



Alive!

Serving More Than 50,000 Members

CITYWIDE

CITY EMPLOYEES STEP UP

LA WILDFIRES

As record wildfires erupt, departments go on tactical alert.
INSIDE: images and actions of the emergency.

-PAGE 12

LAFD Firefighters Aaron Amezcua, Moises Martinez and Kevin Benitez from FS 88 attack a blaze in Studio City.

Photo by LAFD Capt. Frank Aguirre, LAFRA Trustee, with permission



Celebrating the work and lives of public employees.

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FEES-BACK ELIGIBLE

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When stress hits, you find out who people are.

When the wildfires scorched greater LA Jan. 7 and devastated wide areas of thriving neighborhoods, City employees responded, as you'll read in this month's standout issue. And the Club responded, too. City employees and Club staff shone bright. Their best came through.

Putting together this month's *Alive!* reminded me of our



Clockwise from left: The Club's Clara Flores, Jasmine Guevara, Eduardo Escalona, Rebecca DeBolt, Mariana Guevara, Lupe Lira, Natalia Guevara and volunteers from partner associations, collecting for wildfire victims. Right: Organizer Arlene Herrero.

efforts when COVID infected the world in 2020. *Alive!* changed gears to create a comprehensive inventory of extraordinary efforts by the City. We used that as a model of how to handle the wildfires this time.

The Club Responds

Club staff responded in a big way. During COVID, we created the Club Care Team, where our employees called every single one of our Members – approaching 50,000 – to check on their status and see how they were coping.

The Club Care Team reactivated for the wildfire emergency. The Team of 12 Club staffers made more than 1,000 phone calls over two weeks; we learned that 14 Members lost their homes, and 40 requested our help supplying staples, made possible by generous donations by Members like you to the Club's separate charity partner, Club Angels. Thanks to **Lupe Lira**, Club Director of Retail and Ecommerce, for organizing the Club Care Team.



ROBERT'S BLOG

by Robert Larios, CEO, The Club



And through Club Vice President of Business Development **Arlene Herrero** — she's also Executive Director of Club Angels — we teamed with several other employee associations to collect and sort clothing, personal care products and Club merchandise to those in need. Arlene represented both the Club and Club Angels at the collection. That was a tremendous day at the Club warehouse!

Our staff members won't brag about what they've done, so I will. Club Members should be reminded that they are served by Club representatives who are both consummate professionals and excellent people, too. I am proud of what they have done.

A Picture's Worth

We thank LAFD **Capt. Frank Aguirre** for permission to publish his extraordinary photo of an LAFD squad attacking flames in Studio City. As soon as we saw the image, we knew we wanted it on our cover. Special thanks, too, go to Retired **Firefighter John Hicks**, Club Member and editor of LAFRA's *Grapevine* magazine, for connecting us.

Members, I hope and pray you are safe from the wildfires. I greatly value you, our City employees, and I treasure the Club staff, too. They are the City, and the Club, at their very best.

¡Gracias por leer!

Robert Larios
CEO

At a recent Mobile Team site visit.



Monthly Anchors:

- North Central Sanitation**
452 N. San Fernando Rd., 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.
The first Monday of every month:
Mon., Feb. 3
- Van Nuys City Hall**
6262 Van Nuys Blvd., 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Tues., Feb. 4
- Harbor**
100 W. Fifth St., 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
The first Wednesday of every month:
Wed., Feb. 5
- City Hall Farmers Market**
201 N. Main St., 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
The first Thursday of every month:
Thurs., Feb. 6

Additional Visits:

- West Valley StreetsLA**
9324 Topanga Canyon Blvd., noon – 4 p.m.
Wed., Feb. 12
- LAWA – Admin West**
7301 World Way., 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Wed., Feb. 19
- Street Lighting – Santa Monica Blvd.**
4550 Santa Monica Blvd., 7 a.m. – 11 a.m.
Wed., Feb. 19
- Animal Services – Harbor Shelter**
957 N. Gaffey St., 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Thurs., Feb. 20



To schedule a Club Mobile visit:

Scan the Code to Schedule a Visit
Or contact Lupe Lira, Director of Retail and Ecommerce:
(213) 819-0350, or mobile@employeesclub.com

ATTENTION SUPERVISORS: Raise employee morale! Bring the Club to your worksite!

Club Mobile is cashless!
For your convenience, now accepting major credit cards.



Follow Club social media for other days, times and locations as they are scheduled:



@EmployeesClub



Employees Club of California



@theClubofCA



Photo: ©Reuters, cleared for publication

COVER STORY:

City Employees Respond to Wildfires.....12-17

City departments go into tactical alert to fight devastating, record-breaking wildfires.

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CLUBDEALS

FROM THE CLUB DEAL DESK

Pedal Power!

Save **14%** on Bulls Bikes and Pegasus eBikes!

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to Help

Contact the Club

if you have an event you want covered in *Alive!*
or if you have questions about insurance.

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Alive!

Feb. 2025 • Volume 24 – No. 2

Alive! is the official publication of the
Employees Club of California

311 Spring St., Suite 1300
Los Angeles, CA 90013

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Alive! (USPS P7960) is published monthly,
12 times per year by the Employees Club of California,
311 Spring St., Suite 1300, Los Angeles, CA 90013.

ALIVE! EDITORIAL OFFICES:

311 Spring Street, Suite 1300,
Los Angeles CA, 90013 • (800) 464-0452

POSTAGE: Periodicals postage paid at Los Angeles, CA
and at additional mailing offices.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Annual subscription price for *Alive!*
is included in the membership dues and is nondeductible.

POSTMASTER: Send address corrections to
Alive!, Employees Club of California, 311 Spring St.,
Suite 1300, Los Angeles, CA 90013.

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to: alive@employeesclub.com

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The Club
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Noelle Hits the Books for Members

NOELLE KAUFFMAN, DIRECTOR OF
SALES, BEGINS EMBA PROGRAM AT
MICHIGAN ROSS.

THE CLUB: The Club's Director of Sales, Noelle Kauffman, has been
accepted into the Executive Master of Business Administration degree
program at the University of Michigan Ross School of Business.

"Serving Members is my utmost goal, and this EMBA will give me
smarter and more advanced and powerful ways to do that," Noelle says.
"I can't wait to use my continuing development to bring even more value
to Club Members."

Noelle's EMBA coursework will be completed mostly at Michigan
Ross's Los Angeles campus, with occasional trips to Ann Arbor, Michigan.
Michigan Ross is considered among the top global business schools.

COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

The Executive MBA – a step above the already elevated MBA – is for
those in senior management roles with a focus on strategic planning and
leadership; who strive to enhance their executive skills while
balancing work, study and personal life; who aim to deliver an
immediate impact in their organizations while preparing for
advancement; and who bring their expertise to dynamic class-
room discussions and collaborative projects.

