



## **Carlos Fandino** Takes Command as Vernon City Administrator

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# Vernon Quarterly

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*Vernon Quarterly* is a newsletter for the residents, businesses and other community stakeholders in this city that “means business.”

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# Carlos Fandino Takes Command as Vernon City Administrator



**O**n March 15, members of the Vernon City Council selected Carlos R. Fandino to serve as Vernon city administrator, effecting a leadership change and bringing in an executive with a new, fresh perspective on municipal management to the top appointed office at Vernon City Hall.

Mr. Fandino had previously served as director of Vernon Gas & Electric (VG&E), the municipal-owned utility and proprietary department (formerly known as Vernon Light & Power) that serves Vernon's nearly 2,000 industrial businesses and residential customers. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the Southern California Public Power Authority (SCPPA) and an executive committee member of the Western Systems Power Pool (WSPP). Prior to his appointment as director of Gas & Electric, Mr. Fandino served as the utility department's systems operator. Peter Hervish is VG&E's interim director.

At his swearing-in, Mr. Fandino said, "I'm honored to lead our city. My goal is to sustain business growth, increase city staff productivity and improve employee

morale. I believe these goals can be accomplished while we maintain our city's firm commitment to good governance practices and we work to steadily improve relations with our city's surrounding communities."

"Vernon is key to business growth and job expansion in L.A. County. I want to build on Vernon's 110 years of success as L.A. County's home for industrial businesses. My experience in managing complex financial transactions, bond financing and department budgets and understanding Vernon's infrastructure needs enabled me to hit the ground running on 'Day One' as Vernon city administrator," Mr. Fandino said.

Mr. Fandino is a decorated reservist and veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps. He served with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Division Light Armored Vehicle Battalion in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm during the Persian Gulf War in 1990. He graduated magna cum laude from Woodbury University with a bachelor's degree in business and management. He is married and a father to three college-age young adults.

Since his March appointment, Mr. Fandino has worked closely with city department directors to make his imprint on the city's spending priorities for the upcoming 2016-2017 fiscal year budget. He has held



group meetings with city employees to listen to their concerns and discuss his administration's goals.

*Vernon Quarterly* spoke to Mr. Fandino about his role and responsibilities as Vernon's "commander-in-chief":

**What do you see as the biggest challenge facing the city of Vernon today?**

Vernon has long surpassed its era of rebuilding its flawed practice into a government operation that is transparent and effective. We have entered into a new phase where our main priority is focus on the support of our constituents. It is our duty to ensure that we provide reliable, unparalleled service in all aspects of city government functions to the community to enable their success. We do not intend to maintain current levels, but we will strive to elevate our performance. This is our new challenge.

**You've worked for the city for more than two decades, so you've witnessed a lot of changes here over the years. How has Vernon changed for the better?**

As articulated in the previous remark, Vernon has managed to overcome many of its past tribulations. Experiencing those difficulties and learning from them has made us better. There is a new perspective, an optimism, which has not presented itself for many years. I, as the new city administrator, will work to foster this further so that our city may prosper.



**Carlos Fandino discusses city budget priorities with Mayor William "Bill" Davis.**

**Every top executive has a collection of professional and personal goals. What are yours as Vernon city administrator?**

As city administrator, I hope to accomplish goals that will enhance the community I serve. I am targeting: Business community vitality; cohesion and engagement; effective and sustainable community health and public safety; sustainable facilities, infrastructure and technology; economic development; and financial sustainability. My personal fulfillment relies heavily on my ability to tackle the aforementioned issues facing the City of Vernon.



**Carlos Fandino with City Administration staff members Lilia Hernandez (L) and Diana Figueroa (R).**



# “I intend to give it my all...”

**Carlos Fandino,**  
Vernon City Administrator



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## **Running an entire city is different from managing a department within a city. What have you learned since you accepted your job as city administrator?**

I have learned that there is not enough time in the day! In all sincerity, I have gained exposure to facets of the city that I had only glimpsed previously. My experience with the city has helped tremendously; I am able to navigate this role by applying the knowledge I have gathered over the years. I am enjoying my time as I work hard to amass change quickly.

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## **What’s your message to Vernon’s business owners?**

Business owners should know what I value most. I realize that I am here to serve them and ensure that they have what they need to be most successful, as they are the heart of the city. In my view, the following are significant core functions of city government: Fiscal responsibility and sustainability; protecting our environment; strategic thinking and planning for the future; high ethical standards; community involvement; high-quality customer service; a strong sense of community; and public safety.

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## **What’s your message to companies and corporations considering Vernon as a place to do business?**

I would encourage them to consider Vernon as their hub for commerce. I have aspirations to promote our

offerings and services to attract new enterprises, as there are many reasons to do business within our city limits and they should be known. In the next few years, I envision the City of Vernon as a vibrant business-friendly community with competitive rates, largely admired as a great place to conduct business.

