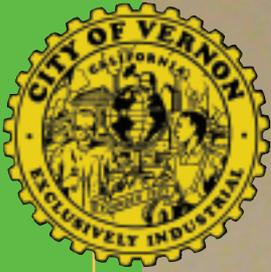


FALL 2012



Quarterly

Vernon

'Police Story'

A Conversation with Vernon
Police Chief Daniel Calleros

Experienced 'By the Book' Lawyer,

Nicholas G. Rodriguez,

Takes Helm as Vernon City Attorney

'Coach McAllister'

Prepares Public Employee
Game Plan for 'Team Vernon'

Vernon Quarterly

FALL EDITION

8 Experienced 'By the Book' Lawyer, Nicholas G. Rodriguez, Takes Helm as Vernon City Attorney

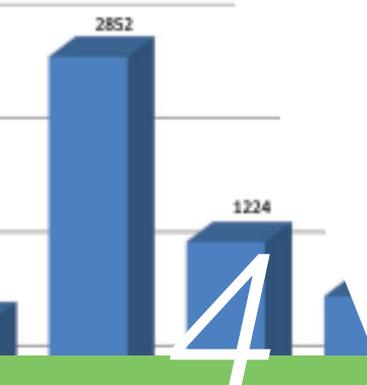
10 Vernon Health and Environmental Control Department Director Leonard Grossberg Envisions 'Exclusively Industrial Green City'

11 'Coach McAllister' Prepares Public Employee Game Plan for 'Team Vernon'

13 City Administrator Views Municipal Stability, Fiscal Resourcefulness Among Vernon's Top Accomplishments for 2012

14 Vernon Continues to Retool General Fund Budget Following Voter Rejection of Utility User Tax Measure in September Special Election

15 Vernon Police Department At-A-Glance



8



11

10



13



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

Produced by DDCC, Inc. • ddcc.bz

‘Police Story’

A Conversation with Vernon Police Chief Daniel Calleros

Vernon Police Chief Daniel Calleros was drawn to a professional career in law enforcement at an early age. An East Los Angeles native, he witnessed during his youth the negative impacts that gangs and drugs were having on his urban neighborhood and broader community.

He decided in his teenage years that he wanted to make a positive contribution to communitywide efforts to the lessen the consequences of crime and violence that affected so many families in his neighborhood and ended the lives of thousands of residents within his community. He graduated from high school and earned a Bachelor of Science degree from California State University, Long Beach. He joined the Vernon Police Department (VPD) in 1988.

A self-described “patrol officers’ chief,” Calleros rose through the ranks of the VPD—moving upward from patrol officer and field training officer to progressively assuming senior-level law enforcement duties and responsibilities as patrol sergeant, training manager, detective, Internal Affairs investigator, administrative lieutenant, Grants and Asset Forfeiture administrator and administrative captain.

During his law enforcement service for the City of Vernon, he played an instrumental role in the development and implementation of field training programs for patrol sergeants, patrol officers and service officers. The demanding training programs put in place by VPD enabled Vernon’s police force to meet or exceed the law enforcement training mandates established by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST).

For his exceptional law enforcement service as a patrol officer and training sergeant, and his professional efforts on behalf of VPD, Calleros received Vernon’s “Police Officer of the Year” award.

Chief Calleros was appointed Vernon’s top law enforcement executive on December 5, 2012. He was appointed interim chief of police in November 2010. As chief, Daniel Calleros oversees all of Vernon’s law enforcement operations, including Police Department administrative and support services.

VPD has 47 sworn officers and 12 civilian police personnel. It resembles the urban police departments that L.A. County residents have come to know over the past four decades. Community Oriented Policing is a top VPD priority, particularly given the

city’s substantial industrial business base and small residential population.

What makes VPD’s job different is Vernon’s changing demographic on a daily basis. Few cities in L.A. County see their daily worker population swell to more than 55,000 employees.

Few cities allow 18-wheel tractor-trailer truck combination traffic numbering in the thousands to travel daily on city streets. Few cities enable a myriad of railroad lines snaking through the city to reach cargo terminals to deliver processed goods and products that are distributed throughout the western United States.

Vernon allows and enables all of those things to take place, which makes providing public safety services in Vernon a different challenge.

VQ – Chief Calleros, the City of Vernon is small. It has very few residents. It has a lot of businesses. Some people might think, “How hard can it be to be the police chief of a city like Vernon?” What are some of the

Continues on page 4



'Police Story'

Continued from page 3

unique challenges to providing public safety services in this city that make it unlike other cities?

DC – The City of Vernon is a very unique community. We don't have the high volume of neighborhood activity like in your typical residential community. Our level of public safety service is directed at the business environment where we experience

having more than 55,000 workers in our daily day-shift population.

So, our focus for policing this city is much different than your typical residential community. We have a full-range of police services like any other community. We have a patrol staff, motor units and canine (K-9) officers. We have a full-range detective bureau where we are able

to conduct investigations of criminal matters. We have our own temporary jail holding facility, as well as our police dispatch center.