Noelle's enrollment highlights her commitment to profes-
sional development and aligns with the Club's
culture of continuous improvement and high-
quality service. The program will equip Noelle
with advanced skills to deliver innovative solu-

tions and bring increased value to the Club and
its Members.

By pursuing this degree, she's dem-
onstrating her dedication to personal
growth, while the Club reinforces its
investment in leadership development
for staff excellence.

**JOINING THE CLUB'S
ADVANCED DEGREE TEAM**

Upon her expected graduation in
2027, Noelle will join other Club staff
members who use their advanced
degrees to serve Club Members
with the highest levels of strategy
and innovation. Notably:

- Leigh Thompson, Controller,
MBA from University of Phoenix
- John Hawkins, Education and Training Manager and Club Founder,
MBA from Pepperdine University, Graziadio Business School
- Robert Larios, President and CEO, Executive MBA from
University of Michigan, Ross School of Business
- Arlene Herrero, VP of Business Development, MSLM from
University of La Verne
- Ronald Cortez, Assistant Quality Assurance
Analyst, MBA from Boston University,
Questrom School of Business (graduates in
2025).

Well done, Noelle! ●



Noelle Kauffman



MICHIGAN
ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



Club Valentines

Alive! presents one of our most popular annual features
– Club Valentines. Enjoy... and happy Valentine's Day!



"Dear HoneyBun – As we count
down to our imminent wedding day,
I thank you for making me your
Valentine every day. Love forever,
Tay #teamjones2025"
– Terri Monk, LADWP



"My favorite
Valentine!"
– Deborah
Ferrer,
Retired,
LADWP



"I fell in love with you 60-plus years
ago. Today I wanted to remind you:
Remember I told you so. 'Still in love.'"
– Sgt. Jesse J. Oliver, Airport Police



"Happy Valentine's Day to
my lovely wife, Vivien!"
– Robert Flores, LADWP



"Thank you for loving me the
way you do! Love,
your wife, Elena."
– Elena Sousa, for Officer
John Sousa, Airport Police



"Thank you for all you do for us. I
love you to the moon and back!"
– Amanda Alegria, Rec and
Parks



"To my lovely wife, friend and mother
to a nice generation of children and
grandchildren, we love and appreciate
you! Happy Valentine's Day."
– Craig Fogg, Retired, MTA,
Los Angeles County
For Kim Fogg, Retired, LADWP



"Thirty-four hard years but
great as well; with Christ, all
things are possible. As long
as we obey. (LOL)."
—Robert Vasquez, LADWP

"I love you,
my Forever
Valentines!"
– Vanessa
Santillan,
Finance



"Wishing my Sweetheart 1 a
very Happy Pre-Valentines' Day.
Wishing my Sweetheart 2 and very
Happy Post-Valentine's Day."
– Rodney Bernaldo, Public Works



"Thank you, Victor
T. Ladd, for an
amazing first-year
journey. WE have
many more adven-
tures to explore.
Love you, my love!"
– Stephanie
Williams, Retired,
LAPD



CLUB RETIREMENT PLAQUE PRESENTATIONS

We Honor Your Service!

The Club’s Noelle Kauffman honors Retired Club Members with a plaque for their many years of dedicated service.



Stephanie Young
Retired from Airports
34 years of City service



Philip Davidson
Retired from LADWP
40 years of City service



FREE! *CLUB RETIREMENT PLAQUE

Retired or Retiring Soon?

Receive your own personalized Club Retirement Plaque, free! (Must be a Club Member for at least five consecutive years.)

* a \$499 value!

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New Exec. Directors

ERIN TRAPP, COURTNEY MOORE APPOINTED AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS.

AIRPORTS: On Jan. 7, Airports announced the appointment of Erin M. Trapp, Ph.D. as Deputy Executive Director, Major Events and Strategy, and Courtney Moore as Deputy Executive Director, Strategy, Innovation and Experience. In these key leadership roles, Trapp will be responsible for guiding Airports’ efforts in preparing for and managing major events coming to Los Angeles, and Moore will focus on transforming the employee and guest experience.

“Erin and Courtney bring a deep expertise in building organizations, managing complex projects and leading diverse teams across industries that will be invaluable in these critical leadership positions,” said John Ackerman, CEO, Airports. “Erin’s experience in civic engagement and large-scale event management, and Courtney’s expertise in experience design and execution strengthen our team as we prepare our airports for the future, including the FIFA World Cup in 2026 and the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2028.”

These new appointments mark an important step in Airports’ ongoing efforts to build its talent pool and position Los Angeles as a premier global destination, enhancing the City’s reputation as a hub for tourism, business and international events.

The Club welcomes Erin and Courtney to the City team!

ERIN TRAPP



Erin Trapp

As Deputy Executive Director, Major Events and Strategy, Trapp will oversee Airports’ planning and execution for large-scale events, ensuring that Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) and Van Nuys Airport (VNY) provide an exceptional experience for visitors, athletes, employees and stakeholders. In addition to the Major Events, she will also co-lead Airports’ Transformation Office, which will implement results from a diagnostic study conducted earlier this year in preparation for the Olympics coming to Los Angeles.

Trapp has launched multiple flourishing startup organizations, most recently as the Executive Director of Colorado Thrives, where she spearheaded a statewide initiative to transform educational opportunities for underserved individuals. Previously, she served as the founding Executive Director of Climate Vault, leading efforts to address global climate change through market-based solutions.

“I am thrilled to join Los Angeles World Airports at such a pivotal time in the city’s history,” she said. “LA has an extraordinary opportunity to showcase our unparalleled culture and environment over the next several years as we host many of the most prominent and anticipated events in the world. I am committed to ensuring that our airports are fully prepared to deliver world-class service for residents and visitors, support the City’s economic growth and global reputation, and help transform LAX into an exceptional airport for our passengers and our communities.”

COURTNEY MOORE



Courtney Moore

As Deputy Executive Director, Strategy, Innovation and Experience, Moore will drive transformation projects and strategic initiatives to elevate the overall airport experience and enhance operational efficiencies across all team member and guest touchpoints. She will lead a team of terminal operations leaders, guest experience professionals and strategic project teams and oversee all experiential initiatives.

Moore previously served as Assistant Vice President of Terminal Experience at Dallas Fort Worth International Airport (DFW), where she was responsible for delivering a best-in-class customer experience for the airport, leading terminal management, which included all terminal operations, custodial services and terminal contracts. She also acted as the airport’s liaison to federal agencies and signatories at both local and national levels. Prior to that, she held leadership roles in operations, engineering and guest experience at NBCUniversal and The Walt Disney Company.

“I am grateful for the opportunity to join the talented and forward-thinking team at LAWA, and help redefine how people experience our airports,” Moore said. “My focus will be on creating transformative experiences that reflect Los Angeles’ diversity, and meet the evolving needs of our employees and guests.” ●

Appreciation Day Returns, Expands

ANNUAL CUSTODIAN APPRECIATION DAY RETURNS, INCLUDES OTHER DIVISIONS.