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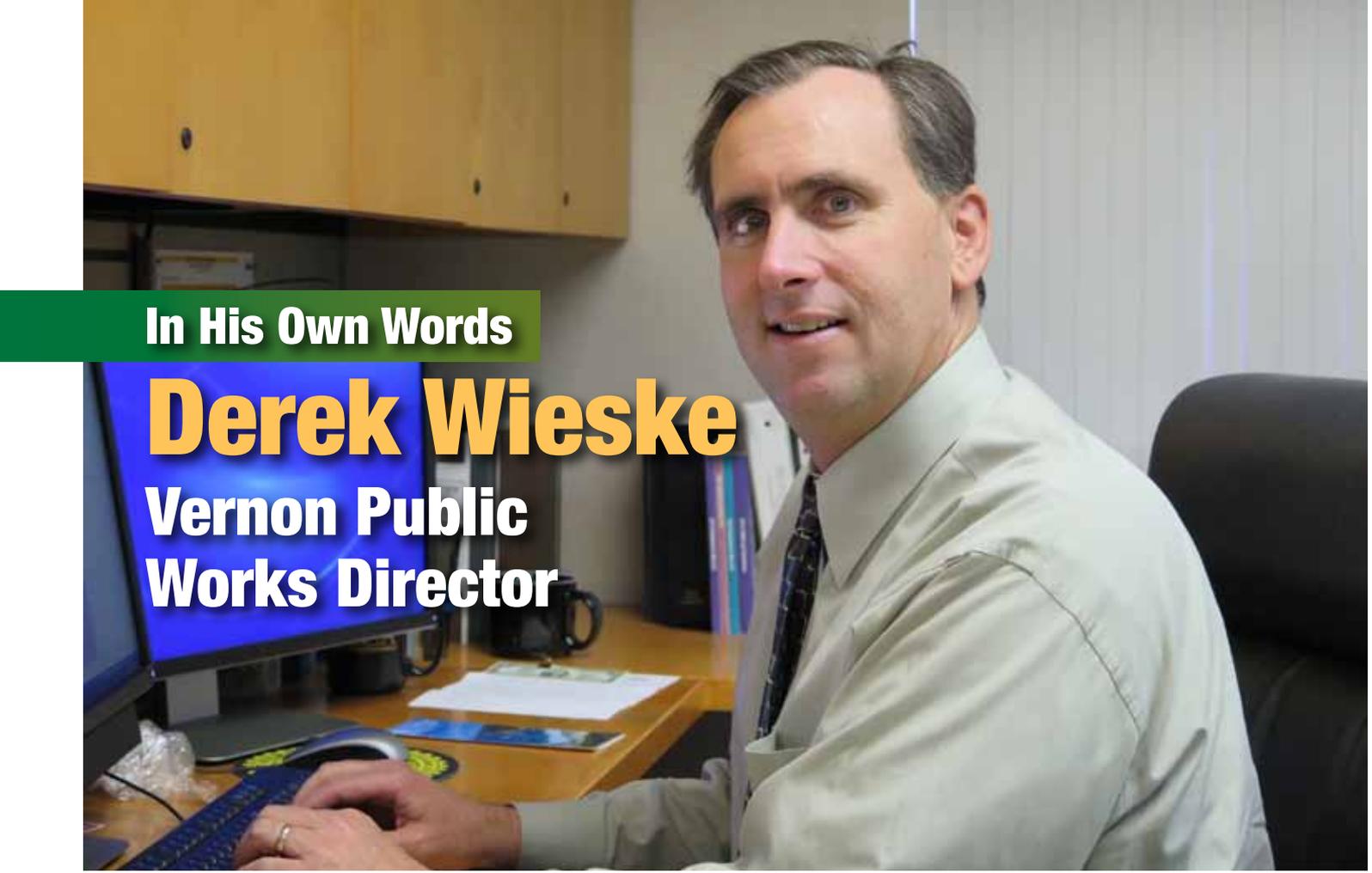
## **What’s your message to Vernon’s longtime residents and its most recent ones?**

Residents should be encouraged by the drive to elevate service in the Vernon community. They are valuable and their voice will always be heard. I am considering methods in which to implement services that will benefit our residents as well as businesses. I welcome feedback and suggestions to employ new programs and initiatives that are meaningful to this group.

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## **What do you hope you will have accomplished in “Year One” as Vernon city administrator?**

In “Year One,” I hope to begin transitioning the focus toward areas that are most valuable to both businesses and residents. I would like to administer a plan that sets us on a path toward growth and achievement that will elicit pride and excitement. The attitude that we employ will positively impact the outcome of our efforts. I intend to give it my all and convey messaging to my team that will encourage the highest levels of performance possible.