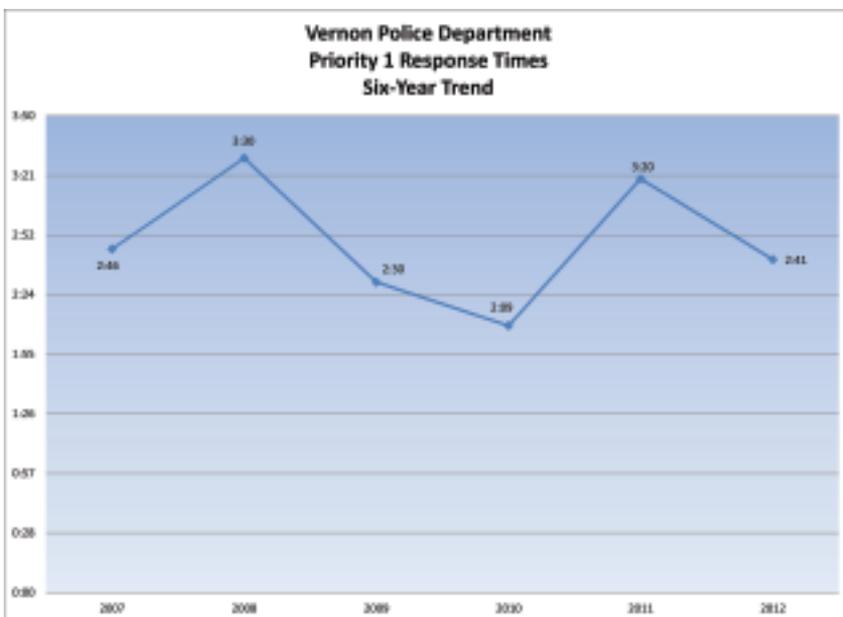
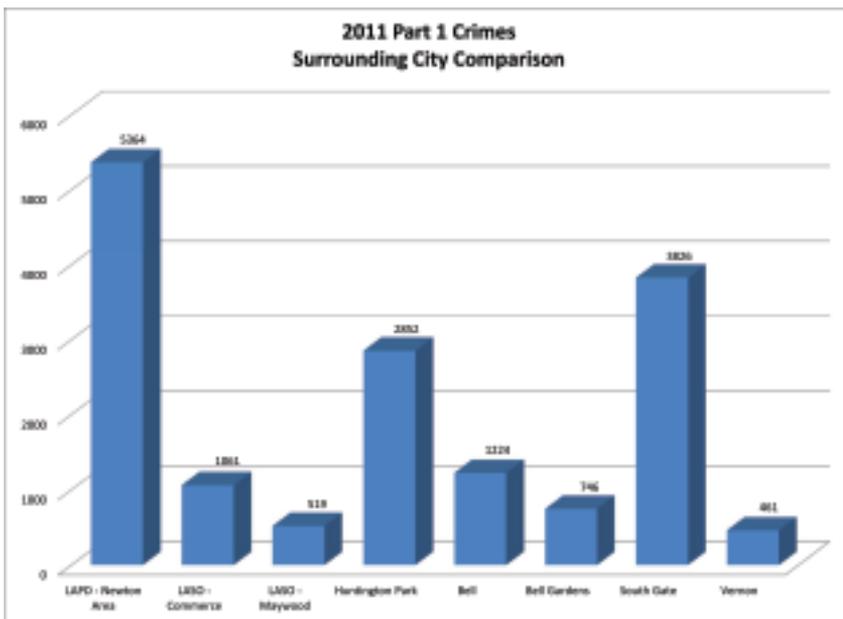
One of the primary focuses of our public safety service is our Professional Standards Office where we manage our Community Oriented Policing program that is specifically designed for the business community. We have a sergeant and detective that are assigned to handle issues involving business and labor in our city.

For example, during labor disputes, we have our staff work cooperatively with union organizations and business owners to make sure labor issues are resolved in a safe manner.

VQ – So, even though Vernon is a small town, policing in Vernon is not like it is in Mayberry [in the fictional early 1960s *Andy Griffith* television show]?

DC – No. As I mentioned, we have the full range of public safety services you would find in any urban police department. We have 47 sworn officers and 12 civilian employees. We provide the same level of service and policing as other residential communities. The uniqueness is that our primary population is members of the business communities. That being said, our residents strongly rely on us to keep them safe at home here in Vernon and depend on us to keep Vernon the safest city in L.A. County.

VQ – Because Vernon has few residents and a lot of businesses, any crime problems Vernon may have might be more related to what a



business might experience. Is that an accurate assessment?

DC – Yes. We don't have much in the way of residential burglaries or domestic issues, but we have our fair share of commercial burglaries. The major crimes we deal with in Vernon are property-type crimes, and that's where our focus is in providing that level of police services that address property crime issues. We have a detective assigned to the Cargo Theft Interdiction Program or CTIP investigative team.

CTIP specifically works on cargo-related thefts. We have an investigator assigned to that team. Any issues involving trailer thefts, major thefts of warehouse equipment or merchandise thefts, CTIP team handles those investigations. It's a very productive team. Their success rate [in theft recovery and criminal prosecutions] is very high. We have officers assigned to other special task forces to handle crimes unique to Vernon's business and industrial environment.

VQ – Given the poor state of the local, state and national economy, do criminals out there look at Vernon and say, "That's where we need to go, that's where the easy pickings are." Has Vernon had an uptick in property crimes since the economy soured?

DC – We have seen a slight spike in property-type crimes. But because of the staffing levels we have on our regular shifts, we're very proactive in identifying crime issues and addressing them accordingly.