GENERAL SERVICES: On Nov. 8, General Services held its 23rd Custodian Appreciation Day, the first time the annual event took place since the pandemic, at City Hall.

This year’s celebration, which drew nearly 100 guests, also honored General Services’ Parking Services and Mail Services teams, and included a special presentation from the City Council.

Employees were chosen to represent the three divisions at the City Council presentation. They were:

- **Custodial:** Dion Curry, representing Civic Center, joined by Angela Montes (Central Library), Magdalena Alvarez (Central District), Melvin Phillips (PD) and Miguel Garcia (Central District/El Pueblo), 43 years of City service.
- **Mail:** Napoleon Fuller III.
- **Parking:** Alfonso Casimiro, representing Civic Center, joined by Henry Matute (Parking Manager), Sandra Calderon (Pershing Square), Ramiro Salinas (Pershing Square), Salomon Charley (El Pueblo) and Eduardo Basto (Civic Center).

Many additional employees attended the presentation and observed in the Council Chambers or, when that filled, in the rotunda area of City Hall.

After the City Council presentation, Custodians, Parking and Mail employees, Dept. Directors and union representatives gathered around Felipe de Neve Plaza at City Hall East for the appreciation event.

SEIU Local 721 sponsored the event and provided box lunches and distributed gifts. Gifts were also generously provided by LIUNA and AFSCME.

The Employees Club proudly supports the City’s Custodians, Parking and Mail employees and loves covering this event each year. Thank you for all your hard work!

Thank you, Custodians and Parking and Mail employees, for everything you do to make our City great! It’s always a pleasure for the Club to share the celebration with employees who keep the City running smoothly.

Special thanks go to Tony Royster, General Manager and City Purchasing Agent, Club Member; Emily Maeda, Assistant General Manager, Club Member; Eric Robles, Director of Special Services, Club Member; and Pierre Riotoc, Assistant Director of Special Services. ●



Holding Certificates of Recognition at a City Council presentation ceremony, hosted by Councilmember Imelda Padilla (front, center) are (from left) Alfonso Casimiro, representing Parking Services; Dion Curry (center, right), representing Custodial Services; and Napoleon Fuller (middle, second row). Behind them are General Manager Tony Royster and Assistant General Manager Emily Mayeda.



Mail Services, **front row, from left:** Evelyn Michelle Blas, Sr. Administrative Clerk, 18 years of City service; Beatriz Rivera, Administrative Clerk, 1 year; Ana Secaida, Administrative Clerk, 1 year; Veronica Serrato, Administrative Clerk, 2 years; Yolanda Jimenez, Driver, 26 years; Tammy Vega, Driver, 7 years; and Reginald J. Williams, Administrative Clerk, 5 years. **Back row:** Pierre Riotoc, Assistant Director of Special Services, 20 years; Napoleon Fuller III, Delivery Driver, 22 years; Sam Galvan, Operations Manager, 17-plus years; Jack Callies, Delivery Driver III, 26 years; Eric Robles, Director of Special Services, 25-plus years; and Michael Hairston, Delivery Driver I, 20 years.



From left: Jose Alvarez, Custodian, 26 years of City service; Leonardo Guzman, Custodian, 2 years; and Rosendo Sanchez, Custodian, 22 years.



Front, from left: Keisha Tyler, Custodian Supervisor, 23 years of City service; and Celina Martinez, Custodian Supervisor, 1 year. Back: Melvin Phillips, Custodian Supervisor, 36 years; Brandon Williamson, Sr. Custodian Supervisor, 16 years; Benicio Hernandez, Custodian Supervisor, 15 years; and Lebron Bennett, Custodian Supervisor, 16 years.



From left: Sam Galvan, Operations Manager, 17-plus years of City service; Eric Robles, Director of Special Services, 25-plus years; Napoleon Fuller III, Delivery Driver, 23 years; and Pierre Riotoc, Assistant Director of Special Services, 20 years.

More pictures on Web Alive!



From left: Melvin Phillips, Custodian Supervisor, 36 years of City service; Jessica Davis; Keisha Tyler, Custodian Supervisor, 1 year; Carnel Baker; Yaneth Rubio; and Leonardo Velasquez.

THE CLUB INSURANCE CORNER

by Noelle Kauffman, Club Director of Sales



CA LICENSE NO: 0H45598

Events Like Wildfires Remind Us: Affordable Legal Support Is Crucial

Open Enrollment for MetLife Legal Plan Now Through March 31, 2025.

The ongoing wildfires across Los Angeles have brought devastation to many, leaving residents to deal with complex legal challenges in the aftermath. From property damage claims to disputes with landlords and navigating insurance issues, these situations can quickly become overwhelming. The Employees Club's MetLife Legal Plan has stepped up as an essential resource for those affected who had coverage prior to the wildfires, offering affordable legal assistance when it's needed most.

For a low monthly cost—\$21 for individual coverage or \$22.50 for family coverage—MetLife Legal provides access to a network of experienced attorneys who can assist with a wide range of legal matters. Whether you need help with real estate issues, filing insurance disputes, or planning your estate, the plan handles attorney fees so you can focus on resolving your situation without surprise costs.

The plan is tailored to bring



peace of mind, especially during crises like the LA fires. With the open enrollment period now under way, MetLife Legal empowers members to address pressing legal concerns efficiently and affordably. Facing challenges such as property damage, tenant rights issues, or other emergencies doesn't have to mean navigating legal battles alone—

MetLife Legal's team of attorneys is here to support you through it.

Open enrollment for MetLife Legal Plan is available now through March 31, 2025. After this date, members will need to wait for the next enrollment period the following year. Don't miss your chance to secure reliable legal coverage when it matters most.

For more information or to enroll today, reach out by email at help@employeesclub.com or call 1-800-464-0452, ext. 4.

Meet Your Club Counselors



Dalila Vielma
Member Services
Counselor



Dylan Noel
Member Services
Counselor



Cynthia Ha
Member Services
Counselor



Cheryl Martin
Member Services
Counselor

Update your benefits and get all of your questions answered by booking a one on one or group presentation appointment with your colleagues at your job site.

Email help@employeesclub.com to request a Counselor visit today!

2025 Events

LARFPA

June 4 Annual Picnic

LA River Center and Gardens
570 W Ave 26, Los Angeles, CA 90065
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

LADWP Retirees Association

Times and dates for future events to be announced.

Reservation information:

LADWP Retiree Association:
(949) 388-1206

LARFPA: events@larfpa.org

Contact Information

Club Retirees Dedicated Helpline:

Club contact:
help@employeesclub.com

LA City Employees Retirement

System (LACERS) (City Dept.)
(800) 779-8328
lacers.services@lacers.org

LADWP Retirees Association

(949) 388-1206

Fire and Police Pensions

 (City Dept.)

(844) 885-2377
pensions@lafpp.com

LA Retired Fire and Police

Association (LARFPA)
(888) 288-5073
membership@larfpa.org

Retired Los Angeles City

Employees, Inc. (RLACEI)
See page 18

FOR RETIREES OR THOSE ABOUT TO RETIRE

The Club is here to guide you through the retirement planning process every step of the way!