**In His Own Words**

# Derek Wieske

## Vernon Public Works Director

**O**n February 22, Derek Wieske assumed his position as director of the city's Public Works, Water and Development Services department. He oversees four divisions: Building, Planning, Public Works and Water. He worked for the Long Beach Public Works Department as an assistant city engineer before he accepted his department director position in Vernon.

Mr. Wieske is a registered civil engineer with more than 25 years of professional experience and management expertise in municipal capital projects, private development review and city infrastructure improvements such as roads, bridges and drainage systems, as well as street maintenance, solid waste management, traffic signal improvements and bike infrastructure.

Mr. Wieske served as public works director for the cities of Rancho Santa Margarita and Los Alamitos, deputy public works director for Rialto, assistant city engineer for Laguna Beach, civil engineering associate for Lake Forest and civil engineer for Orange over the course of his professional career.

Mr. Wieske earned his master's degree in business administration and holds a Master of Science in civil engineering from California State University, Long Beach. He earned his Bachelor of Science in civil engineering from University of California, Irvine.

Vernon's Public Works department offers a streamlined "one-stop" approach to permitting new development. Developers may process permits and receive project-specific information on building and zoning codes, public rights-of-way and water services at the Public Works department's City Hall counter.

Mr. Wieske admits he has big shoes to fill in his new role. He succeeded Samuel Kevin Wilson, Vernon's respected public works director who retired after nearly 40 years of public service in December 2015.

*Vernon Quarterly* spoke to Mr. Wieske about his new role and vision for his department:

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### ***What is at the top of your agenda as Vernon's public works director?***

Right from the start, my first order of business was to close a backlog involving permit reviews and plan checks that our department experienced before I assumed my position as director. We had a period

**Derek Wieske meets with Public Works senior staff member Scott Rigg.**



where it was all-hands-on-deck to make sure our businesses would not have to endure long delays that might hamper progress on their developments. I'm proud to say we've fully closed the backlog. I credit our staff for their hard work and dedication to upholding Vernon's solid reputation for providing quality public services.

Since you're asking me about my agenda during budget preparation time, I can tell you our department's budget has been on my mind a lot lately. Like many public works departments throughout the county, we are foreseeing a long-term shortfall of revenues to handle our current backlog of street repairs. The situation is particularly challenging in Vernon as the funding sources that most public works directors use to fund transportation costs, such as Prop A, Prop C, Measure R and gas tax, are generally distributed on a per capita basis.

However, since our population is so low, despite the fact that we have a significant road inventory to maintain, we are unfairly shortchanged. Additionally, I am finalizing plans to adjust the city's water rates to ensure the financial health of our water enterprise fund. We have already had some very positive meetings with the business community in that regard and anticipate bringing new water rates to the City Council this summer for their approval.

I've been spending a lot of time building relationships with various members of the business community, including taking tours of some of the local businesses, and I have come to appreciate the strong relationship between the city and the Vernon Chamber of Commerce. Over the coming months, I hope to continue to meet with business owners to find out how our department can improve our services.

In the long run, I would like to increase the overall investment in the city's infrastructure, including our streets, sidewalks, storm drains, housing units and, particularly, our water system. I would like to explore options to green our fleet, particularly when grant funding opportunities become available. Finally, realizing that our employees are our most important assets, I want to personally get to know each of my staff and do what I can to ensure the department's workforce is operating at their highest potential.

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### ***What should Vernon residents and business owners expect over the course of the next 12 months?***

Despite the momentary plan check backlog, I inherited a well-run department that was already highly respected by the business community in Vernon. In fact, several people have already informed me that I have some big shoes to fill after the departure of Kevin Wilson, the longtime director who served the city for nearly 40 years. Looking ahead, I would say that the businesses will continue to see a strong commitment to the business-friendly environment that has existed at City Hall over the years.

That said, I'm a big supporter of continuous improvement, and in my first 90 days, I have already seen some opportunities for improvement.

With regard to the residents, I will be playing a significant role in working with the Vernon Housing Commission. I already see a lot of need for improvements in our public housing stock, as well as for improvements in some of the policies that may not have been looked at in a number of years. That will be one of my major areas of focus during the summer months.

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### ***How does your experience in Vernon's public works department differ from your experiences in your previous senior public works position in Long Beach?***

Long Beach was obviously a much larger city in terms of both size and population, so there were a lot more capital projects to deliver, with a lot more staff to work on projects. Also, we had nine council districts in Long

Derek Wieske and Public Works staff member Felix Velasco confer with business representatives.



Beach, which sometimes had different priorities in terms of projects, so getting consensus on project issues was sometimes challenging in Long Beach.