VQ – Every city council meeting, there is a portion that is dedicated to departmental oral reports. When you present the VPD report you recount incidents where VPD is investigating or solving a crime in the city. Some

of these incidents involve individuals that are preying on innocent victims near the city's boundary lines. What kind of work does VPD do with police in the City of Bell or Huntington Park or others nearby to keep workers in Vernon safe from armed robbers toting weapons and demanding their money?

DC – When we see problems in a specific sector of the city, particularly around the boundaries, we work with the local law enforcement agency in that specific area. It could involve a policing partnership with the L.A. County Sheriff's Department or a local city police department. We work together with other police jurisdictions to mitigate any crime problems.

We jointly share crime information and any investigative leads that help us apprehend crime suspects. When the need arises, we add more police resources to a specific geographic area of the city that may be experiencing crime incidents to wrap our arms around the situation and provide a highly visible police presence in that specific area to deter any continuation of criminal activity.

For example, we recently had a few strong-arm robberies reported in the west sector of the city. Our patrol staff apprehended one of the suspects. Our detectives are now sharing information about those robberies with the Bell Police Department because it appears they had a similar series of crimes in their town.

Because of that cooperation between our department and Bell's, there may be additional charges filed against the individual who is in custody. Bell police may be able to solve some of their recent armed robbery cases, if they find that the same individual was committing armed robbery crimes in their city. We share crime information with our surrounding cities—Huntington Park,

South Gate, Downey and others—to help them investigate criminals who may be active in Vernon and their cities, as well.

Our cooperation with local law enforcement and Sheriff's investigators is very solid. That cooperation helps keep crime lower in our region and puts dangerous individuals behind bars. The impact of our teamwork with our neighbors is low crime in Vernon for our residents and a safer city for tens of thousands of our businesses' employees.

We work with law enforcement agencies throughout the region to identify problems and attack crime issues that arise in each community. If a crime problem emerges in a nearby city that's larger than they can handle, we share our police resources and if needed, develop a task force to help that city quickly address that crime issue.

VQ – You mentioned that VPD has motor officers. They must have to deal with a lot of long-haul and short-haul truck drivers moving in and out of the city, on top of commuters driving cars to and from work. That's a lot of personal vehicles in combination with a lot of big commercial vehicles. How do they manage all of that traffic and maintain safety on Vernon's roadways?

DC – In our city, we identify the top five areas where we have high incidents of traffic collisions. Our motor units focus on those areas and conduct traffic enforcement as necessary. In addition, we provide public education and public awareness through our community alert system.

We also receive traffic information from our business owners. They are a good source of information about

Continues on page 6

‘Police Story’

Continued from page 5

tractor-trailer speeding incidents on streets near their operations. No one wants to see a 20,000-pound truck barreling down the street and travelling well in excess of the posted speed limit. So, through our use of motorcycle patrols and our Community Oriented Policing program, we take in information provided by businesses and residents to curtail and, ultimately, eliminate unsafe motoring and unauthorized parking on our city’s streets.

Our motor officers are also trained in commercial vehicle safety enforcement, so they conduct enforcement on commercial vehicle violations, involving over-weights, tires, brakes and so forth. They also partner with California Highway Patrol (CHP) officers in our area when the CHP conducts some of their targeted commercial vehicle enforcement on Washington Boulevard.

We also work cooperatively with the Railroad Police on an annual basis to target enforcement activities in those areas that have been identified as high accident areas at rail crossings, such as along Downey Road and Fruitland Avenue.

VQ – How is it being the top law enforcement executive here in Vernon?

DC – It’s no different than in any other community. We have the challenges that are faced in other communities, but Vernon is a very unique city and we have a unique method of providing public safety.

VQ – During the VPD oral report to city council, a captain comes up and delivers an incident report on graffiti and graffiti removal in

the city. That’s not something you hear reports on at council meetings in lot of other cities. Why are graffiti reports important in Vernon?

DC – We take pride in the level of service we provide in the City of Vernon. Graffiti is an important factor in the city’s quality of life. Graffiti is a property crime that attracts ongoing property crime. Eliminating graffiti in Vernon is one of the ways we establish Vernon as a safe city.

It sends a message about this city, and that message is: We care how our city looks and we don’t tolerate our city being vandalized. When businesses approach city officials about setting up shop in Vernon, they often base their investment and commercial real estate decisions on what they see when they visit our city.

If they see considerable graffiti and blight, they would wonder if anyone in Vernon really cared about their city, and if that’s the case, why should they puts millions of their dollars into a place to do business if no one cares enough to keep the city and its businesses clean and safe.

When our officers are on patrol, they act as a mobile part of our city’s graffiti abatement program. They radio report any graffiti they see, and that information is relayed to the Community Services Department and the graffiti is removed or painted over, usually within a couple of days.

It’s like the “Broken Window Theory,” which postulates that, an ordered and clean environment—one that is continuously maintained—sends the signal that the area is monitored and that criminal behavior will not be

tolerated. Conversely, a disordered environment—one which is not maintained (broken windows, graffiti, excessive litter)—sends the signal that the area is not monitored and that one can engage in criminal behavior with little risk of detection. If you allow broken windows on establishments—homes or businesses—in a community to go on unrepaired or replaced for an extended period of time, it demonstrates that people don’t care.

