

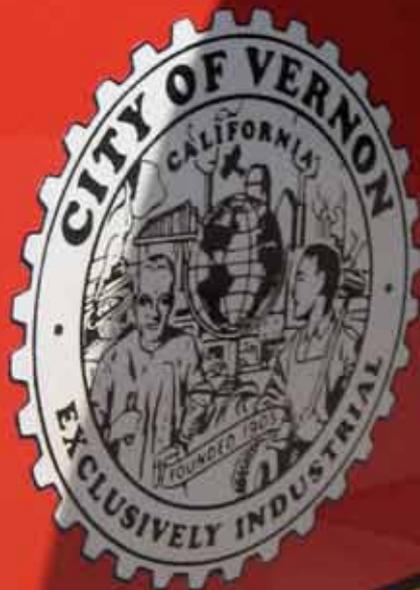
Vernon Quarterly

MAY 2015



CLASS WON

VERNON



FIRE

CLASS 1

PLUS: Peace Keepers
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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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EXIDE PLANT CLOSURE PROCESS UNDERWAY



The City of Vernon Health and Environmental Control Department, Public Works, Water and Development Services Department and Vernon Gas and Electric Department have met with Exide Technologies officials to go over a detailed list of city requirements for proper closure of the company's lead acid battery recycling plant at 2700 South Indiana Street in Vernon.

Before city department officials are able to issue building demolition permits to Exide, the company must submit detailed work plans for complying with the city's requirements for asbestos removal; capping sewer system laterals; terminating utilities; storm water discharge management and control; clarifier and waste structure removal; air quality and fugitive dust control; hazardous materials management and hazardous waste removal; non-hazardous solid waste disposal and diversion; soil disturbance and erosion sediment control; and rodent control.

"We deeply regret the loss of jobs that will result from the closure of the

Exide plant and the impact that the plant closure will have on the families of Exide's plant employees due to their loss of income," said Vernon City Administrator Mark Whitworth. "We pledge to work collaboratively in partnership with federal, state, regional and county environmental agency officials to ensure the Exide plant will be safely demolished over the coming months, and perhaps years, it will take to accomplish," he added.

The city's plant closure meeting with Exide representatives came in the aftermath of a California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) order on March 12, 2015, that began the state's environmental oversight process to safely close Exide's plant. DTSC's order includes provisions for the company's continued funding of lead dust clean-up efforts at residential properties in Vernon's surrounding communities.

Under an agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice, Exide will avoid criminal charges related to its plant operations in return for

agreeing to permanently shutdown its plant in compliance with DTSC requirements. Exide filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in June 2013. DTSC officials had previously notified Exide executives that they felt the lead acid battery recycling facility could not operate in compliance with California's public health and environmental safety regulations.

DTSC Director Barbara Lee said, "In keeping with our commitment to the community, our priority is to ensure the safe closure of the Exide plant and to complete the clean-up of contaminated yards in the surrounding neighborhoods. DTSC will use every tool and legal mechanism at its disposal to ensure that Exide's remaining resources are used to properly close the facility and clean up contamination in the residential area."

In November 2014, DTSC required Exide to set aside \$38.6 million, including an \$11 million surety bond for safely closing the plant, and \$9 million for soil clean-up at homes in two affected neighborhoods.



Vernon Fire's highly trained personnel protect our city as well as surrounding communities.

CLASS WON

Vernon Fire Department Retains Its Top Public Protection Rating

For the 25th straight year, the Vernon Fire Department has retained its highly coveted Class 1 fire protection rating. Vernon Fire scored 96.08 earned credits out of a total 105.5 credits available to retain its hard-earned Class 1 status.

Vernon Fire Chief Michael Wilson said, "Maintaining our Fire Department's Class 1 rating is an important recognition of the comprehensive fire protection services available to the Vernon community. There is no feeling more reassuring for residents, business owners and their employees than to know that the city where they live and work has the full complement of fire protection resources needed to save lives and protect property in times of an emergency."