In addition, in Long Beach, Public Works, Water and Development Services were actually three different departments, whereas, in the interest of remaining business friendly, the three functions are combined in Vernon. My department in Vernon is a “one-stop shop,” if you will, and I hear all the time how much the developers in Vernon appreciate how streamlined things are in this city. Also, in Long Beach, my focus was simply on the Engineering Bureau of the Public Works department.

There, I had a higher volume of projects to oversee, and I was able to focus primarily on traffic engineering, private development review and capital project delivery, whereas in Vernon, I do so much more. I am not only serving as the city engineer, but also as the planning director, the public works director, the water utility manager and the building official. My first three months have been quite a challenge, but I have always been one to enjoy a good challenge.

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***Vernon facilitated the construction of a new apartment complex that opened a year ago. Is more privately owned housing on Vernon’s horizon?***

That’s a great question, and I know that a lot of people are wondering that, but at the end of the day, that is a question that the City Council will ultimately need to answer. Frankly, it is a tough one, because Vernon was established as an industrial city more than 110 years ago, and currently, the City’s existing Housing Element does not envision more housing, public or private, due to its industrial nature. Rather, it’s a city that ultimately exists to primarily serve business, which is what personally intrigued me about the opportunity to come here.

The completion of the Vernon Village Apartment Complex, built by Meta Housing Corporation last year,

was a game changer for the city, as it essentially doubled the population. That project was ultimately accomplished with some public funding, and Meta deserves a great deal of the credit for putting that deal together. Looking forward, since we do not see much interest from residential developers to build in Vernon, the most likely scenario I foresee in the next few years is more publicly funded, but privately maintained, housing.

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***How close is Vernon to having what other cities with larger residential communities already have, such as a park?***

To be honest, I would say that would take a few years to come to fruition. Since Vernon has traditionally been an industrial city, there was not any emphasis from either the residents or the local businesses on development of recreational amenities, such as parks, bike paths and community centers. That may slowly change over time as the resident population slowly increases. There are some signs that these things may be coming in the future. Earlier in the year, the city had its first Park Master Planning Workshop in the city’s history, and if the voters pass the countywide park bond in November, some funding could become available to build the city’s first park. Next month, we are conducting our first Bike Master Plan Workshop in the city’s history, where we will discuss the L.A. River Bike Gap Closure Project, which has been in the planning stages for a number of years now.

Most importantly, we have started working with representatives from River L.A., which is being led by Frank Gehry, arguably one of the most famous architects alive today. We are trying to find out more about what they are planning for the future of the Los

Angeles River in terms of creating a long-term vision for the river and figuring out how to balance that vision with the concerns of our local businesses. That project, which has a lot of regional support behind it, will ultimately create a greener vision for the Los Angeles River, and then the main issue will be funding that vision. So, to answer your question, it appears that things are headed in that direction in Vernon.

***There is a lot of discussion and planning around transportation. What is the status of the 710 Freeway widening project that may help goods movement and the ECO Rapid Transit light rail system that could help with people movement?***

There is no denying that there is a significant need for the I-710 Corridor Improvement Project to move forward. When I was in Long Beach, I was fortunate enough to represent that city on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and one thing that was frustrating was the slow pace of the project.

At this point, it is one of the most congested freeways in the region, and it has been for a while. There is no doubt that the better the circulation on the freeway, the better it will be for businesses along the corridor. Looking ahead, I will remain on the I-710 TAC, but now I represent the City of Vernon, which also has an overall interest in the project moving forward, but obviously has some concerns unique to Vernon. Metro staff has indicated that the project's Recirculated Draft Environmental Impact Report (RDEIR) will be released next year, and at this point, I have no reason to believe that it will be delayed.

Regarding the EcoRapid Transit Project, I am optimistic that we will start seeing some real progress on that project in the next few years in terms of planning and environmental work. The Metro Board of Directors recently allocated \$18 million to that effort, which will give the project the boost it needs. While I am generally supportive of the project, I plan on working closely with representatives of the Eco Rapid Transit Authority to minimize the traffic impacts on the businesses of Vernon.

