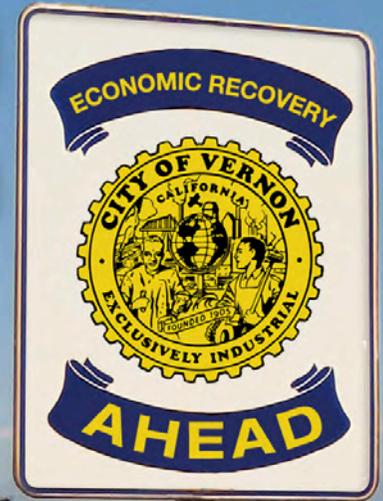




# Encouraging Signs Boost Optimism in Vernon



# Vernon Quarterly

SPRING EDITION

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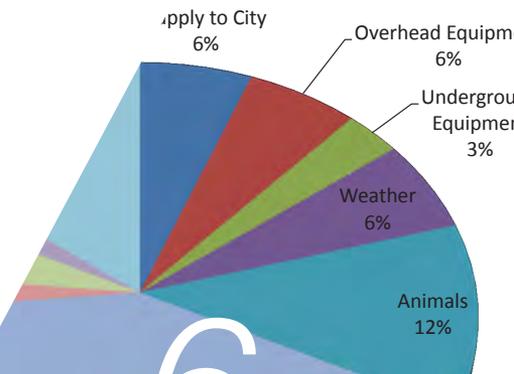
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*Vernon Quarterly* is a newsletter for the residents, businesses and other community stakeholders in this city that "means business."

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# Vernon Positioned to Lead Region's Economic Rebound

The shock and awe from our nation's Great Recession, that hammered businesses' bottom lines, blew out corporate profits and left many companies dazed and clinging to life, is finally showing signs of wearing off.

Leading indicators pointing to a slow but steady economic recovery are beginning to be more evident in the City of Vernon, as commercial activity picks up among the city's 1,800 businesses.



**"We are seeing a very encouraging rise in construction activity in 2014; it**

**tells us the future for business in Vernon bodes well for companies looking to expand their operations or locate significant business units in Southern California."**

—Mark Whitworth, Vernon City Administrator

"We began to witness a weak upward trend in business activity in early 2013, with an emphasis on the word 'weak,' when viewed as a month-to-month trend-line," he said. "As we approached the summer of 2013, we saw slight dips in business activity. But as 2013 drew to a close, we observed a fairly strong finish to that year."

"In my mind, those are indications that our local business owners are working to put the recession behind them and get back to doing what they do best: making great products and distributing them to their domestic and global markets," Mr. Whitworth added.

Recent building sales and leases in Vernon have contributed to the city's continuing optimistic outlook for 2014. A 143,000-square-foot building will soon house a produce company. A 90,000-square-foot building will soon become the new home for a garment firm, adding to the impressive stable of brand name garment manufacturers that already make Vernon their home.

One of the nation's fastest growing, premium natural and organic food retail chains recently closed escrow on a major Vernon property that will allow it to construct a new distribution center to better serve its Southern California supermarkets. The company maintains a substantial warehouse and food distribution footprint in Vernon.

Another encouraging sign: Vernon businesses have upgraded, improved, remodeled and retooled to the tune of nearly \$58 million in 2013. That business investment figure is more than double the \$27-million valuation for permitted construction activity that was generated in Vernon in 2012.

The rise in commercial activity helped reinforce Vernon's image as a job engine for the Southern California economy as electrical, plumbing, grading, roofing and mechanical workers plied their trades to bring new luster, safety and greater capabilities to major Vernon businesses.

But \$58 million in construction activity doesn't mean Vernon is fully back to its pre-recession position. In 2006, more than \$99 million in construction activity occurred in the city. In 2007, an estimated \$98 million in construction activity took place in Vernon.

Everyone recalls what occurred in 2008 when a Wall Street financial meltdown triggered our nation's Great Recession; the sharp downturn hit with full force on Main Street and businesses and workers across the nation were sent reeling for four years.