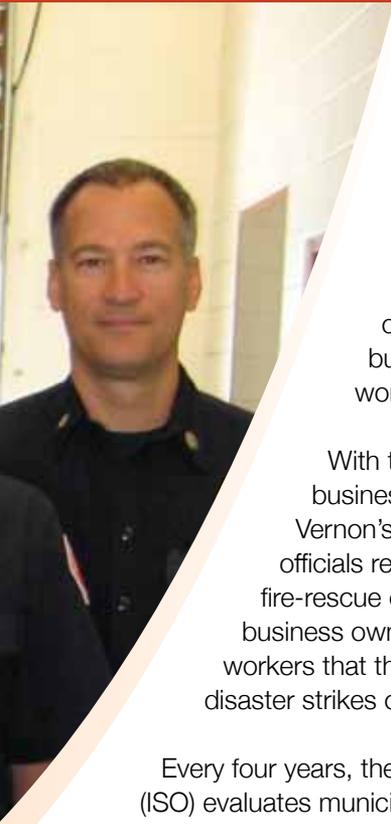
"But it's not just Vernon that benefits from our department's Class 1 standing," he added. "Our department's fire and rescue services are often relied upon in our city's surrounding communities. Through

mutual aid agreements with fire services in our neighboring cities and our county and state fire services, Vernon Fire's highly trained personnel are routinely called upon to respond at a moment's notice to major incidents beyond our city's boundaries."

"It takes a Class 1 team of executives, firefighters, paramedics, dispatchers and support staff to achieve our department's reputable rating. We are proud to have maintained a high level of excellence for a quarter century in Vernon," Chief Wilson said.

A Class 1 fire department rating is no small matter. Fewer than 60 fire departments nationwide have attained the prestigious Class 1 status. Vernon Fire is one of only 10 fire departments in California to have achieved this standard.

Maintaining the highest standards for fire suppression services has been one of Vernon's premier calling cards



for nearly three decades. Companies seeking to locate major business operations in a city often look to a city's fire department class rating as a key barometer of a city's ability to protect their buildings and the employees who work in them.

With the broad array of complex business operations located within Vernon's 5.2 miles, city fire department officials rely on a four-station, multi-faceted fire-rescue capability to assure residents, business owners and the city's 55,000 workers that their lives can be saved when disaster strikes or a significant blaze threatens.

Every four years, the Insurance Services Office (ISO) evaluates municipal fire protection capabilities in communities throughout the U.S. The ISO is an independent company that serves insurance companies, communities, fire departments, insurance regulators and others by providing information about risk.

ISO staff collects information and analyzes the quality of the services that fire departments provide to their communities using standards set by the National Fire Protection Association and American Water Works Association.

fire suppression capabilities. Suppression capabilities are measured based on the fire department's first-alarm response and initial attack to minimize potential loss. Here, ISO reviews such items as engine companies, ladder or service companies, deployment of fire companies, equipment carried on apparatus, pumping capacity, reserve apparatus, company personnel and training.

Water Supply

The review of the water supply system accounts for 40 points of the total classification. ISO evaluates the community's water supply system to determine the adequacy for fire suppression purposes. We also consider hydrant size, type and installation, as well as the frequency and completeness of hydrant inspection and flow-testing programs.

Community Risk Reduction

ISO staff reviews a community's risk reduction efforts and credits them in the Community Risk Reduction section, which allows for extra credit of up to 5.5 points for a potential total of 105.5. That takes into account fire prevention code adoption and enforcement, public fire safety education and fire investigation.

ISO analysts evaluate fire protection data received from fire departments to determine a department's Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) numeric score.

ISO analysts assign a Public Protection Classification (PPC) from 1 to 10. At the top of the scale, a Class 1 rating reflects a superior level of fire protection services available within a community. At the bottom of the scale, a Class 10 rating indicates that the area's fire-suppression capability falls below the ISO's minimum standard for property fire suppression.

By classifying a community's ability to suppress fires, the ISO helps the communities evaluate their public fire protection services. The ISO's objective analysis helps fire departments plan and budget for facilities, equipment and training by providing fire executives with a clear standard for assessing their performance and capability.

The ISO's PPC program provides incentives and rewards for communities that improve their firefighting services. The ISO's ability to help secure lower fire insurance premiums for communities with better public protection is a highly sought-after cost-saving incentive. Homeowners and business owners in a Class 1 fire protection community can expect to pay substantially less for hazard insurance than those in the communities with a Class 10 rating. The ISO rates more than 47,000 fire-response jurisdictions.