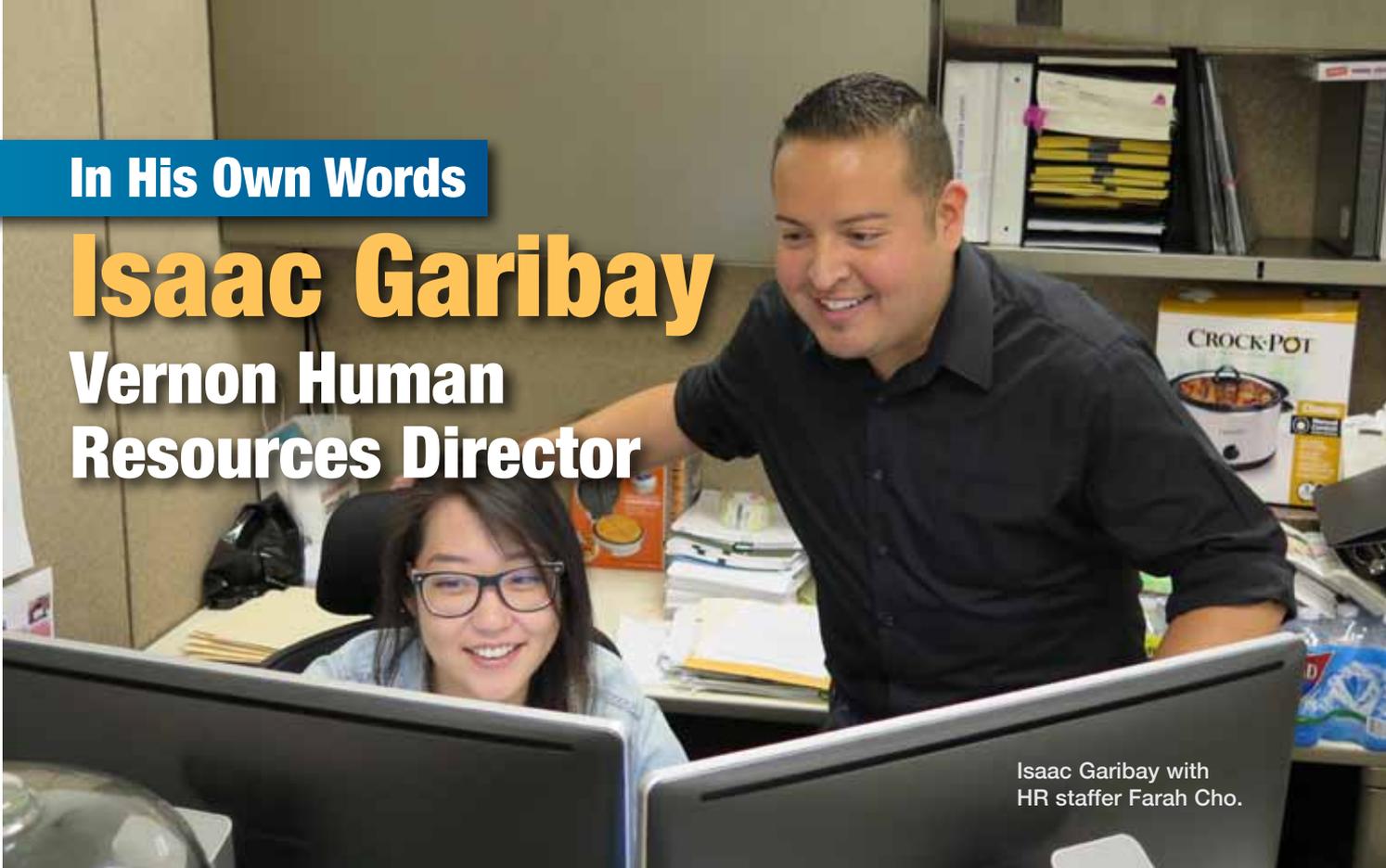
Derek Wieske discusses Public Works goals with staffer Anthony Zarate.



## In His Own Words

# Isaac Garibay

## Vernon Human Resources Director



Isaac Garibay with HR staffer Farah Cho.

Isaac Garibay became Vernon's new human resources director on May 3 after serving for nearly four years as director of the City of Temecula's department of Human Resources. Before serving as Temecula's human resources director, Mr. Garibay worked for nearly a decade with the City of Chino, where he rose to the position of human resources analyst. He began his professional career in human resources at the Montgomery Wards Distribution Center in June 2000. He served as a human resources associate with the West Covina-based East Valley Community Health Center in 2001.

Mr. Garibay earned his master's degree in public administration from California State University, Dominguez Hills, and earned his Bachelor of Science in business administration with an emphasis in management and human resources from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

Mr. Garibay is a member of the Society for Human Resource Management. He has 16 years of private and public sector experience in human resources management, labor relations, employee benefits, employee recruitment, risk management, employee classification and compensation and personnel policies. He succeeded Teresa McAllister, who retired as Vernon's first-ever human resources director in October 2015.

*Vernon Quarterly* spoke to Mr. Garibay about the challenges and opportunities of his position:

***You were the head of the Human Resources department in the City of Temecula. Are the challenges in that city different from the ones you face in Vernon, and if so, how are they different?***

Yes, the challenges are different in general because the demographics of the communities are very different; Temecula has a larger residential population



Isaac Garibay meets with HR senior staffer Karina Rueda.