If you plan to retire soon or are newly Retired, you have access to attend a retirement planning party with Club Retiree Specialist Counselors that will set you up for success in retirement.

We will be reviewing topics including pension deduction, Retiree Life Insurance, Retiree Legal Insurance, the Club's Retiree Mentorship Program, our Retiree Recognition Awards, and other valuable Club benefits.

The Club strives to make your transfer from active to Retired as easy as possible by guiding you through the processes; educating you on new, important topics; and welcoming you to our Club Retiree Community.

Don't hesitate to contact our Retiree specialists at info@employeesclub.com • or (800) 464-0452

Attend a Retirement Planning Party!

Date: Last Thursday of each month
(Choose one: Feb. 27, Mar. 27, or Apr. 30)

Time: 1 – 2 p.m.

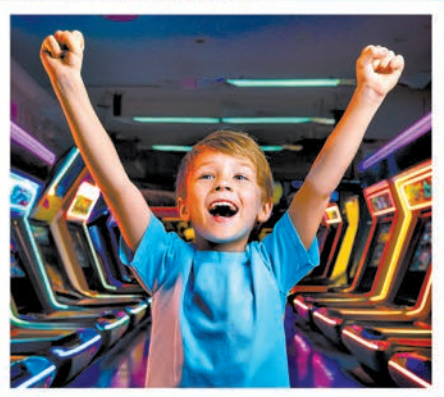
Location: Club Headquarters
311 S. Spring St., Suite 1300
Downtown Los Angeles

Parking: Validated parking provided.

RSVP today!

To reserve a spot at an upcoming Club Retirement Planning Party:

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Details at EmployeesClub.com



More than
\$130 MILLION
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Your Insurance at Work

When Members purchase insurance through the Club,
they trust the insurance will help them in times of need.

Below are the monthly amounts of claims paid back to Members.
Club insurance plans will be there when you need them.

INSURANCE PLAN	DECEMBER	TOTAL SINCE 1992
Life/Accidental Death and Dismemberment	\$25,023	\$75,487,274
Disability Insurance	\$247,719	\$37,077,649
Long-Term Care Insurance	\$180,118	\$15,229,695
Cancer/Critical Care Insurance	\$110,050	\$5,451,000
Accident Plan	\$1,610	\$151,212
Totals	\$564,521	\$133,396,830

CLUB MEMBERS' PRAISE

"The Employees Club of California was prompt, thorough and professional. All my questions were easily explained when needed, and the claim form was processed promptly. [*The Fall of Freddie the Leaf*, given by the Club as a gift to life insurance claimants on their loss] is an easily read book for children and adults to help understand the reasons of life. The book was very inspiring and helpful."

— Stephanie Laster, December 2022



Mikayla Sprague
Claims Administrator

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Top Shelf

CITY LIBRARIAN JOHN SZABO,
CLUB MEMBER, NAMED
LIBRARIAN OF THE YEAR.

LIBRARY: In January, Library Journal named John F. Szabo, City Librarian of Los Angeles and Director of Los Angeles Public Library, as its 2025 Librarian of the Year.

He is a Club Member.

Library Journal cites that, in his 12 years as Library director, John has expanded and deepened the library's mission to connect with all corners of his adopted city. Through innovative programs such as the Library Experience Office, which helps connect Angelenos with social services; Career Online High School, a free program that allows adults 19 and older to earn a high school diploma; and the buoyant L.A. Libros Book Festival, among many others, Szabo has aligned the library's work with Citywide priorities that include serving the homeless and immigrants, health, and literacy, and has grown its partnerships to include hometown organizations from the Zoo to the Dodgers.

The Librarian of the Year award, sponsored by Baker & Taylor, honors librarians for outstanding achievement and accomplishments reflecting the loftiest service goals of the library profession. These include free access to information for all, encouragement of reading, enhancement and expansion of library service to all areas and constituencies in the community, and strengthening the library role and position in the community.

John was profiled in Library Journal's January issue.

"John Szabo has taken his very genuine love of community to every library he has helmed," said Lisa Peet, Executive Editor of Library Journal. "From his first role in a rural midwestern library serving 8,000 residents to Los Angeles, with its population of nearly four million spread out across 503 square miles, his priorities as a director have stayed much the same.

"John empowers LAPL's 1,500 staff members to help drive innovation and take ownership of their work, centers the City's history and many stories, and extends a hand to new Americans and residents in need. His compassion, curiosity, and top-level strategic thinking combine to provide leadership—and librarianship—that exemplifies the best of the field."

"I am both thrilled and humbled by this recognition that is only possible through the dedicated, life-changing work of the outstanding staff of the Los Angeles Public Library," John said in response. "Angelenos love their library, and we are incredibly fortunate to have their support. It is an honor to serve them."

The Club congratulates and celebrates John for this noteworthy achievement. ●



John Szabo graced the cover of the January Library Journal.

Mandel is Govt. Liaison

ARTIE MANDEL PROMOTED TO DIRECTOR OF
GOVT. AFFAIRS.

HARBOR: On Jan. 14, the Harbor Dept. promoted Artie Mandel to Director of Government Affairs, a position overseeing the Port's collaborative efforts with governmental entities at the local, regional, state and federal levels. His duties will involve advocacy, legislative coordination, grant funding identification and coalition building, among other responsibilities.

Mandel previously served as the Port's Director of Strategic Initiatives. In his new position, he will continue to report to Avin Sharma, the Port's Sr. Director of Workforce and Government Affairs.

"Artie has a long track record of bringing stakeholders together to tackle challenging policy issues, and facilitate smart and strategic solutions," Sharma said. "His extensive background and understanding of government processes across all levels of government, along with his strong work ethic, are a tremendous asset to our Port. We look forward to seeing all he will be able to accomplish in this new role."

Prior to joining the Port, Mandel served as Chief of Intergovernmental and Legislative Affairs for the City of Los Angeles, where he oversaw federal, state and local government affairs and advocacy. In that role, he worked with City departments and the City Council to develop and execute the City's legislative program. During his tenure there, he was credited with helping secure more than \$1 billion in state homelessness assistance and housing grants for the City.

Previous to that, he served for 10 years on Capitol Hill as senior policy adviser for U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and legislative director for Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ), where he focused on tax, international trade and affordable housing policy.

Originally from New Jersey, Mandel earned a Bachelor's degree in government and politics from the University of Maryland. ●



Artie Mandel



From left: Geographic Information Specialist Chief Betty Dong; Geographic Information Specialists Brienne Solis and David Abbott; and Geographic Information Systems Supervisor II Timmy Luong.

GIS Day

STAFF SHARES INFO ON THE NEW DOWNTOWN
ZONING CODE.