The following four critical fire protection factors are assessed:

Emergency Communications Systems

The review of the emergency communications systems accounts for 10 points of the total classification. The review focuses on the community's facilities and support for handling and dispatching alarms for structure fires.

Fire Department

The review of the fire department accounts for 50 points of the total classification. ISO focuses on a community's

Guardian of RECORDS

Maria Ayala, Vernon City Clerk—In Her Own Words

Maria E. Ayala, MPA, CMC was sworn in as Vernon's city clerk in February 2015. She is a certified municipal clerk and certified special board secretary. Ms. Ayala previously served as clerk of the Board of Directors of the Orange County Sanitation District in Fountain Valley. She formerly served as senior administrative assistant to the superintendent of the Bassett Unified School District in La Puente.

Ms. Ayala earned her Masters degree in Public Administration from California State University, Dominguez Hills and her Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the University of Phoenix. She supervised her first municipal election in Vernon on Tuesday, April 14.

A city clerk is often barely noticed among the ranks of senior officials charged with the management of a city's government affairs. But despite doing their jobs quietly and largely out of the spotlight, no city in California could manage its official affairs without a city clerk.

City clerks administer a city's elections. They provide residents with access to city records. Clerks maintain records of legislative actions taken by a city. They ensure government transparency to the public, and make sure federal, state, and local good governance statutes, including the Political Reform Act, Brown Act, and Public Records Act, are adhered to.

Vernon Quarterly spoke to Ms. Ayala about her new role as Vernon City Clerk:

A city clerk performs many functions. What should Vernon's residents and business representatives know about the job you perform?

They should know, first and foremost, that Vernon's Office of the City Clerk is a hub of information. I encourage our residents and business representatives to use the Office of the City Clerk as their starting point if they have any

questions about the city's official business. We are here as a resource to provide assistance and accurate information.

As the City Clerk, I am also the elections official, the City's custodian of records, and am here to ensure that the City is compliant with our federal, state, and local statutes such as the Brown Act, FPPC filings, and Public Records Act. I am excited to have the opportunity to serve the residents and business community of Vernon. It is important to me to be able to convey the City's belief, earning the confidence of the people that live here as well as of those businesses that operate here, that we are committed to good governance and transparency.

Vernon city's electorate is expected to double when new residents move to Vernon Village Park. Do you expect a change in Vernon elections after the new residents arrive and the city gains new voters?

While there are no current plans to change our elections process, I think it is important that our voters know and understand where their opportunities to participate in the

democratic process exist. As the city's elections official, I am responsible for ensuring our city's voting integrity, and our voters deserve to receive accurate information and to trust their city's election process. I think this is a great time to welcome our new residents, as they become a part of Vernon, and for us to focus on how we can educate our electorate on Vernon's elections and voting processes.

You play a pivotal role before, during and after each of Vernon's City Council meetings. What's involved in preparing for each meeting and reporting out the actions taken at City Council meetings?

It is my responsibility to ensure that our City Council meetings are noticed for the public and that our meeting agendas are posted in accordance with governing laws for good governance and transparency. All of this is



City Clerk Maria Ayala (on left) with Records Mgmt. Asst. Debbie Juarez and Administrative Asst. Sanda Dolson



City Clerk Maria Ayala (left) with Deputy City Clerk Ana Bârcia



City Clerk Maria Ayala confers with City Administrator Mark Whitworth

certainly not accomplished without the synchronized collaboration of many departments within our city.

Vernon is dedicated to providing the public with agendas that are timely and consist of clear and accurate staff reports and recommendations, complete agenda packets with all supporting documents and information and making these agendas easily and readily accessible. We notice, publish, distribute and post our agendas in compliance with the Brown Act. Our agenda packets often consist of hundreds of pages, and each packet is uploaded in its entirety on our website for public access.

The actions taken by our City Council will set off a different chain of events within the departments, such as expediting contracts, policies put into effect, etc. The minutes of the meeting are the official record of the Council's actions. The minutes are presented for certification at the following regular Council meeting and uploaded to our website for public access shortly thereafter. The public is always welcome to contact our office to inquire as to what action was taken on any agenda item that was presented.