Isaac Garibay is sworn in by City Clerk Maria Ayala.



to serve whereas Vernon has a larger business population to serve. Those demographics result in a very different staffing makeup, which comes with different employee and labor relations needs, and those needs are largely managed in the Human Resources department.

***Vernon's reform era transformed how the city carries out various municipal functions, such as implementing its human resources policies. From your perspective as a human resources executive, what is your assessment of Vernon's accomplishments in human resources?***

Vernon is well on its way to becoming the model city on many fronts, including human resources management. Many of the best practices in HR policies and procedures have already been implemented post-reform era, and many more are in the works. I'm excited to have been chosen to continue to lead this effort.

***How does Vernon stack up as a workplace compared to other cities you're familiar with?***

I have been fortunate to work for great employers, with wonderful people, but Vernon stands out as an employer that is committed to making sure it has the staffing, tools and training to deliver excellent service to the public. Committing those resources toward high levels of services, and working alongside a team that values that same commitment, is very rewarding to me.

***Are there any best practices you feel Vernon should adopt to further the city's improvements with regard to human resources?***

At this point (i.e., my second week at Vernon), there are no immediate needs for change that I can identify; however, I am still making a lot of observations and learning about why things are done the way they're done. I am certain we will continue to fine-tune operations, including introducing and/or updating our best practices, as that is an ever-evolving endeavor.

***What do you see as the value proposition for the women and men you would hope to recruit to work for Vernon as city employees?***

Isaac Garibay reviews a document with HR staff member Veronica Avendano.



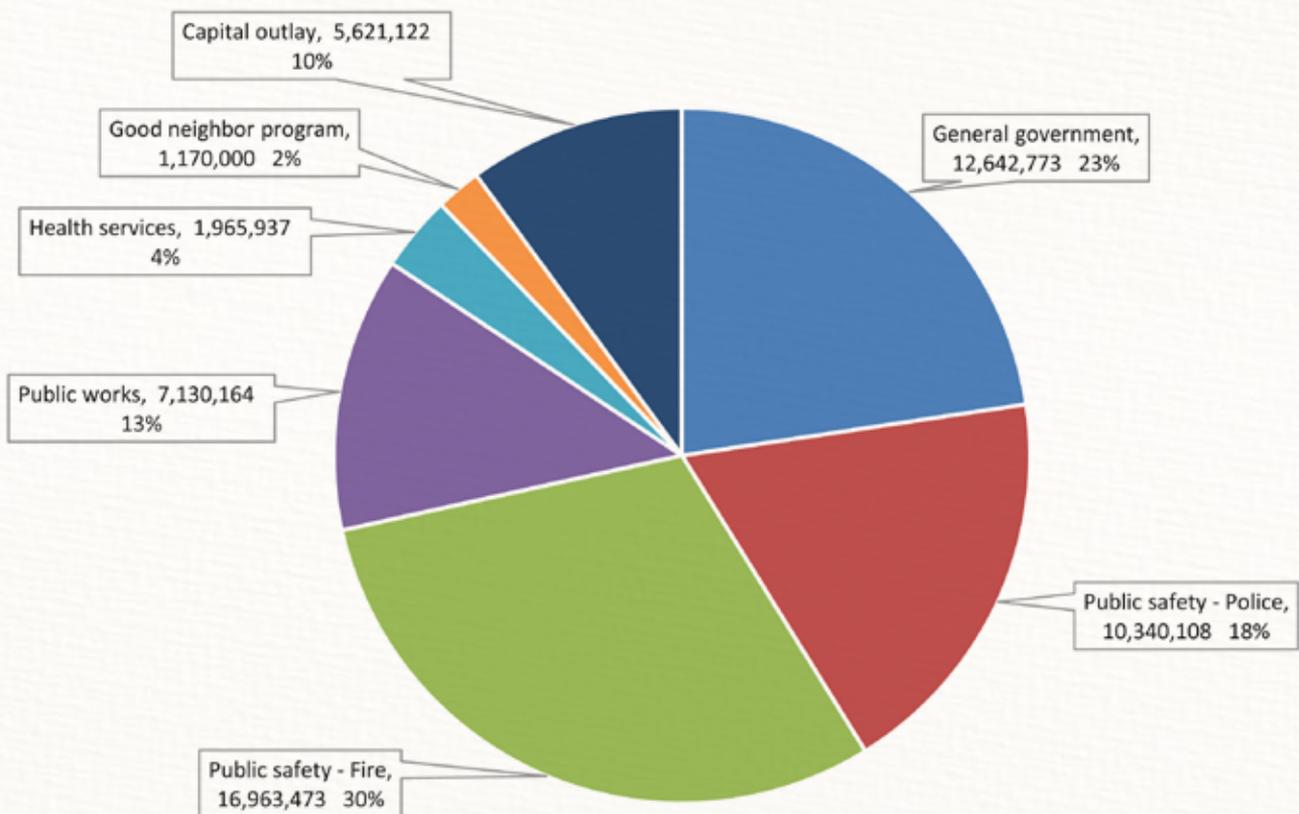
To start, the foundational values for any candidate being considered for employment with Vernon would be honesty and integrity. Beyond that, there are several values that will be evaluated for fit with the organizational culture. I am still learning that culture, and so far, it appears that those additional values will include: High work ethic standards, a progressive outlook, valuing technology to enhance efficiencies and being team-oriented as opposed to self-oriented.