PLANNING: On Nov. 20, LA County's 17th annual GIS (Geographic Information System) Day was held at Gloria Molina Grand Park next to the County Hall of Administration. This year's theme, "Think Differently, Think Spatially," explored how GIS technology enhances decision-making, improves public services, and offers educational opportunities.

Planning GIS staff hosted a booth highlighting the new Downtown Zoning Code. ●

CLUB ANNUAL LUNCHEON

Photos by Rebecca DeBolt, Club staff

2025: Honoring, Thanking, Reflecting

CLUB’S 96TH ANNUAL LUNCHEON INCLUDES NEW ELEMENTS TO EMPHASIZE CLUB MISSION, PURPOSE.

THE CLUB: The Club held its 96th annual meeting Jan. 8 at the California Endowment in downtown Los Angeles. The meeting was hosted for the first time by Arlene Herrero, Club Vice President of Business Development.

The annual luncheon featured many new elements: the naming of Employees of the Year across many jurisdictions; a Lifetime Achievement Award; the debut of a new direction in Club video; and a “fire-side” chat hosted by Association and Club President and CEO Robert Larios to explore the deeper meaning and purpose of our daily lives.

Those new elements combined with annual favorites like the Club President’s Award, the ceremonial swearing in of Club Board Members, annual reports from Club staff, and of course a delicious lunch and the renewal of friendships and business relationships.

“We are thrilled to have you here for this very special event,” Arlene said in opening the luncheon, before introduc-



Club CEO Robert Larios delivered remarks to open the luncheon.

ing the luncheon committee of Mariana Guevara, Director of Ticketing and Affinity Programs; Clara Flores, Sr. Accountant; and Guadalupe Lira, Director of Retail and Ecommerce. “We’ve worked hard to plan an extraordinary experience for all of you.”

Officer Dan Jenkins of the LAPD Chaplain Corps gave the opening invocation and the closing benediction.

The business portion of the annual meeting – the swearing in of Club Board Members – took place in late 2024. ●

Officer Dan Jenkins of the LAPD Chaplain Corps, delivered the invocation and the benediction.



Event host Arlene Herrero, Club Vice President of Business Development.

CLUB AWARDS

PRESIDENT’S AWARD



Petros Khachatryan
President’s Award

Robert Larios presented one of the Club’s most meaningful and distinguished honors – the President’s Award, chosen by the awardee’s peers and co-workers. This year’s recipient was Petros Khachatryan, Club Director of IT.

“Petros, your empathy and leadership have created a space where collaboration thrives, and excellence becomes the standard,” Robert said. “You’ve built a community where others might see only challenges, and your positive influence radiates across the entire organization. You’ve reminded us that true leadership isn’t just about leading – it’s about serving, inspiring, and lifting others toward success. I want to thank you for all you’ve done for this organization. You’ve set a benchmark with your compassion, innovation, and dedication that will continue to guide us for years to come.”



From left: Petros Khachatryan, Director of IT and awardee of the Club’s President’s Award, with Club Vice President of Business Development Arlene Herrero and Chief Operating Officer Summy Lam.



Petros Khachatryan, Club Director of IT, thanks his family as he accepts the Club’s President’s Award.

EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

For the first time, the Club presented its Employee of the Year Awards, a new initiative to celebrate the incredible dedication, professionalism and heart that define public service employees in California. It’s about recognizing excellence, the very best of public service.

Recipients of the inaugural Employee of the Year Awards were:

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Porsha Rogers,

Seven years of State service, Five years of Club Membership

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
Larna Jordan,

17 years of City service, Nine years of Club Membership

LADWP
Monique Ortiz,

27 years of LADWP service, 12 years of Club Membership

LADWP (RETIRED)
Cynthia Billingslea,

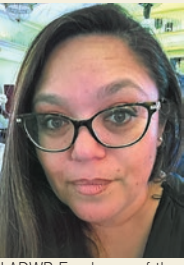
32 years of LADWP service, 25 years of Club Membership



Employee of the Year Larna Jordan, Public Works/Street Lighting, with Club CEO Robert Larios.



Retired Employee of the Year, Cynthia Billingslea



LADWP Employee of the Year, Monique Ortiz (not present).



State of California Employee of the Year, Porsha Rogers (not present).

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Event host Arlene Herrero then presented the rarely awarded Club Lifetime Achievement Award to “an extraordinary leader, trail-blazer and advocate – Ruth B. Perry.

“Ruth had a remarkable career with the City of Los Angeles. She started as a Clerk Typist in 1991 ... and ultimately served as Personnel Officer for LACERS, retiring in 2018. Her work laid a foundation for fairness, professionalism and excellence.”

In retirement, Ruth served “as the first Latina and female president of Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. (RLACEI). She broke barriers and set a powerful example of inclusion and leadership. Her presidency marked a new chapter for the organization and its commitment to diversity. At RLACEI, she championed Retiree benefits, facilitated crucial partnerships, and worked to reform federal laws like the Windfall Elimination Provisions and Government Pension Offset. “Her legacy is one of strength, advocacy and inspiration.”



Ruth Perry delivers her warm and emotional thanks as she accepts the Club’s Lifetime Achievement Award.



Beverly Clark, First Vice President, RLACEI, and one of Ruth Perry’s best friends, shares her thoughts on Ruth Perry’s Lifetime Achievement Award.



Ruth Perry, Retired, LACERS and former president, RLACEI, is honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award by Club CEO Robert Larios.

CLUB ANNUAL LUNCHEON

CEO REMARKS AND SWEARING IN

After welcoming and thanking the Board of Directors, Club Ambassadors, Club staff and creative contributors, Association and Club President and CEO Robert Larios then introduced Club Chief Operating Officer, who swore into office Association Board Member Capt. II Danny Wu, LAFD.

The Club Boards for 2025 consist of: LACEA (Association) Board of Directors

- Phillipe Chou, LADWP
 - Jackie Koci Tamayo, Santa Clara County
- Carlos Rodriguez, LADOT
 - Andrew Virzi III, LADWP
 - Capt. II Danny Wu, LAFD

LACEA Insurance Services (The Club), all Retired:

- Terry Carter
 - Marilyn Holley
 - Rose Hyland
- David Muraoka
 - Rita Robinson-Kane
 - Andrew Virzi Jr.



Club CEO Robert Larios delivered remarks to open the luncheon.



Club COO Summy Lam speaks on the Club's fiscal strength and innovation.



LAPD Capt. II Danny Wu (right) takes the oath as a Club Board Director.



From left: John Hawkins, Education and Training Manager (and Club Founder), with Andrew Virzi Jr., Club Board Member.

CORPORATE UPDATES

After thanking Club insurance partners AFLAC and Employers First Choice, Club Chief Operating Officer Summy Lam reported on the current development of the new Code of Ethics and Conduct, which protects the Club's brand and strengthens its partnerships with those who share the Club's vision. The Code has been in development for several months and will be published in *Alive!* after it is finalized.