As the “Broken Window” theory goes, if you don’t care about graffiti, you probably won’t care about illegal dumping, as well. Before too long, the lack of caring about these important quality of life matters can literally cost a city its business community and residents, as both leave to find cleaner and safer environments in which to work and live.

We act swiftly, on a daily basis, to deal with problems like graffiti and illegal dumping along our roadways to demonstrate very clearly that we care deeply about our city and we’re highly protective of the visual image our city projects to the local community and the world beyond our borders.

Today, there is no graffiti in the City of Vernon, be it on buildings along major streets or side streets. When we find graffiti, we eliminate it. It is interesting to note: When you drive out of Vernon heading north, south, east or west in neighboring areas, once you cross the border leaving Vernon, you immediately begin to observe graffiti on buildings and incidents of illegal dumping.

Quality of life is critical to a city for its businesses and its residents. It is one



of the reasons why we have supported a Drug Awareness and Resistance Education (DARE) program through the department, in partnership with Vernon Elementary School, for the past 12 years. Our young people need our strong support to reject the notion that gangs and drugs are a path to acceptance for them. The presence of graffiti in our community would undermine efforts to support our young people, and their quality of life and future in our community is important to our department.

VQ – Vernon Independent Reform Monitor John Van de Kamp has looked critically at the city’s operations, general fund revenue and spending. He has advised city administration officials to seriously consider re-sizing the VPD as a means of cutting

expenditures and reducing a sizable general fund budget deficit. A member of the business community encouraged the L.A. County Sheriff to propose a contract public safety services plan that would replace the VPD in its entirety. What are your views on VPD’s costs and benefits?

DC – Contracting-out public safety services to another law enforcement agency, such as the County of Los Angeles, would decrease public safety services to our community. You would not have the proactive approach to law enforcement that we maintain today and provide to our business customers and residents. Policing would switch from being proactive and preventative to becoming reactive to crime incidents and situations. It would become emergency calls for service only. In

addition, response times to Priority 1 calls would increase. VPD’s average response time to these types of calls is just over three minutes. In our region, we maintain the lowest response times.

The resources that our department provides coupled with the specialty of assignments that are specific to the business community would be eliminated in a proposed contract outsourcing for public safety. If the city wished to retain those business-focused public safety services through an outsourced contract, it is likely the public safety contract would not result in any savings to the city’s general fund; in fact, it is highly likely contracted police services would cost the city significantly more in general fund expenditures, not less.

Continues on page 16



Experienced 'By the Book' Lawyer, **Nicholas G. Rodriguez,** Takes Helm as Vernon City Attorney

Nicholas George Rodriguez began his new duties as Vernon city attorney in September 2012. Prior to his appointment to the city attorney's position by Vernon city council members, Mr. Rodriguez was the primary business lawyer and head of the Civil Division for the City of Pasadena. He served as Pasadena's general counsel for the Rose Bowl Operating Company. He functioned as the staff lawyer for the day-to-day business of many of Pasadena's city departments, as well as serving as lead attorney in complex transactions for Pasadena's Water and Power, Public Works, Finance, Police, Fire and Health departments.

Mr. Rodriguez practiced law for the Pasadena City Attorney's Office for 23 years. He rose through the ranks from civil division attorney to deputy city attorney to chief assistant city attorney. He began his legal career as a public interest lawyer for El Centro de Accion Social, Inc., a small not-for-profit organization he helped to found where he handled

voting rights, employment rights, land use and other social justice matters. Mr. Rodriguez also spent a number of years in private practice handling complex business litigation.

A member of the California State Bar, Mr. Rodriguez earned his law degree from Boalt Hall School of Law at U.C. Berkeley. He earned his Bachelor's degree at Cornell University where he was a College Scholar in the College of Arts and Sciences. He is a local graduate of Pasadena Polytechnic High School where he was a National Merit Scholarship Finalist. The State Bar honored him as Public Lawyer of the Year in 1996. Mr. Rodriguez has remained an active volunteer in his community.

Q&A with Nicholas G. Rodriguez, Vernon City Attorney

What are your top three priorities as Vernon city attorney?

The Vernon City Council set the following priorities for the city attorney position in the recruitment materials for the position:

1. Evaluating the organization and staffing of the City Attorney's Office.
2. Overseeing the multiple law firms used for outside counsel and controlling costs related to activities of these firms.
3. Assisting in facilitating the municipal reform effort now underway.

What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing the City of Vernon?

I have very little firsthand experience with the City of Vernon, and so I do not have a lot of data on which to base an opinion on which challenges are the biggest. I look forward to being able to answer that question with my own opinion in a few months.

I do know that Vernon faces fiscal challenges, but so does almost every other city in California these days, some far worse than Vernon, such as Stockton and San Bernardino.

Likewise, many cities have issues relating to their election systems, for example, Anaheim and the issue of at-large or district elections. There

have been public corruption scandals, unfortunately, throughout the region and the state.

There are no municipal challenges that are unique to Vernon, and my expectation is that none of the challenges will prove insurmountable.

What should business owners and city employees expect from you as the city attorney of the City of Vernon?

Business owners, city employees, residents, organized labor and other groups can expect that I will provide sound and independent legal advice relating to the governance of the City and the manner in which the City conducts its business.