Your office routinely receives requests for documents under the state's Public Records Act. How does your office manage those requests?

Public records requests are very important to our department. I strongly encourage requesters to take advantage of our user-friendly public records request form found on our website and available at our public counters throughout city hall. The requests are received by the Office of the City Clerk and logged in accordingly. We then conduct an initial review and route the requests to the corresponding department for responsive records. We will always work with our requesters so that they can have a realistic understanding of what the request will require in terms of responsiveness and how that is coupled with Vernon's commitment to follow applicable laws and our compliance policy and procedures.

We receive an average of 30 requests per month. Each public records request is provided a response from

the City within 10 days. Sometimes we provide our responsive documents via e-mail, in digital form or by an on-site inspection of records. In any and all cases, the requester can expect a response to their request. Our department is committed to a high standard of customer service. We believe open government is the right way to operate as a city.

What do you hope to accomplish over the course of your first 100 days as Vernon City Clerk?

I am honored to have the opportunity to be a part of such a committed leadership team in Vernon. We are devoted to a high standard of operations and are committed to nurturing and sustaining the trust and confidence of our community, residents and businesses.

My first 100 days will quickly fly by but will be an example of many future endeavors that our department will take on as we continue to develop and enhance our services. I am currently working on a plan to redevelop our citywide records program. This is a priority for my office, as we ensure that city records are accurate, easily accessible and continue to be retained, maintained and organized.

I'm very enthusiastic about Vernon serving as host of an informational networking session for local city clerks—a first in our Southeast L.A. County area. I have high regard for my professional colleagues. I know the value of what these sessions can offer.

My office is working on ways to enhance our services as we prepare to welcome our new residents to Vernon, and this could mean the opportunity to prepare an information packet for our new residents from our department.

I am thankful to have the support of a city that believes in the importance of the role of the city clerk. I'm equally thankful that I have a strong team—a skillful deputy city clerk, a knowledgeable records management assistant and a savvy administrative assistant—with a shared vision of how our department will continue to reiterate and reinforce Vernon's commitment to being a model city of good governance.



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PEACE KEEPERS

Leaner Vernon Police Department Maintains Low Crime Rate

In the aftermath of the city's battle against disincorporation and the brutal fiscal challenges caused by the economic recession, the Vernon Police Department has had to "keep the peace" in Vernon with fewer peace officers.

But an examination of recent major crime statistics shows Vernon's leaner police force has done a very good job of keeping crime rates low while providing expected levels of public safety service to Vernon residents and the city's more than 50,000 workers. Incidents of murder, rape and robbery have declined over a four-year period beginning in 2010. Arson, burglaries and vehicle thefts have declined as well.

What also declined from 2010 to 2014 was the number police staff, down from a high of 51 officers in 2010 to a low of 42 officers in 2014. But all things associated with keeping the peace in Vernon have not decreased. The public's need for a ready police response has steadily increased, from 4,899 calls for service in 2010 to 5,560 calls for service in 2014.

With more calls for service and 11 fewer staff responding to those calls, it stands to reason that Vernon Police response times would be affected. Vernon Police responded to a call for service in an average time of 2 minutes, 44 seconds in 2010. With reduced police staffing due to budget belt-tightening, Vernon police officers responded to calls for service in an average time of 3 minutes, 55 seconds in 2014.



VPD officers attend Premier Meat Co. "Police Appreciation Day" luncheon

Vernon Police Chief Daniel Calleros said, "Despite our Police Department's size, we maintain a fairly high profile throughout the Vernon community. Our presence and community-policing model enable our staff to provide levels of public safety our residents and business expect and rely upon, even though we're accomplishing that task with fewer personnel."

"We must give credit to the public for a lot of our success in that regard," he continued. "In many cases, members of the public function as our officers' eyes and ears in the community, enabling our department to prevent crimes and bring a halt to criminal activity in progress."

"We're thankful for the good relationship we've established, fostered and nurtured with our residents and business leaders. They have stepped up as our department has downsized to serve as true-to-life crime-stoppers in our city by reporting incidents to our department that could be the precursor to major criminal activity. We greatly appreciate their efforts to help our officers keep Vernon's crime rate among the lowest of any city in L.A. County," Chief Calleros said.