Arlene then introduced Club staff team leaders – Clara Flores, Sr. Accountant; Mariana Guevara, Director of Ticketing and Affinity Programs; Noelle Kauffman, Director of Sales; Guadalupe Lira, Director of Retail and Ecommerce; and Petros Khachatryan, Director of IT – and announced developments and notable achievements from 2024 within each of their departments. For a list of the achievements, readers can refer to the December 2024 issue of *Alive!*



The Club's insurance partners from Employers First Choice in Sacramento, from left: Alexander Mattis, Dante Willerton and Patrick Miller III.



From left: Club AFLAC insurance partners Steven Hanson and Andres Trujillo; and Club Ambassador Cesar Ponce, LADOT.



Philip Kwon, KSS Commerce, with Club Vice President of Business Development Arlene Herrero.



Club Team Leaders (second from left) Petros Khachatryan, IT; Megan Eckert, standing in for Mariana Guevara, Ticket Procurement; Lupe Lira, Retail and Ecommerce; Noelle Kauffman, Sales; and Mikayla Sprague, Claims; report on their teams' 2024 successes and highlights.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

PAM ROY AND THE SEARCH FOR MEANING

After lunch, Robert Larios introduced the afternoon's keynote speaker, Pam Roy, a writer, philanthropist, filmmaker and tireless advocate for the mental health and wellbeing of children and young adults. She co-founded the Viktor E. Frankl Institute of America and has been greatly influenced by the late Frankl's work; he wrote the famous book *Man's Search for Meaning*, derived from his deep suffering at several concentration camps during the Holocaust. Pam brings Frankl's life-changing teachings to new generations, transforming lives by fostering a stronger connection to purpose and meaning.

During a fireside chat format, Pam spoke about finding meaning in current times, and took questions from luncheon guests.

A transcript and video of the chat will be available later this spring on the Club's Facebook page.



Keynote speaker Pam Roy, co-founder of the Viktor E. Frankl Institute of America, was joined in a fireside chat by Club CEO Robert Larios on the theme of Frankl's book, *Man's Search for Meaning*.

CLUB VIDEO:

'ALONG FOR THE RIDE'

Finally, the Club debuted its new direction in Club video – the first installment of its immersive documentary series called "Along for the Ride," where the Club cameras spend time on the job and using important Club benefits with individual Members, one at a time. The debut featured Cesar Ponce, Traffic Officer; LADOT; Chermaine Fontenette, RCTO, Public Works/Sanitation; and Kirk Broyard, Retired, LADWP. Complications a few days short of filming prevented the inclusion of a fourth Club Member, Scott Walton, State of California, but he was thanked at the luncheon for his passion for the Club.

The first installment of "Along for the Ride" will have its public debut later this spring.

"Along for the Ride" was produced for the Club by Burnes Creative and ÁLAS Media.

Let Club video tell your story! Are you interested in being featured in a future segment of "Along for the Ride"? Email the team at alive@employeesclub.com



Images from the Club's new video series, "Along for the Ride," highlighted Club Members Cesar Ponce, LADOT; Chermaine Fontenette, Public Works/Sanitation; and Kirk Broyard, Retired, LADWP.

SPECIAL THANKS

The Club thanks all those who attended, participated and planned the 96th edition of the Club's annual luncheon, and gives a special shoutout to David and Marie Jamgotchian, who created the event's design elements. We'll see you again in early 2026!



Club staff welcomed guests. The welcome table staff, from left: Megan Eckert, Tickets and Benefits Procurement Associate; Frank Ochoa, IT Accountant; and Cesilee Castillo, Customer Service Rep.



The Club's Annual Lunch Committee, which produced the event, from left: Rebecca DeBolt, Lupe Lira, Arlene Herrero and Genesis Martinez.



Club staffers Alan Bound, Mikayla Sprague, Dulce Lopez and Rey Hernandez.



From left: Suzanna Huerta with Club Retail staff Raul Salgado, Eduardo Escalona and DeAngelo Thompson.



Dwayne and Club Ambassador Chermaine Fontenette, Public Works/Sanitation, with Club Ambassador Larna Jordan, Public Works/Street Lighting, and guest.



Club IT staffers (from left) Edith Bon-Sanchez, Citlali Bon and Ron Cortez.



Club Counselors Cheryl Martin and Marcus Martin.



Noelle's Picture Perfect Contest

Noelle Kauffman, Club Director of Sales

This month's theme was: **Storytelling**

ENTER TO WIN
\$50 AMAZON
E-GIFT CARD



"The gang reunites every seven years."
– **Dominique Daito, LAPD**
Noelle's comment: And so do you, Dominique, in being there to chronicle them. This tells a story that's universal to all humans: Time is so precious! Thanks for submitting.



"This story needs to be shared: Because even if it's hard to believe – yes, there is definitely life after retirement. Especially on those lazy spring and summer days in Tuscany, Italy. The End."
– **Det. Yves Didier, Retired, Airport Police**
Noelle's comment: Ahhhhhh, that's the story of this photo. Congratulations on your retirement, Yves. Looks like it's starting off well!



"Korean War Memorial in Washington, DC."
– **Dennis Eigel, Retired, LADWP**
Noelle's comment: The art (the statues) were already provided, but the angle and time of day/lighting make all the difference, Dennis, and tell a story of service, dedication and unity. Thank you for submitting this unique perspective.



"Cuba."
– **CT Feng, LAPD**
Noelle's comment: The vivid colors, the swoosh of movement and the blur of the wind combine for a breezy, casual and irresistible image. Thanks, CT!

"Sunset at Dana Point Beach on Dec. 30, 2024. Saying farewell to 2024 and feeling the stillness of the moment."
– **Myrna Tecson, Retired, Airports**
Noelle's comment: The enlarged sun as its colors fade for another year, nonetheless holds a promise as it looks over us: Tomorrow will be here too soon, so enjoy this moment, every moment. Thanks. Myrna!



The next photo contest theme:

Chocolate

DEADLINE: **February 16**

Submit your best photos, and be in the running for a prize.

The Club's online photo contest, organized by Director of Sales Noelle Kauffman, has a monthly theme. For the next contest, the theme is "chocolate" – send in a photo that features the treat in any of its forms, in honor of Valentine's Day.

Submit your best photos online at alive.employeesclub.com/pictureperfect/ Club Members only. Good luck!



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- ✓ Use it to consolidate debt
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* All loans are subject to credit approval. Restrictions apply. Consolidating multiple debts into one monthly loan payment can help manage debt. Ask us about our loan details, including refinancing options for your existing loans. WPCCU membership required.



Retirement Prep: Get Ready. Get Happy!

Another Great
CLUB BENEFIT



Be My Valentine

Send your loved one a special Valentine in the February Web Edition.