They can expect the following: I view both the law and the process of public decision making as sacred. I will work hard and concentrate on the details of documents, ordinances and written opinions. I will not play favorites. I will not shade my advice to achieve any particular outcome. I will not meddle in politics nor will I misuse the office of City Attorney to be an entrepreneur.

These groups can expect that I will provide the City Council and City Administrator with the legal advice needed to conduct the business of the city for the good of the many constituents in the City of Vernon.

They can expect that I will always be “by the book” and never sanction or approve doing less in the way of process or policy than the law requires. They can expect that I will be committed to the reform efforts and to good government.

I believe in the urgency of finding a way for government, business and labor to work together for the benefit of all, and toward the greater good of our society and our way of life.

Vernon offers a unique opportunity to help recreate this balance, and that is why am interested in being Vernon’s city attorney.

As an outside observer, how do you feel the public perceptions of the City of Vernon have changed since the 2010 disincorporation disagreements with the State Legislature and the many governance reforms the city has implemented in the past two years?

There is still a lot of work to do. While much of the public does not care about and has no perception of the City of Vernon, the coverage by the print media is still uniformly negative. Vernon needs to move forward because it is the right thing to do, not because of the media or public perception.

Many, if not most, members of the public do not look much further than their own backyard on issues of governance, and so many, if not most, are unaware of Vernon and these issues. That is not a criticism, as survival and the demands of family and meeting basic needs is more than a full-time job for most people these days.

Vernon has received little publicity on television or radio, two basic sources of news for much of the population. Therefore, those who depend on

television and radio for news probably have little knowledge or feel for Vernon, its past problems or its current progress.

However, the population that receives its news from the print media probably still has a negative view of Vernon as the print media has been uniformly negative, and the coverage has focused on conflict, not on progress.

That is not a criticism of the press, as it is doing its job, and this job is essential in our society, and the press has done it very well here.

The perception of the population that follows print media can change with time if there is nothing else negative about which to write, and if Vernon and the reform efforts continue to move forward.

To put it in context, even the recent negative articles evoked only a handful of blog comments, obviously from insiders because of the facts they recited, compared to the hundreds of comments from uninvolved readers that are generated by an article of great public interest.

Vernon is, simply put, just not that interesting to the general public these days. That, in and of itself, is a good thing, and it shows that Vernon is making progress.



Vernon Health and Environmental Control Department Director **Leonard Grossberg** Envisions ‘Exclusively Industrial Green City’

Leonard Grossberg, Director of Vernon’s Health and Environmental Control Department, has worked with the city’s business and labor leaders to develop a groundbreaking ‘sustainability action plan’ he believes puts Vernon on course to be the model for sustainable cities in Southeast L.A. County.

The plan, recently approved by Vernon city council members, lays the groundwork for Vernon to substantially reduce its carbon footprint. It sets specific goals for energy efficiency, water conservation and waste reduction in Vernon over the next decade.

“Because Vernon is substantially an industrial city, it may not evoke idyllic images often associated with ‘sustainability.’ But Vernon’s business community has had a long history of environmental stewardship and resource conservation,” Mr. Grossberg said.

“Vernon is home to several rendering companies, which, due to the re-use of organic materials, is one of the most sustainable industrial processes in existence. Moreover, every day in Vernon, a tremendous amount of glass is recycled and transformed into new products, rather than transported to landfills. Food processing and textile cutting are additional examples of industries in Vernon that engage in sustainable operating practices,” Mr. Grossberg added.

“Many of Vernon’s businesses operate sustainably because they want to do the right thing. But just as many businesses operate sustainably

because it helps their bottom line profitability. The goal of Vernon’s sustainability action plan is to build on the city’s accomplishments, and move Vernon to an even higher level of sustainability,” Mr. Grossberg said.

The City of Vernon has adopted a goal to achieve ‘zero waste to landfills’ by 2020. City officials have adopted a mandatory commercial recycling policy to increase the number of Vernon businesses that participate in recycling.

Q&A with Leonard Grossberg, Vernon Health and Environmental Control Director

What are your top three priorities as director of the Vernon Health and Environmental Control department?

1. To maintain the production and efficiency of our department’s status to continue providing the best service possible for the residents and businesses in Vernon.
2. To promote and facilitate the growth of alternative technologies in Vernon.
3. To meet all of the mandates and reforms required by the City of Vernon to create a “Model City Example” for all to use.

What do you feel are the biggest health and environmental challenges facing the City of Vernon?

It goes without saying that budget constraints and the status of the U.S.



economy are and will continue to be pressing issues for the immediate future.

The high cost of maintaining environmental programs to protect and preserve our natural resources is a necessary duty to address our long-term plans to reduce greenhouse gasses and ultimately climate change.

Additional efforts must be utilized on reducing the amounts of recoverable items that are land filled every day, which is a waste of resources.

As a largely industrial city, can Vernon become a model of environmental awareness and sustainability?

The City of Vernon already has a roadmap to become the ‘model’ of environmental awareness and sustainability, not only for the City, but also for the State and the nation!

Our efforts are being shared so that the successful building blocks can be used by all. Because we have a City Council that supports our sustainability action plan, and a proactive Sustainability Development & Energy Efficient Commission, we expect to reach all of our goals on time.

