



MAY – JUNE 2025

Orange County Cemetery District

TRUSTEES

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Tim Deutsch, General Manager

Please Join Us for Memorial Day as we Remember and Honor Our Veterans

On Monday, May 26th, The Orange County Cemetery District will be hosting Memorial Day programs at each of our three cemeteries. Your attendance sends a message to our Veterans that they are remembered and their service and sacrifices are appreciated by a grateful nation.

Anaheim Cemetery
1400 E. Sycamore
11:00 a.m.

Anaheim's program takes place in front of the historic Community Mausoleum. The program is coordinated by American Legion Post 72 and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3173. The event includes a flag ceremony, special guest speakers, wreath presentations, and more. Following the program, VFW Post 3173 will be hosting a lunch reception at their Post.

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

Santa Ana's program takes place in front of the Soldiers' Monument at the main gate on Santa Clara Ave. Memorial Day programs have been staged at this site since 1881. The inspiring program typically includes:

the Presentation of the Colors, the pageantry of the Parade of Flags, special patriotic music, Cannon Salutes by Cooper's Battery, a P.O.W./M.I.A Vacant Chair Dedication, poetic readings, and special guest speakers.

Volunteers are welcome to attend a flag placement event at Santa Ana Cemetery on Saturday, May 24th at 8:00 a.m. to ensure every Veteran's grave is honored with a U.S. flag.

El Toro Memorial Park
25751 Trabuco Road
Lake Forest
11:00 a.m.

El Toro's program takes place in the rear of the cemetery in Old Section.

El Toro Memorial Park's Keynote Speaker will be U.S. Army Veteran, Frans VandenBroek. As a helicopter crewchief with the 68th Assault Helicopter Company in Vietnam, Mr. VandenBroek accumulated 1,000 combat flight hours, losing three helicopters and two pilots to enemy action and crashes. He earned the Army Air Medal, the Purple Heart, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry and the Distinguished Flying Cross.



Frans VandenBroek
U.S. Army Veteran and
El Toro Memorial Park
Keynote Speaker

He will be speaking on, "The Legacy of the Vietnam Veteran."

El Toro Memorial Park's program also includes a combined color guard, a wreath presentation, a VFW Honor Guard firing salute, and special music by a bugler, a bagpiper, and the Master Chorale of Saddleback Valley.

All programs are free to attend and take place rain or shine. Seating is limited, but you are welcome to bring your own lawn chairs. For the best seats, plan to arrive early. Our most sincere thanks to the countless volunteers who have all contributed to make these programs possible.

Orange County Cemetery District Welcomes New Board Member, Raymond Schnell

The District is excited to welcome Raymond Schnell to our Board of Trustees. Trustee Schnell has lived in Orange County for over 20 years and is a long-time Tustin resident. He was appointed to our Board on April 8, 2025 by the County of Orange Third District Supervisor, Donald Wagner.

Trustee Schnell will be completing the term of former Trustee, Vladimir Anderson, who sadly had to leave the position due to health concerns.

Trustee Schnell brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to our Board. He holds a Bachelor's degree in English from the University of Rochester and a Master of Business Administration from Chapman University. His career in financial services focuses on M&A transactional risk and capital

intermediary services for Private Equity, Hedge Funds and Venture Capital firms.

Trustee Schnell is currently a Councilmember with the City of Tustin. He also participates on several other Boards including: The Orange County Library Advisory Board, The Foothill / Eastern Transportation Corridor Agency, and the El Dorado HOA. He is also the alternate for the Santa Ana River Flood Protection Agency and Senior Fund Board of Directors.

When asked why he wanted to serve on the Orange County Cemetery District Board, Trustee Schnell stated that he is the proud son of United States Air Force General, John J. Schnell, who passed away in August 2024. He is looking forward to being a part of bringing the



**Trustee Raymond V. Schnell
District Three**

Gypsum Canyon Cemetery development to fruition. It is a project that will benefit both the residents of Orange County with a new public cemetery as well as our brave and dedicated Veterans who are so deserving of a new State Veterans Cemetery.

Santa Ana Cemetery Opens New Section with Second Road Closure

Santa Ana Cemetery is nearing completion of the second road closure, located in the northeast corner of the cemetery. The new interment area is being called Section FA (**pictured right**) and includes 220 new double-depth casket spaces, and 120 in-ground cremation spaces. Staff are currently setting location pins in Section FA and plan to open it for sales on May 1st. As with the first road closure, Section FA will not have any grass planted, until several lots have completed all first interments. When families purchase space, they need to be willing to accept the space assigned.

Construction is now underway on the final road closure. It will be called Section RM and is located in the northwest area of the park. The District estimates that this final road closure will yield an additional 171 full casket spaces.