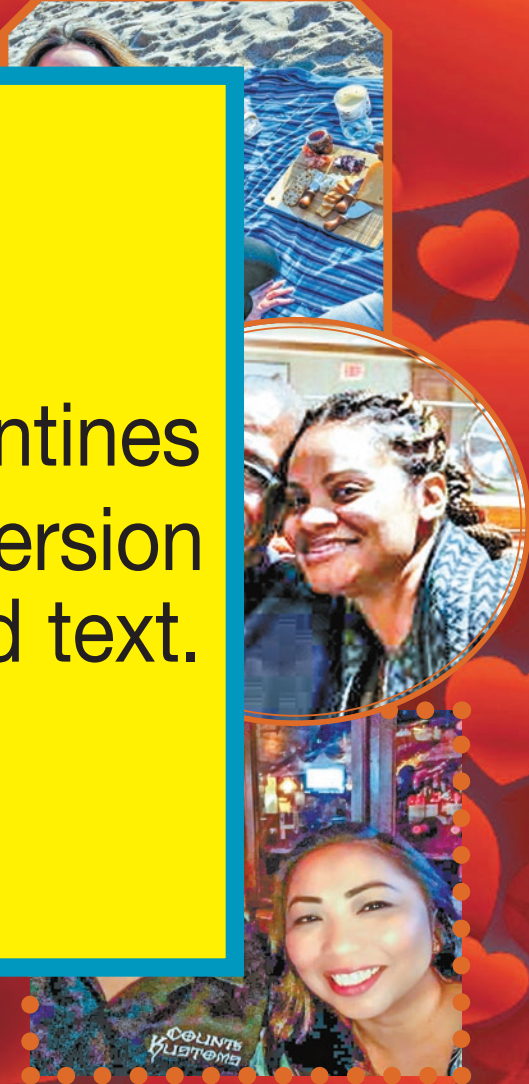
Here's how it works:

Send us a favorite photo (high-resolution preferred) and your loved one(s) (could be a parent or child, etc.) and two or three sentences declaring your special bond. And we'll make it as we can in the print and digital versions.

DEADLINES:
February 10 for Web Edition
February 15 for Digital Edition

To send your digital Valentine and your message, visit alive.employeesclub.com/valentines

1/30/25 Valentines - Web only version with modified text.





LACERS

LOS ANGELES CITY EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM

FOR ACTIVE AND RETIRED MEMBERS

Appointment-Based Service Is Now in Place at LACERS

LACERS now uses an appointment-based system for all members who need in-person assistance. There are two options for appointments: in person, at our headquarters, and virtually, via Zoom. These new options allow for timely and convenient access to get your questions answered. Visit lacers.org/contact-us to make an appointment online or call (800) 779-8328.

Appointments aren't necessary if you drop off documents Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., and don't need to speak to anyone. Please note that LACERS' operating hours have changed.

In-Person and Virtual Appointment Hours:
8 a.m. – 4 p.m., Monday – Friday.

Phone Hours:
7 a.m. – 4 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday;
7 a.m. – 3 p.m. Tuesday

Additional online options continue to be available to you. Use the LACERS' Secure Document Upload found at lacers.org/secure-document-upload to submit forms or required documents, visit the LACERS website at lacers.org to obtain benefits information; log onto your MyLACERS account at <https://mylacers.lacers.org> to view your account details; and visit the LACERS' YouTube channel at youtube.com/@lacersofficial where you can find a wealth of benefits videos. Stay up to date on LACERS announcements by checking the website periodically at lacers.org, contacting LACERS by email at lacers.services@lacers.org, and by phone at (800) 779-8328.

Please be advised that pre-entry metal detector screening requirements are in place at LACERS' headquarters, and a current government-issued photo identification or City employee badge is required except when attending public meetings of the LACERS Board of Administration. Parking is not available at the building. Paid parking lots, public transit and street parking are available nearby. ●

FOR ACTIVE AND RETIRED MEMBERS

Social Security Fairness Act Signed Into Law

On January 5, then-President Joe Biden signed H.R. 82, the Social Security Fairness Act into law. While this law does not affect LACERS benefits, it may result in increased Social Security benefits for some LACERS Members.

The Act repeals two federal provisions—the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO)—which reduced Social Security payments for many public sector Retirees and survivors who received pensions from a public retirement system not requiring Social Security contributions. With the repeal, Social Security benefits for these individuals will no longer face such reductions.

The Social Security Fairness Act applies to benefits payable from January 2024 onward. The Social Security Administration is actively preparing to implement the law. For assistance or more information, Members should contact the Social Security Administration directly at (866) 964-0991 or [SSA.gov](https://ssa.gov). Please note that LACERS cannot address questions about Social Security benefits or the impact of the new law. ●

FOR ACTIVE MEMBERS

Active Member Checkup

Now is a great time to check on your LACERS benefits. Here are some things to review:

MyLACERS Account

Have you created your profile on the MyLACERS Member Portal at <https://mylacers.lacers.org>? MyLACERS is your online gateway to real-time details about your retirement account. Not sure how to get started? Watch this two-minute video on our YouTube channel youtube.com/@lacersofficial

Beneficiaries

Review your designated beneficiaries annually to be sure they are current. You can view your designations via your MyLACERS account at <https://mylacers.lacers.org>. To update them, submit a new Designation of Beneficiary Form found at lacers.org/forms.

Attend a Retirement Benefits Seminar

It doesn't matter what stage you are at in your City career, attending a seminar is a necessary to understand all the components of your retirement benefits and eligibility. View the schedule on the LACERS website at lacers.org/calendar and/or register to attend via your MyLACERS Account at <https://mylacers.lacers.org>.

Service Credit Purchases

Did you work part-time intermittently for the City of Los Angeles before joining the LACERS plan or full-time for another government agency? Have you gone through a divorce or taken a long unpaid leave of absence? If so, you may be eligible to purchase Service Credit, which may count toward your retirement eligibility and increase your retirement allowance and health subsidy.

Watch this Service Purchase video on our YouTube channel youtube.com/@lacersofficial, to learn more. When contacting LACERS to discuss a service purchase, be sure to ask to speak with a Buyback Representative.

Supplementing Your Retirement

Your LACERS benefit alone may not cover your expenses in retirement. To supplement your LACERS retirement allowance, you may want to consider the LACERS Larger Annuity Program on the LACERS website at lacers.org and the Personnel Dept.'s Deferred Compensation Program at [LA457.com](https://la457.com). These are voluntary programs that could help bridge an income gap in retirement. ●



CITYWIDE

LA WILDFIRES

CITY EMPLOYEES



A Calfire Firefighter races to extinguish a home in the Palisades Fire. We honor all public employees, including Firefighters from Calfire, LA County Fire and a dozen other jurisdictions, who came to the aid of the City during the unprecedented emergency.

Photo: ©Reuters, cleared for publication

Alive! Feature

Photos courtesy LAFD CERT teams (Chin Thammasaengsri, Red Linares and Orlando Bohr), and the individual departments

STEP UP

If You Need Help

If you are in need, reach out to the Club:
help@employeesclub.com

Beginning the morning of Jan. 7 in Pacific Palisades, flames – driven by winds that approached 90 miles an hour in inland areas – engulfed Los Angeles.