'Coach McAllister' Prepares Public Employee Game Plan for 'Team Vernon'



Teresa McAllister comes to Vernon with all of the skills to handle her new duties as human resources director for the City of Vernon. In her 21-year professional career in human resources for the cities of Riverside and Commerce, she was a key member of both cities' municipal executive teams.

She arrives in Vernon with a proven track record of providing leadership and guidance to thousands of line employees and hundreds of department heads and agency administrators.

Ms. McAllister describes her human resources career as "part coach, part performance manager, full-time team-builder and a moment's notice diffuser of highly charged workplace situations and workforce contentious issues."

Ms. McAllister says the keys to her success in human resources are understanding and meeting the needs of diverse employees in municipal settings, and being a hands-on professional adept at understanding the full range of employee perspectives in union and non-union environments.

A Conversation with Teresa McAllister

1. The average person underestimates the importance of a human resources director for a city. Why is your job critical to how a city like Vernon operates?

As the advocate to balance employee-employer relations, my job is important in providing guidance and leadership on human resources

management issues to ensure compliant, consistent and fair practices in the workplace.

As a strategic partner to city employees and administrators, my responsibility is critical to fostering change in the workplace environment that will contribute to the development of city staff members and effectiveness of the organizational structure.

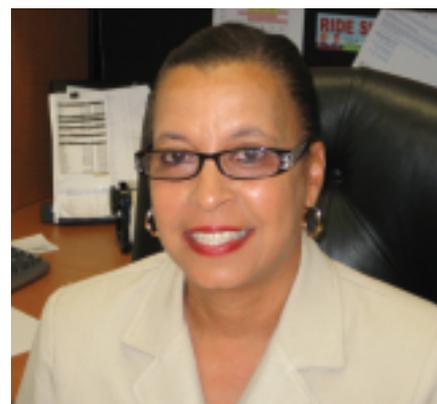
Employee engagement and commitment are key factors in successfully accomplishing Vernon's overall employee relations goals and objectives.

2. How does municipal reform fit into your plans for Vernon's public employees?

As the human resources director and, as an agent of change, I will utilize effective interpersonal skills to leverage inclusive partnerships to assess the current human resources structure and make recommendations for change where I believe they may be needed to ensure Vernon staff can achieve at their highest level and enjoy their work.

Keeping employees up to date and informed about potential changes will build the necessary commitment and loyalty among the employees, so that together, we can recommend to the City Administrator and City Council creative and new alternative employment structures and solutions to make Vernon a model municipal workplace among cities in Southeast L.A. County.

This process of employee engagement is intended to result in the development of comprehensive policies and



procedures that are fair, sustainable and consistent to all parties.

3. What do you hope to accomplish in your first year as Vernon human resources director?

My first order of business is to meet with all levels of staff within the municipal organization. After those meetings and consultations, my goal is to develop effective employee-employer partnerships and re-functionalize the Human Resources department and the services it can provide.

4. What can Vernon's city employees expect from you as their human resources director?

They can expect me to be an energetic leader with extensive leadership skills. They can expect Vernon to be a city where employees can look forward to an opportunity for engagement in the organizational strategies that will, hopefully, make Vernon the best functioning city it can be from an employee and employer perspective.

Vernon city workers can expect me to be a skilled and knowledgeable human resources professional and a

Continues on page 12

‘Coach McAllister’

Continued from page 11

fellow staff member who will provide guidance and make contributions to their staff growth and development.

5. Since coming on board as HR director, you have initiated a number of changes in how the City of Vernon works with its employees. What are the top three steps you’ve taken?

In partnership with our city administrator, I have held two citywide employee discussions. There was a lot of interest and a lot of questions. We covered a lot of ground during these employee discussions, including the CalPERS Pension Reform Act, overview of city’s fiscal circumstances and future steps being taken or proposed to reduce expenditures and increase revenues. Among the high interest topics for employees with a lot of seniority was the city’s offering of an early retirement incentive package.

We also discussed the development of a merit-based system and major components of the city’s good governance reform package. We discussed employee rights and roles under the Myers Milias-Brown Act, provided workers with a City Council status update on municipal reform initiatives and held a question and answer session to cover additional topics of high interest among Vernon’s employees.

To date, I have implemented four new human resources policies and procedures. They apply fair, compliant and best practices for Vernon’s recruitment and employment processes. We have updated the Human Resources department webpage to include these policies. We have also made

various Memoranda of Understandings (MOU) accessible to our employees and the public.

I’ve created an employee benefits review committee to analyze current and proposed future health and benefit programs and provide feedback to HR and city leaders. This new committee will begin their review in 2013 for consideration of the city’s 2014 health and benefit packages.

6. The city’s general fund budget challenges have led the city council to approve an early retirement incentive for eligible city employees. How will this incentive program work and which city employees qualify for it?

The purpose of the early retirement incentive program is to encourage long-term or senior employees—those who are typically at the top of their employee salary schedule—to retire early, thereby achieving savings to the city’s general fund budget by enabling the city to replace those retirees with younger, lower paid employees or by increasing the number of natural attritions by 3-to-4 times.

Those employees who are eligible for the early retirement incentive package are workers who are at least 50 years old at the time of their separation from city service. They must have served as a Vernon city employee for a least five years and they must retire under CalPERS system.