***What sold you on Vernon before you finalized your decision to accept your executive position as human resources director for the city?***

There were many factors that went into my decision to accept the human resources director position with the City of Vernon. I was initially intrigued by Vernon's history as it relates to the most recent reform efforts, and it was attractive to me to be part of a team that is setting the standard for good governance and transparency. Additionally, the reform efforts led to the establishment of a well-staffed Human Resources department, which was a sign that the human resources function was valued, and that is critically important to me. Finally, getting to know City Administrator Carlos Fandino sealed the deal for me! I found him to be visionary, committed, supportive and generally amicable, which are characteristics I seek in a leader because those qualities provide for an effective and enjoyable work environment.

# Vernon City Council Approves Budget for 2016-2017

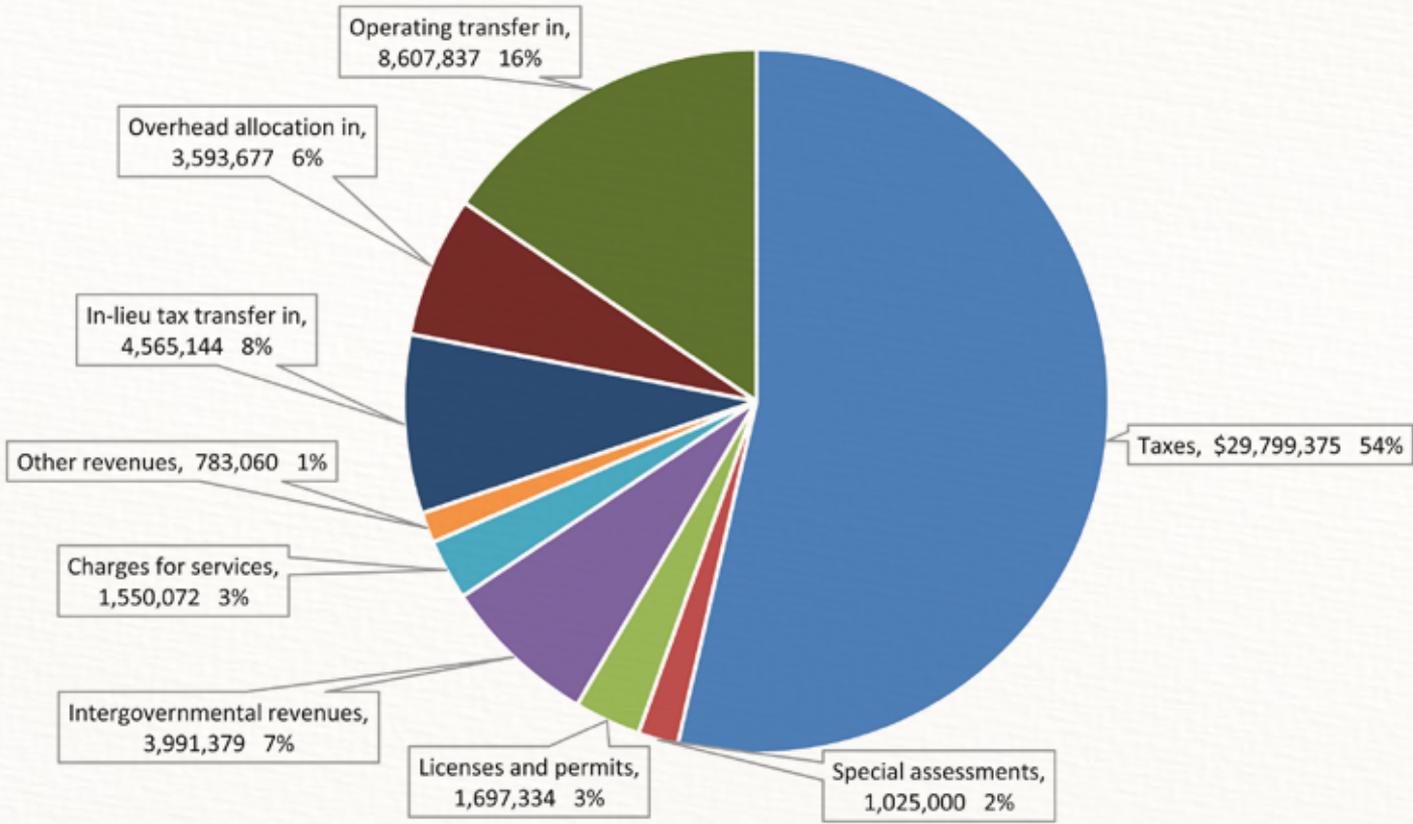
## EXPENDITURES



- General government
- Public safety - Police
- Public safety - Fire
- Public works
- Health services
- Good neighbor program
- Capital outlay

