded with the book or content of your choice. Patrons may borrow a Playaway from their local public library and need only to supply their own headphones.

“Even as adults, we can relate to storytelling and the act of being read to,” said Fried.

OCPL has future plans to create a kiosk system in its branches for patrons to directly download books to their MP3 devices.



Satish Ajmani
Chief Information
Officer

New IT Chief Joins Orange County

Newly appointed Chief Information Officer Satish Ajmani walked into his office on Feb. 21 for

his first day on the job. With more than 35 years of experience in both the public and private sectors, Ajmani is a recognized leader in Information Technology (IT).

In 2004, he was honored by Computerworld Magazine as a “Premier 100 IT Leader.” Just prior to joining Orange County, he was the Chief Information Officer for the County of Santa Clara for eight years.

Ajmani recently sat down with County Connection and outlined his goals and priorities for the County’s Information Technology function.

Q. What are your goals and immediate priorities for IT?

A. My overarching goal is to help the Board, County management and employees use Information Technology to make their jobs better and improve service to the public. It is extremely important for us to conduct business in a more efficient manner, through technology. The ‘utility’ aspects of IT need to function with high availability and reliability, which is part of my responsibility.

The Board of Supervisors is taking a strong role with the future direction of IT. With leadership from the Board and the CEO, my vision is to develop and imple-

ment strategic information technology to achieve effective, measurable business objectives. I will be working with the Board, the CEO and agency executives to look at IT operations that will ultimately develop ideas to improve the way IT functions.

My initial priorities include developing a five-year strategic plan along with a three-year operating plan that will focus on initiatives and projects to be accomplished in that time frame. IT staff will create and implement an IT Governance Model that embodies principles of collaboration.

Q. Can you tell us about your philosophical/organizational approach to IT?

A. Overall my approach is to work with the Departments recognizing and respecting their expertise in their application systems. I plan on using a balanced organizational structure to guide IT. The County as a whole should look at duplicative underlying technology platforms such as hardware platforms for efficiencies. Departmental applications should remain in the domain of the departments. Another focus will be on new types of solutions, especially those serving the public. The County should present “one face” to the public through our web site. You might also think of this in terms of a County identity or County brand so that County services and information are very easy for constituents to access. This will help the public to develop a trust in the County and conduct more transactions online.

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IT Chief

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Q. What kind of changes in the future do you foresee with technology?

A. One of the biggest changes I see is our changing workforce. When the baby boomer generation retires, which is beginning to happen now, we will have a much younger workforce, which is extremely savvy with technology. They will expect our tech-

nology to be more sophisticated and to work instantly. The younger workforce will want the latest technology to feel highly effective.

Also, I see the demand growing for collaborative tools, such as blogs (online web logs, like a diary) and online discussion boards.

Q. How would you describe your management style?

A. My management style is focused on teamwork and collaboration.

Q. What interests do you have in your spare time?

A. I really enjoy being outdoors. I like hiking, bicycling and camping. My wife and I recently celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary with a trip to Hawaii. A lot of my spare time recently has been devoted to finding a new permanent home here in Orange County.

County Mental Health Service Act Office Impresses State Review Board



Health Care Agency conducts a mini-community workshop to obtain feedback on a mental health services plan at the Delhi Community Center in Santa Ana.

The County's community mental health plan recently won kudos in Sacramento from the State Department of Mental Health Review Team. The well received plan is the result of an exhaustive planning process implemented by Health Care Agency's Mental Health Service Act (MHSA) Office.

"This plan is a significant piece of our future, and we hope to leverage this opportunity to really transform our mental health system," said Mark Refowitz, Deputy Agency Director for Behavioral Health Services, at last month's review board.

All 58 counties took part in the State review process.

Proposition 63 MHSA was passed by voters in November 2004 and directed counties to develop community mental health systems that meet the needs of all residents with serious mental illness and which also reduces the long-term, adverse impact that results from untreated serious mental illness. The County's MHSA office then began a thorough process to find out what Orange County residents wanted in a plan.

The multifaceted planning process included components such as community awareness meetings, stakeholder training workshops, a 59-member steering committee, age-specific workgroups to make program recommendations to the steering committee, and a variety of focus groups to provide feedback. More than 4,000 attendees participated in the planning process.

"I am so pleased to be a part of this historic initiative that will soon bring new services to those who so desperately need them," said MHSA Administrator Dorothy Hendrickson.



25 Years

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Stephen Wells
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Brian Cossairt
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Sima Nassiri
Sheriff-Coroner

Winnie Yangstay
Social Services Agency

Patricia Hill
Treasurer-Tax Collector

Jerry Hemighaus
Resources & Development
Management Department

Grant Anderson
Resources & Development
Management Department

Nirund Khorphorn
Resources & Development
Management Department

Jose Aguilera
Resources & Development
Management Department

Peter Rodriguez
Resources & Development
Management Department

Ly Thornburgh
Public Library

40 Years

John Gietzen
Resources & Development
Management Department

35 Years

Barbara Christian
Public Library

Daniel Josslin
Public Library

30 Years

Ervin Schorer
Auditor-Controller

Malcom McKinnon
District Attorney

Susan Cremeans
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