7. In your discussions with city employees and management supervisors, what has been their major concern?

Our employee and supervisor groups have two major areas of concern:

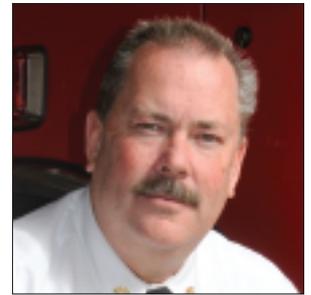
First, they want the ability to review the city’s overall health and benefit programs. They would like to ensure that they and their families are offered cost-effective and quality health insurance services. They would like to see the city implement a cafeteria-style benefit plan that would allow employees to choose their level of benefits that meet their specific individual and family needs.

Second, as a result of previous layoffs and the potential impact to the departments from early retirements, the city will need to realign several positions. That realignment will result in department reorganizations. So, as might be expected, our employees are very interested in this subject.

A classification and compensation study plan will be required to ensure class specifications are in line with current changes and requirements in the law. The employee class specifications will need to be updated to reflect current job duties and requirements of each position, including physical requirements and essential functions to comply with the ADA.

This will provide the necessary framework to guide administrative, financial and human resources decisions. It will provide a basis for recruitment, performance management, compensation, training and career ladders and succession planning. These plans will ensure the City of Vernon aligns talent to the vision and purpose of the municipal organization, and ultimately enables the city to attract, retain and develop the best people; and when they’re in our workforce, it helps clarify the direction and expectations for each employee while improving employee engagement and commitment.

City Administrator Views Municipal Stability, Fiscal Resourcefulness Among Vernon's Top Accomplishments for 2012



As the Year 2012 draws to a close, Vernon City Administrator Mark Whitworth is upbeat as he looks ahead to the city's future. But staying optimistic may not have always been an easy task during the past 12 months. Vernon experienced challenges throughout the year: a \$16 million general fund budget deficit threatened public services, serious allegations of voter fraud created electoral turmoil and led to numerous legal challenges, contested city council elections heightened political uncertainty and a proposed utility users tax measure that would have raised desperately needed general fund revenues failed at the ballot box.

Despite the city's significant challenges, Mr. Whitworth enumerates five of the city's top accomplishments of 2012:

"First, Vernon has achieved municipal stability. There is a normalcy as a result of the good governance reforms we implemented in 2011. The political battles with the California State Legislature are over. Gone are the costs associated with mounting a defense of our city. Political conflict has been replaced by a more accommodating

atmosphere of state and local collaboration. Don't get me wrong, politicians in the State Capitol are still watching us closely, but they see that we are taking the right steps and moving in a productive manner to be more like other cities in California, even as we maintain our city as a prime industrial location for 1,800 businesses and 55,000 workers.

"Second, we have a financial plan. We don't have all of the general fund revenue we need, but we have a roadmap for our city's financial future that would fairly share the burden of funding our essential services. Even though the proposed utility users tax failed to win voter support, we continued to work hard to trim general fund expenditures and maintain our city's level of services. We reduced our city labor force to save money. We restructured city contracts to trim costs. We restructured city finances to lighten our debt load. We adjusted Light and Power department utility rates and restructured its finances. We've sold city assets to generate revenue. What was once a backbreaking \$16 million general fund deficit, is today a \$9.5 million shortfall. We've come a long way in a short period of time. We're not across the finish line, but we are on a good path going forward.

"Third, our budget reductions have made a difference. Labor force reductions will save millions of dollars and the early retirement incentive package approved by city council will enable us to sustain those budget savings as older, longtime, career city

employees move on into retirement next year.

"Fourth, we have finally been able to fill key executive positions within city government. The executive searches we conducted brought us highly capable executive talent. City Attorney Nicholas Rodriguez is respected and skilled. His work has enabled the city to lessen its reliance on outside counsel and that means a substantial savings will be realized over past years. Human Resources Director Teresa McAllister brings a wealth of knowledge and skill to her position, an executive asset that was sorely lacking in city administration. Teresa helped fashion the early retirement package, so in a short time, she has already helped cut substantial city costs. In short order, we will have a new finance director on board and a search underway for a new fire chief. In early 2013, we will consider creating a new position: industrial development director.

"Lastly, Vernon is on the fast track to construct new housing. A housing developer has been chosen. The site for the proposed 45-unit housing development has been picked. We have made site visits to comparable housing developments in Orange County, L.A. County and the San Fernando Valley. The housing will feature one-bedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom townhome apartments that will be owned by a private housing firm and leased by a private housing management company. We are well on our way to doubling the size of our electorate in the City of Vernon."



Vernon Continues to Retool General Fund Budget

Following Voter Rejection of Utility User Tax Measure in September Special Election

Vernon City Administrator Mark Whitworth is continuing discussions with Vernon business leaders in an effort to develop a comprehensive general fund revenue package that will close the city's sizable budget deficit.

The city's projected general fund deficit for 2012-2013 was \$16 million. That deficit figure has now been lowered to \$9.5 million. The reduction was achieved through a series of cost-saving efforts, including labor force reductions and cuts to legal expenditures and capital projects, along with other reductions in municipal expenditures.