Still, the doubling of Vernon's business construction since 2012 is a positive sign for the economy of L.A. County, and Vernon continues to be an ideal center for business growth and job expansion.



Whole Foods Market is building a new distribution center on Pacific Avenue to complement its 48<sup>th</sup> Street facility.



# Vernon Police Say “10-4” to Crime Reporting from Mobile Devices

Vernon residents, business employees and city workers have a new online tool to combat crime and report suspicious activity to Vernon police officers and investigators. The Vernon Police Department has implemented a new Internet-based Online Police Reporting System that can be accessed through the City of Vernon website ([cityofvernon.org](http://cityofvernon.org)) from a computer, smartphone or tablet.

The system is easy to use, but it is not intended for emergency situations where immediate police response is needed. In the event of an emergency or a crime in

progress, Vernon police urge crime victims or persons witnessing a crime in progress to call 911.

The Vernon Police Department's Online Police Reporting System is intended to be a high-tech complement to effective community-oriented policing activities, such as Neighborhood Watch and WeTip. The difference with the Online Police Reporting System is that people living and working in Vernon can report suspicious incidents or suspected criminal activity—from truck battery thefts to graffiti vandalism to identity theft—using a computer, smartphone or tablet.

“We need the eyes and ears of our community members—and now we can add their fingers on their keyboards—to help our police officers keep Vernon safe and secure,” Chief Daniel Calleros said. “Our primary goal in deploying our department's new Online Police Reporting System is to encourage Vernon residents and workers to be actively involved in preventing crimes. We have a new Internet-based crime fighting software tool that is available and accessible to our city's residents and employees seven days a week, 24 hours a day on their computers or mobile devices.”

The Vernon Police Department's Online Police Reporting System takes a user through a series of questions and a set of steps in order to submit a non-emergency crime report to Vernon police officers.



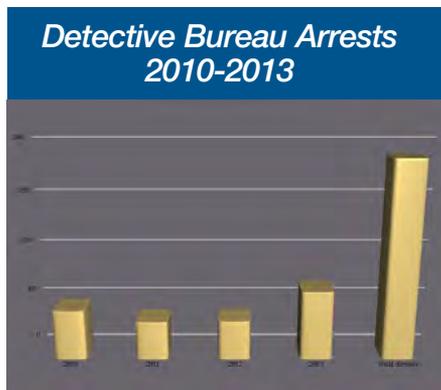
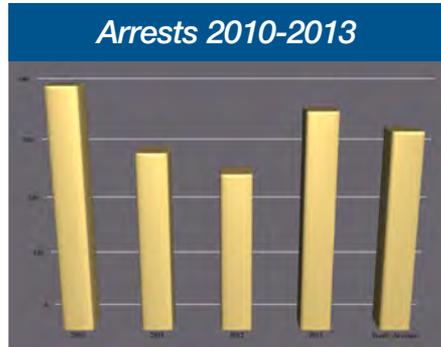
# Leaner Police Force Keeps Vernon Safe

Despite a significant reduction in staffing levels from 2010 through 2013 as a result of the recession and the city's tighter finances, members of the Vernon Police Department (VPD) have managed to keep Vernon ranked as one of the safest cities in Los Angeles County.

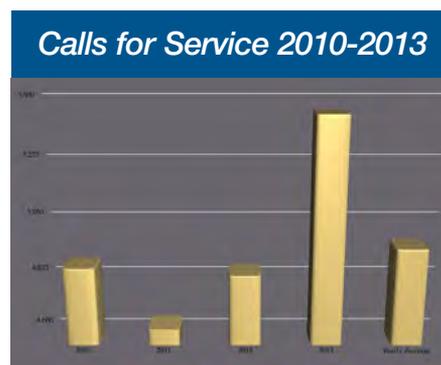
A four-year analysis of Part 1 Crimes investigated by VPD shows that Vernon's police officers, detectives and dispatchers have consistently managed to provide more public safety services—year-over-year—with less police staff each year over the past four years.



"We've had to tighten our belt due to less general fund dollars for public safety," VPD Chief Daniel Calleros explained. "Despite a leaner budget, our department has managed to do more with less to keep Vernon's residents and workers safe. Our patrol officers and detectives are making more arrests even though our staffing levels are lower than they were in 2010."