While there are some disadvantages to closing these three roads when navigating the cemetery, the 647 casket spaces that are being created in Sections MJ, FA, and RM will ensure that the district can continue to serve Orange County families who are in need of full casket space. We will continue to make every effort to meet this need until Gypsum Canyon Memorial Park becomes operational.



New sod as now been placed for the first interments in Section MJ

Judge Rules in Favor of Gypsum Canyon Cemetery Development

The Anaheim City Council unanimously approved the Gypsum Canyon Cemetery Development on August 23, 2024.

Unfortunately, a lawsuit challenging this approval was filed shortly after by Build The Great Park Veterans Cemetery of Irvine, Dr. Harvey Liss of Irvine, and Cyrus Pourhassanian of Yorba Linda (collectively Petitioners). The lawsuit claimed that the 2005 environmental impact report (EIR), which was utilized for approvals along with an extensive 4-year environmental review conducted from 2020 to 2024, was too old and should not have been considered.

However, we believe that no legitimate environmental concerns exist, and the lawsuit is a selfish attempt to delay the project, so that this small group could try to bring the Veterans Cemetery back to Irvine. For many years the City of Irvine had studied and discussed the development of a State Veterans Cemetery on three different parcels in Irvine, but no action or approvals were ever taken by the Irvine City Council.

To defend this lawsuit, the City of Anaheim, the County of Orange,

and the Orange County Cemetery District have been working with the legal team from Meyers Nave. Meyers Nave is a firm that specializes in litigation of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) related lawsuits.

Over the past 7 months, the legal team has been providing the Superior Court Judge with all of the facts related to the case and on March 17, 2025, the Court ruled in favor of the project to dismiss this legal challenge by the Petitioners in this Court. Sadly, the Petitioners still have the ability to appeal this decision to another Court.

Since this lawsuit was filed, the Orange County Cemetery District has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars defending this project – funds that should have been going towards the development itself. With interment space rapidly dwindling in our three existing cemeteries, the development of this fourth public cemetery is essential for the residents of Orange County.

For now, we must wait to see if these Petitioners will continue their efforts to delay progress on this badly needed community resource.

In the meantime, the legal challenge has not stopped the Development Team from moving forward. The Team has been working with the County, the City of Anaheim, and CalVet on development documents to bring water and electrical utilities onto the site, prepare for mass grading activities, and planning for the first phase of both of the State Veterans cemetery and the public cemetery properties, which could begin in the fall of 2026.

The Development Team has also been working with many of the City, County, State and Congressional Elected Officials on this important county and regional project. When complete, this beautiful and unique cemetery development will provide our Veterans and the Orange County community as a whole with peaceful, dignified and beautiful cemeteries that families can use for the next 80-100 years.

To learn more about this project and the latest developments, please visit the Gypsum Canyon Cemetery Development Project website at: <https://gypsumcanyon.occemeterydistrict.com/>. The District will also continue to provide updates in upcoming newsletters.

Board of Trustees to Review the 2025-26 Fiscal Year Budget

Each spring, staff prepares the upcoming budget that will go into effect at the start of the new fiscal year on July 1st. The budget is the District's annual financing and spending plan and is an important communication tool and policy document. It grants spending authority to District staff and serves as an accountability tool to ensure resources are used prudently.

As a part of the annual budget process, a careful review of the District's Master Fee Schedule is conducted. In determining fee changes, staff consider a variety of factors including: comparable costs at other cemeteries; the Consumer Price Index percentages; current staff labor rates; the District overhead rate; and benefit percentages.

This year, the District's Finance & Investment Committee will review the preliminary budget in May and it will then go to the Board for approval at the June 3rd Board Meeting. Any fee changes approved by the Board, will be posted on our website and available at each cemetery office, but will not go into effect until 30 days after Board approval, on Monday July 7, 2025.

ORANGE COUNTY CEMETERY DISTRICT

May/June Board Meetings

The Board of Trustees for the Orange County Cemetery District typically 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. Members of the public are welcome to attend and may also join 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. In May and June, meetings will be held as follows:

- **Tuesday, May 6th at 10:00 a.m.**
- **Tuesday, June 3rd 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 place fresh water in the vase 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 1st and must be removed by Tuesday, May 20th. Flowers may be placed for Memorial Day beginning on Thursday, May 22nd and must be removed by Tuesday, June 3rd. In honor of Father’s Day, flowers may be placed on Thursday, June 5th and must be removed by Tuesday, June 24th. During this time, light clean-ups will still occur each Wednesday and only flowers that are obviously wilted will be removed.

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 2025 Cemetery Grounds Wednesday Clean-up Calendar is available on our website at 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 has Extended Visitation and is open for visitation, 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 provides affordable interment services for County residents and taxpayers. We strive to maintain the beauty and dignity of the grounds while preserving their historical and cultural value for the benefit of all.

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

- Integrity ■ Respect ■ Responsiveness
- Empathy ■ Transparency