In a further effort to cut costs, Vernon has proposed an early retirement plan for eligible city employees who retire from city service in fiscal year 2012-2013. But the city's \$9.5 million general fund deficit is unlikely to be eliminated through cuts alone.

High on the list of revenue-generating proposals to address the city's \$9.5 million deficit is a one-time sale of surplus water resources from Vernon-owned water wells. City staff projects an estimated \$4 million could be collected from the proposed surplus water sale. City staff is considering amendments

to the Vernon General Plan to encourage retail businesses to locate within specific corridors of the city. Retail operations could generate sales tax revenues that might provide a modest boost to the city's general fund.

A proposal to allow electronic billboards along Vernon's boundary with the 710 Freeway is also under consideration. An increase in outdoor advertising could add revenues to the general fund.

City staff is studying the possibility of contracting with nearby cities in Southeast L.A. County for the use of Vernon police and fire public safety services to patrol and protect surrounding communities interested in utilizing Vernon's highly respected police and fire personnel.

Voters and business leaders opposed Proposition A, a proposed two-year user utility tax placed on the ballot in a September special election. Vernon voters rejected the

measure by a 24-to-16 margin. The utility user tax would have been assessed on the amount of electricity, gas, water and telecommunications services Vernon residents and businesses used.

The City is continuing its efforts to develop a long-term revenue proposal consistent with revenue models commonly used in other cities, which is expected to consist of a significantly lower rate parcel tax, significantly lower rate utility user tax and an increased business license tax. The proposed general fund tax revenue approach is intended to achieve a more equitable tax distribution. The proposal is being discussed with Vernon business leaders.

If Vernon City Council members place such a proposal on the April 2013 ballot, senior city administration staff will conduct public information workshops for Vernon's residents and business leaders.

Vernon Police Department

At-A-Glance

The Vernon Police Department is an urban law enforcement agency providing a full range of police services to a unique community comprised primarily of large-scale industrial businesses, logistics companies and food processors. The Vernon Police Department employs 47 sworn officers and 12 civilian personnel.

PATROL DIVISION

35 sworn officers
8 patrol sergeants
2 patrol lieutenants
2 12.5-hour shifts

Assignments

DARE Program
Canine (K-9) Program
Motor Unit Programs

Equipment

Automatic external defibrillation (AED) devices

DETECTIVE BUREAU

Lieutenant
Sergeant
4 detectives

Assignments

Crime Investigation
Professional Standards Office
Regional Inter-Agency Task Forces
Southwest Borders Initiative (Narcotics Interdiction Team)
Cargo Theft Interdiction Program (CTIP)

Taskforce for Regional Auto Theft Prevention (TRAP)
Inter-city-Interstate Property Theft Investigation Team
Auto Theft Investigation Team

MOBILE FIELD FORCE

3 supervisors
15 officers

Duties

Restoring civil order
Large labor disputes
Homeland security

Natural or manmade disasters
Perimeter security of large geographical areas

ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE

Southeast Area Parole Sweeps
Southeast Area Truancy Sweeps
BNSF Railroad PD with R/R Trespassing Sweeps
Southeast Area Vandalism Enforcement Sweeps
AVOID Anti-DUI program
Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) Training

Vernon Police Department is committed to a Community Oriented Policing approach within the business environment. Vernon law enforcement meets the same needs and demands as police agencies provide in large residential communities and provides many of the same services as larger urban city police departments. VPD provides significant resources during activation of Area E Mutual Aid requests in concert with the Southeast L.A. County cities of Huntington Park, Maywood, Bell, Bell Gardens, Southgate, Downey, Montebello, Compton, Whittier and Signal Hill.



City of Vernon
4305 South Santa Fe Ave
Vernon, California 90058-1714

PRESORTED
FIRST CLASS MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
LOS ANGELES CA
PERMIT NO. 2492



‘Police Story’

Continued from page 7

city’s businesses have not seen a drop in our level of service. Our officers pride themselves on providing a high level of service and full array of public safety services to members of our community.

level of service to residents and businesses in Vernon. What we bring to the table is being a proactive agency, being visible and being a part of the community. Here in Vernon, there are many business owners who know our patrol officers on a first-name basis.

Our officers know their business layouts and specifics about their business operations. They know when they observe something that appears out of the ordinary, and they can then work with that businessperson to prevent a crime of opportunity from occurring.

That’s Community Oriented Policing at its best, when we have 1,800 business owners and 55,000 employees acting as our eyes and ears in the city to prevent crime and keep our city safe. That’s what the men and women of the VPD do for a living. And we’re proud and honored to have the duty and responsibility to keep our unique community safe.

If VPD was eliminated and contract police agency services were implemented, there would be no motor officers, no specialized units, no K-9 unit dedicated to Vernon, no cargo theft investigations, no auto theft investigations and no graffiti enforcement.

For what we provide and for what our businesses and residents receive in public safety services, I believe strongly that VPD is the best choice and the right choice for Vernon.

We have been reducing our staffing levels over the past few years. We now do more with fewer officers. Our

VQ – One idea that has been floated recently—as a revenue-generating measure—is having VPD provide public safety service to interested nearby cities under a contract. Is that option viable?

DC – Yes. We are exploring those options. We believe we can provide public safety services to nearby communities that desire to have and maintain a proactive police presence in their neighborhoods.

We’re confident we can do what we do in Vernon for adjacent communities without diminishing our