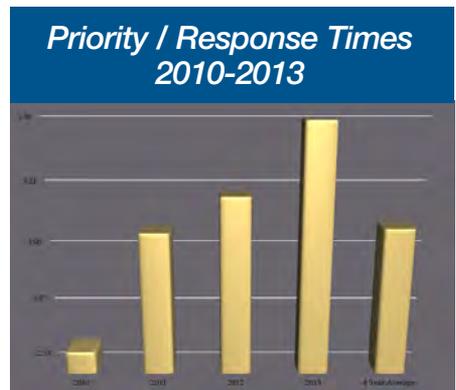


Despite a 10-member reduction in staff over the past four years, Vernon police officers responded to 550 additional calls for service in 2013 compared to 2010.



Despite this reduction in staff, the measurement of public safety that typically matters most to residents, workers and business owners hasn't changed dramatically. VPD officers arrive on the scene of a Priority 1 incident nearly as quickly today as they did four years ago.

"Our goal is to respond within three minutes," Chief Calleros said. "We knew that reduced staff would likely affect our response time. But our officers and staff have shown great dedication, and our average response time for the past four years is a respectable three minutes, 13 seconds."

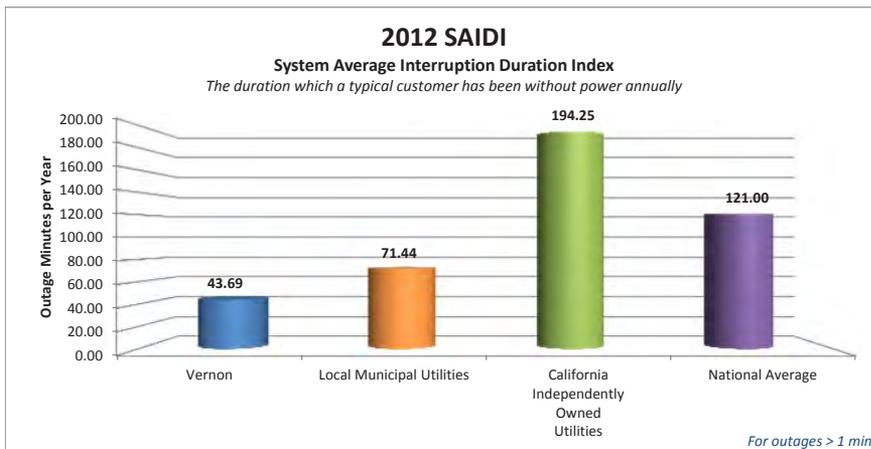
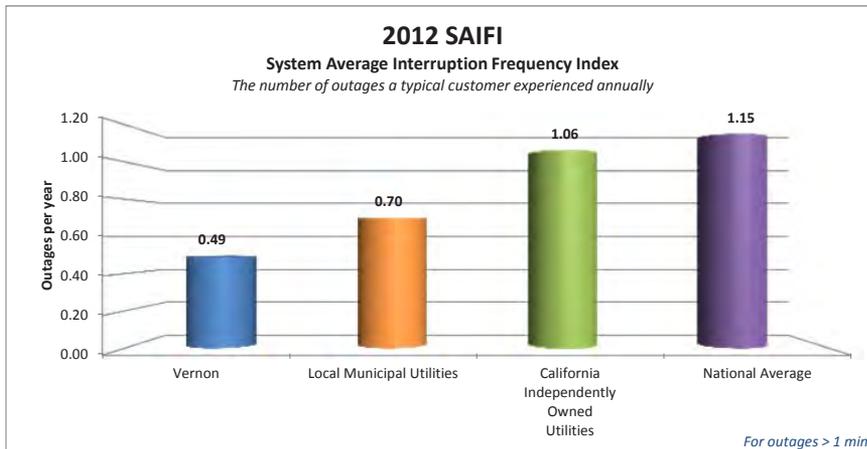


"We know that when a crime is in progress or a person's life may be endangered, every second counts," Chief Calleros said. "So our department will continue to work on arriving on scene as fast as we can whenever our officers respond to a Priority 1 call for service."



