



**MAY – JUNE 2024**

# Orange County Cemetery District

## TRUSTEES

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Tim Deutsch, General Manager

## Remember Our Veterans on Memorial Day – Monday May 27th All District Cemeteries are Hosting Free Memorial Day Programs



### **Anaheim Cemetery**

1400 E. Sycamore, Anaheim ❖ 11:00 a.m.

Join us at the Community Mausoleum to enjoy special guest speakers, a flag presentation, and a beautiful wreath ceremony. The program is organized and co-sponsored by Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3173 and American Legion Post 72. Seating is limited and guests are encouraged to bring their own lawn chairs. Thank you volunteers for making this program possible!

### **El Toro Memorial Park**

25751 Trabuco Road, Lake Forest ❖ 11:00 a.m.

Gather with us at El Toro Memorial Park's Old Section for a morning of patriotic music provided by the Saddleback Valley Master Chorale, a poetic reading by John Huntington, a combined color guard by VFW Post 6024, an honor guard firing salute, a wreath presentation, and more. El Toro's keynote speaker will be Mr. Bill Cook, a U.S. Marine Corps Vietnam Veteran and Chair of the Orange County Veterans Memorial Park Foundation (pictured right).



### **Santa Ana Cemetery**

1919 E. Santa Clara Ave., Santa Ana ❖ 10:00 a.m.

Santa Ana Cemetery's program takes place at the Soldier's Monument and will include a color guard, a parade of flags, special guest speakers, wreath presentations, and inspiring music. Reenactors will portray President Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt. The program will also include a special cannon salute that you won't want to miss! **Anyone interested in helping to place flags on Veterans graves at Santa Ana Cemetery should meet at the cemetery on Saturday, May 25<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 a.m. Your participation will be greatly appreciated!**



## Road Closures at Santa Ana Cemetery Will Create New Casket Spaces

With the number of available casket spaces at El Toro Memorial Park rapidly dwindling, and a new fourth public cemetery still years away from opening, creating new interment spaces within our existing cemeteries, is a top priority.

After careful consideration, the District has determined that three sections of roadway within Santa Ana Cemetery can be closed and converted to new interment lawns.

As you enter Santa Ana Cemetery from Santa Clara Avenue, the first road closure will be located on the left side of the cemetery between Sections L and K and Sections M and J. We expect that this closure will yield 152 new full casket spaces.

The second road closure will take place on the road at the back of the cemetery leading up to Fairhaven Cemetery's maintenance building. This road closure will provide about 168 new casket spaces.

The last road closure will take place in the back right corner of the park between Sections F, E, and A. This closure should create approximately 227 casket spaces and 224 cremation spaces.

**In all, Santa Ana Cemetery should gain about 550 casket spaces. These spaces will only be sold to families who are in immediate need of burial. No sales of casket spaces will be allowed for purposes of advanced planning.**

Work on these road closures is expected to commence sometime in July 2024. No grass will be planted in these new interment areas until sections are completely sold and burials have been conducted. Gravesites will be sold in order to fill each lot fully before opening new lots. Once burial activity subsides in an area, grass will be planted.

We apologize for any inconvenience these necessary road closures may cause to families visiting gravesites. We realize that some families may not be able to park as close to a loved one's gravesite as they did before. We ask for your patience and understanding during construction and hope you will excuse the extra noise and dust.

## Santa Ana Secretary, Mary Diane Fuentes to Retire on June 27<sup>th</sup> - After 37 Years with the District!

In 1987, Mary Diane Fuentes's first job with the District was as a contract employee cleaning all three cemetery offices. When the District purchased its first computer program around 1991, she took decades of old paper records (some so old they were written with a quill pen) and entered them in electronic format. Soon she was answering phones, greeting families, and doing

all sorts of clerical work. A true "Girl Friday" as Mary Diane likes to say. In 2017, the District officially made her a part-time Secretary for Santa Ana Cemetery. Although she is really excited to retire, (even if she didn't make her goal of retiring at age 85!), she says it will be hard to leave her "work family", adding, "it was actually fun to go to work!" **Congratulations Mary Diane!** We know that casino trips, bingo and your garden



weeds are calling. We will miss your wonderful smile and the joy and laughter you always bring!

## El Toro Memorial Park Receives a New John Deere Compact Tractor

Groundskeeper Felipe Romo-Chavez (pictured right) tests out El Toro's new John Deere 4066R Compact Utility Tractor.

As a government entity, the District is able to participate in cooperative purchasing programs which provide the lowest competitive bid on each piece of equipment.

Before tax, our new tractor was priced at \$53,641.00. However, through the purchasing program, the District received a discount of \$9,118.98, representing a 17% savings. We were also able to trade in our old John Deere 4700 tractor, saving an additional \$1,500.00. Including tax, the final purchase price was \$46,363.24.





## Please Remember These Do's and Don'ts for Gravesite Decorations

- Do** limit gravesite decorations to no more than two items.
- Do** follow the cemetery clean-up calendar and remove items on Tuesdays before full park clean-ups take place.
- Do** change the water in your vases or containers at least once a week.
- Do** be respectful of neighboring gravesites by not allowing decorations to spill over onto other spaces.
- Don't** put up fences or line the perimeter of your gravesite with anything.
- Don't** use more than two temporary cone vases at a time.
- Don't** place mulch, stones, or small items on your gravesite that can be picked up by mowers and cast out. This can cause harm to those nearby or damage your marker.