Vernon city council members have approved the city’s budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1. City Administrator Carlos Fandino described the city’s spending plan as “fiscally responsible and leaner than in past years.” He noted the city reduced Vernon Fire Department overtime expenditures by 50 percent in the coming fiscal year, saving the city more than \$1 million. “We will continue to work to streamline costs as we move forward,” Mr. Fandino said.

**REVENUES**



- Taxes
- Intergovernmental revenues
- In-lieu tax transfer in
- Special assessments
- Charges for services
- Overhead allocation in
- Licenses and permits
- Other revenues
- Operating transfer in

# AmeriPride Puts “Green Tech” to the Test With All-Electric Delivery Trucks



AmeriPride replaces 20 percent of its Vernon branch delivery vehicle fleet with electric trucks.

AmeriPride Services, a leading North American textile rental services and supply company, has followed through on plans to replace 20 percent of its Vernon branch’s delivery vehicle fleet with electric trucks equipped with Motiv Power Systems’ All-Electric Powertrain. Motiv delivered the first of 10 zero-emission step vans in February as part of AmeriPride’s mission to reduce its carbon footprint and be an industry leader in environmental sustainability.

Bill Evans, president and CEO of AmeriPride, said, “AmeriPride is committed to the environment and the communities where we live and work. As one of the biggest operators in our industry, we are setting the standard for clean operations. We continue to make improvements to our delivery operations and invest resources to test and help advance new green technologies.”

AmeriPride purchased 10 battery-powered walk-in vans with a grant from the California Energy Commission. The company chose their Vernon market for its all-electric truck pilot based on route density, recharging infrastructure, financial incentives and the region’s poor air quality.

Vernon City Administrator Carlos Fandino said, “We hope Vernon businesses follow AmeriPride’s lead and invest in ‘green truck’ fleets. One day, we hope to have far more zero emission truck-charging stations in Vernon than today’s gasoline and diesel truck-fueling stations. The clean air benefits to Vernon and its surrounding communities are obvious. Businesses with vehicle fleets in Los Angeles, Long Beach and other cities throughout L.A. County should take notice.”

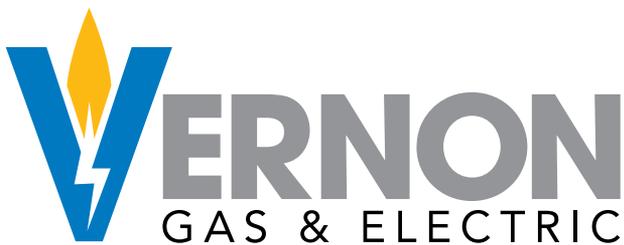
AmeriPride’s battery-powered walk-in step vans are built on a Ford chassis with an 80-mile range and 50 percent battery charge in 2.5 hours. Jim Castelaz, founder and CEO of Motiv Power Systems, said, “The Ford F59 chassis being used is incredibly versatile. We’re excited to demonstrate an all-electric option on these AmeriPride trucks. This effort provides a good example to the regional delivery services community that there are real things a company can do to improve regional air quality and reduce fuel costs.”

# Vernon, San Gabriel and Pasadena City College Police Officer Road Race Team Wins Brutal Baker to Vegas Relay

For the road runners of the Vernon Police Department's relay team with San Gabriel Police Department and Pasadena City College Police Department, the typical post-race pledge—"Wait until next year"—wasn't spoken this year as the team's final runner crossed the finish line in an impressive 16 hours, 15 minutes and 3 seconds to win the Baker to Vegas Challenge Cup Relay in the 99-sworn member police agency category. The grueling 120-mile road race relay attracts law enforcement running teams from around the globe to raise funds for charity.



## VG&E Receives APPA's Top Honor for Public Utilities



The American Public Power Association (APPA) has awarded Vernon Gas & Electric its prestigious "Diamond Level" for reliable public power providers demonstrating their proficiency in four categories: Reliability, safety, workforce development and system improvement. VG&E was among eight power providers nationwide out of more than 2,000 public power utilities in the U.S. to be bestowed the APPA's Diamond level recognition.



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# Vernon Firefighters Inspire Elementary School Students to Become Lifelong Readers



*Vernon Fire Captain Steve Ruffoni reads stories to Vernon City School third graders.*