# Reliability Matters When Power Outages Can Puncture Profits

## 2012 Reliability Benchmark



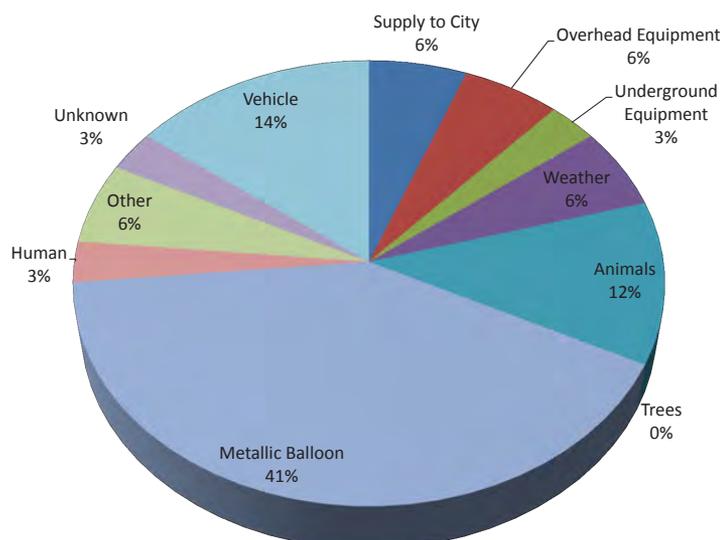
Vernon Gas & Electric (VG&E) has been ranked as one of the state's most dependable power providers in a 2012 reliability benchmark survey of local municipal utilities and independently owned utilities in California.

"Our team prides itself on its ability to keep Vernon businesses powered up and operating with the fewest disruptions in service possible year after year," Carlos Fandino, VG&E Director, said. "It's one of the top three reasons why Vernon is a prime destination for large manufacturers, food processors and cold storage facilities."

"We maintain an excellent response time," Mr. Fandino said. "We monitor 1,910 business meters compared to 28 residential meters, so the focus of our team is clear, and we take care of business with efficient and effective troubleshooting operations and time-sensitive power restoration."

"We have an enviable reliability record; now, if we could only do something about those darn metallic balloons," he commented.

## 2013 Outage Causes





## “Exclusively Industrial” Evolution

California State Senator Kevin de León, State Senator Ricardo Lara and U.S. Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard joined Vernon officials to break ground on Vernon Village Park, a 45-unit apartment development to be completed in mid-2015.

“Vernon Village Park marks a new day in our ‘Exclusively Industrial’ city,” Vernon City Administrator Mark Whitworth said. “When the apartment complex is completed, Vernon will become a ‘live/work’ community. Five years ago, you couldn’t have imagined an evolutionary change such as this in the life of our city.”

Vernon Village Park represents the fulfillment of Vernon’s most significant

good governance reform: the city’s pledge to increase its voting population. Vernon Village Park is expected to more than double the number of voters in Vernon.

“I applaud Vernon’s progress,” Senator De Leon said. “We’ll continue to work hard to ensure the city meets all of its reform obligations to enlarge its population, energize its electorate and become a model city in East Los Angeles.”

West Los Angeles-based Meta Housing Corporation will build and manage the development. Vernon Village Park is designed to be an attractive, affordable and energy-efficient home for low-income families. The LEED Silver project features spacious one-, two- and three-bedroom units with balconies and patios, on-site laundry and a community building with kitchen.





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## Name Changers

The historic Vernon Light and Power Department has a new name: Vernon Gas and Electric (VG&E). The city's new VG&E brand more accurately reflects the department's full array of municipal utility services for business and residential customers, comprised of electric power, natural gas and fiber-optic digital communication services.

In addition to the city's new VG&E brand, the stalwart staff of the Vernon Community Services Department now reports for work to the newly named Vernon Department of Public Works, Water and Development. This Vernon Public Works brand is intended to more accurately reflect the broad scope of the department's infrastructure, water and commercial development responsibilities and duties throughout the city.