**Please limit gravesite decorations to two items only. As these photos illustrate, when gravesites are overloaded with decorations, it makes mowing and trimming extremely difficult and time consuming. Decorations should be placed so that the gravesites are unobstructed, allowing mowers to freely pass across gravesites. Thank you!!**

## Board of Trustees and Staff to Create a New 5-Year Strategic Plan

As we prepare for a new fourth public cemetery, and our three existing cemeteries transition to maintenance only properties, the District must address and be ready for a variety of changes that will occur in the next five years.

successfully navigate the financial impacts, staffing concerns, and changes to policies and procedures that will allow us to open Gypsum Canyon Memorial Park, without sacrificing service to families at our existing cemeteries.

provide staff with specific action items they must accomplish each year in order to make this vision a reality.

That is why our Trustees are diligently working on a new 5-year strategic plan that will help staff

When completed, this strategic plan will lay out a vision for what the District wants to achieve and will

The goal is to complete this strategic plan before the start of the new fiscal year on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Annual budgets will then be structured in accordance to the goals set forth for each year in the strategic plan.

## 2024-2025 Fiscal Year Budget Scheduled for Board Review in June

Staff is currently working on the new fiscal year budget that will take effect on July 1, 2024. The annual budget is an important management, communication, and accountability tool that grants spending

authority to District staff. Included in the budget are revenue projections, expense estimates, equipment purchases and capital project improvement costs. In addition, the Master Fee Schedule is reviewed

and updated. For the 2024-25 budget, it is likely there will be price increases. Updated price sheets will be posted on the District website 30 days prior to implementation and will be available at each cemetery office.

**ORANGE COUNTY CEMETERY DISTRICT**

**May/June Board Meetings**

The Board of Trustees for the Orange County Cemetery District holds regular meetings the first Tuesday of every month at 10:00 a.m. at the District Office located at 25751 Trabuco Road, Lake Forest, CA 92630. Meetings are now being held in person and are open to the public. Members of the public may also attend Board Meetings remotely. Instructions to join remotely are posted on the agendas.

Agendas are available at least 72 hours prior to each meeting and are also posted on our District website at: [www.occemeterydistrict.com](http://www.occemeterydistrict.com). In May and June, meetings will be held as follows:

- **Tuesday, May 7<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.**
- **Tuesday, June 4<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.**

If you have any questions or need additional information please contact the District Secretary, Mary Funk at (949) 951-9102 ext. 110.

**Flower Removal and Holiday Schedule**

Every Wednesday, groundskeepers remove and discard flowers and decorations throughout all three cemeteries. Families are encouraged to remove their flowers and/or decorations on Tuesday night. You can then place the flowers back on the space on Thursday morning. Please remember that the District policy only allows for two items to be placed on gravesites. This includes the in-ground flower vase and one other item. If gravesites exceed the number of allowed items, staff may remove and discard the excess items. Please do not leave items of great monetary or sentimental value on gravesites as the District cannot prevent theft.

Throughout the year, various holidays are recognized with extended periods between full park clean-ups. During these times, we ask that you empty the vase and place fresh water in the container every four to five days to eliminate mosquito breeding sources, which can cause serious health issues. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

**In honor of Mother’s Day, flowers may be placed on Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> and must be removed by Tuesday, May 21<sup>st</sup>. Flowers for Memorial Day may be placed beginning on Thursday May 23<sup>rd</sup> and must be removed by Tuesday, June 4<sup>th</sup>. In honor of Father’s Day, flowers may be placed on Thursday, June 6<sup>th</sup> and must be removed by Tuesday, June 25<sup>th</sup>. During this time, light clean-ups will still occur each Wednesday and only flowers that are obviously wilted will be removed.**

**Please be advised, during full park clean-ups everything on gravesites are discarded. Please be sure to remove items you do not want discarded before the cemetery closes on Tuesdays.**

The 2024 Cemetery Grounds Wednesday Clean-up Calendar is available on our website at [www.occemeterydistrict.com](http://www.occemeterydistrict.com). Click on the tab for Flowers, Markers and Rules for more information.

**CEMETERY VISITATION HOURS**

**Anaheim Cemetery  
and  
Santa Ana Cemetery  
are open for visitation, seven days a week,  
from 8 am to 5 pm.**

**El Toro Memorial Park is open seven days a  
week from 8 am to 7 pm.**

**Cemetery Offices are open M-F, 8 am to 5 pm.**

**All offices are closed on the  
weekends and on holidays.**

*The Orange County Cemetery District manages and maintains Orange County’s public cemeteries in a manner that preserves their beauty, dignity, historical and cultural values, and offers affordable interment service for County residents.*

The Trustees and staff of the Orange County Cemetery District are committed to the following values:

- Integrity ■ Respect ■ Accountability
- Responsiveness ■ Empathy ■ Transparency
- Appreciation for Diverse Needs