It's a day, and a week or two, that LA will never forget. Thousands of structures – homes, businesses, places of worship, cultural centers, libraries, outdoor recreational areas, and so much more – were destroyed or rendered unusable or unreachable.

City departments went into tactical alert. Firefighting resources were deployed to Pacific Palisades and fire stations throughout the City, according to official information released. Over the two weeks before rains came Jan. 25, fires erupted in Malibu, Encino, Brentwood, Castaic, Sylmar, the Hollywood Hills, West Hills, Ventura County, and other places. Altadena and Pasadena took a major hit.

Fire departments from throughout California, the West, and Canada and Mexico, joined the fight. The State of California's Calfire and the LA County Fire Dept. played major roles.

Thousands of people evacuated the many areas in harm's way. And now, at *Alive!* press time in late January, approximately 28 people died area-wide; damages are estimated in the tens of billions. Plans are afoot to rebuild as quickly as possible, but even at that, Los Angeles will never forget the day the devilish winds forever changed the City.

City Employees stepped up to save lives, to limit the damage, and to start fixing what was destroyed. They mobilized quickly to start to get Los Angeles back on its feet again, a process that could take many years in the burn areas.

City efforts focused mainly on the Palisades Fire, whose path of destruction was located mostly within the City, and spot fires in other City areas.

Approximately 50 City employee first responders (as best we can ascertain at press time) lost their homes.

On these pages is a partial list of City department self-reported actions taken in response to the wildfire disaster. Details are subject to change.

For current updates, sign up for text alerts from the City at: [NotifyLA.org](https://www.notifyla.org)



THE CLUB RESPONDS

The Club immediately got busy doing what it does best, too – raising funds, collecting and donating clothing and food, and calling Members personally who were thought to be suffering.
— SEE PAGE 15

THE CITY TAKES ACTION

Below and on the following pages is a partial list of City department actions taken in response to the wildfire disaster. These actions are self-reported and/or those in direct response to *Alive!*. *Details are subject to change.*

Mayor's Office

Representatives of the Mayor's Office and Mayor Karen Bass presented fire updates at live press conferences and distributed updates to the media daily.

Also, the Mayor's Office reported that on the first day of the City's Disaster Recovery Center, more than 140 households impacted by the wildfires had been served.

The City set up a plan to assist fire victims who might be victims of price gouging. Those wondering were asked to call the City's 3-1-1 system.

The Mayor's Office set up an information table at the City's Disaster Recovery Center in Westwood.



Airports



LAX remained open and received traffic from Burbank Airport, which temporarily closed. LAX reversed its takeoff and landing approaches due to the strong winds.

The Los Angeles Airport Police helped patrol areas affected by the wildfires. "Airport Police extends its heartfelt sympathies to all individuals who lost their homes in the Palisades Fire. We understand the profound impact such a loss can have, and we stand by you in this challenging time. We wish you immense courage as you navigate the path to recovery and rebuild your lives. Our thoughts and prayers are with you, and we are committed to supporting you through every step of this journey. Remember, you are not alone, and together, we will overcome this adversity."

— CONTINUES PAGE 14

THE CITY TAKES ACTION

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

LAPD

- LAPD teams mobilized to actively assist with evacuations and traffic gridlock. LAPD was on a Citywide tactical alert with personnel assigned to assist in the Pacific Palisades community.
- The department managed the following road closures as of Jan. 11: Mulholland Highway at Stunt Road, Topanga Canyon Boulevard at Mulholland Drive, Malibu Canyon Road at Piuma Road, Topanga Canyon Boulevard at Entrado Drive, Piuma Road at Woodbluff Road, Mulholland Drive at Santa Maria Road. Coastline Drive at PCH, and Topanga Canyon Boulevard at PCH. These were all hard closures; only first responders were allowed to enter these areas.
- Topanga and Valley Division Officers responded to the Kenneth Fire in West Hills. "A special shoutout to the kind neighbor who graciously allowed a few of our Officers to use their restroom during the incident. It's the support of the community that helps us do our job better. Together, we make our neighborhood safer!"
- As of Jan. 13, the LAPD reported 14 arrests in the Palisades



Debriefings played a strong role as LAPD changed shifts in the Pacific Palisades area.

fire area, including one for impersonation of a firefighter, one for possession of burglary tools, four for burglary, one for driving under the influence, one for vandalism and three for shoplifting.

- LAPD Chief Jim McDonnell, Club Member, announced the creation of the Los Angeles Regional Wildfire Investigative Task Force, which will look into the causes of the Southern California Wildfires.
- The LAPD partnered with Animal Services to respond to reports of abandoned pets within the evacuated areas of the Palisades fire.

Emergency Management Dept.

The City's Emergency Management Dept., a major part of the City's response, was activated the first week of the wildfires. The department worked closely with LA County and the national Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) to open Disaster Recovery Centers, which help people who have lost vital records (birth or death certificates, driver's licenses, Social Security documentation), who have lost homes or businesses to apply for disaster relief loans, and provide referrals for mental health counseling and other services. More than 140 households were served in the Disaster Recovery Center's first day.

The EMD also helped set up Family Assistance Centers.



Emergency Management set up Disaster Recovery Centers, including this one in Westwood.

Aging

The department distributed information especially for seniors about:

- Evacuation sites for families with small and large animals
- Transportation and utility resources
- Information on power outages
- Location information of the City's Family Assistance Center
- Contacts for mental health support

The department also distributed information to prevent scammers, a reminder to check on neighbors.

Dept on Disability

The department distributed information on evacuation centers and how to access help getting to them.

Information Technology Agency

- Various divisions from ITA were called upon to quickly assess and lend emergency response during the City's State of Emergency. ITA divisions including the 311 Call Center helped Angelenos with extended hours; the ITA Desktop Support team provided Emergency Operations Center tech support; Channel 35 aided social media messaging and live press conference support; and the web services team updated important resources and links on City sites for public information.
- Other teams assisting during this disaster were the Public Safety Radio group, NCC, ITA's emergency coordination team, and Citywide Help Desk.
- The ITA thanked first responders, the LAFD, the LAPD and those on the front lines and behind the scenes who helped combat the Citywide disaster. Our thoughts are with those displaced and affected by these events.

Council

- The City Council passed a series of measures to aid recovery from catastrophic fires.
- Individual Councilmembers assisted at welcome centers, donation centers and family assistance centers.

Harbor

Port Police helped secure the Pacific Palisades community alongside its partner agencies since the Palisades fire began. "The destruction is hard to witness, as are the many faces of homeowners as we escort them through the neighborhoods. Our deepest condolences to those impacted. Thank you for letting us service you."



Harbor Port Police helped secure the Pacific Palisades neighborhood.

LADOT

- Traffic Control officers and Special Traffic Operations personnel from the Department of Transportation were on tactical alert and assisted in road closures, evacuations and traffic gridlock. Red Flag parking restrictions were in effect.
- Transportation Traffic Officers and repair crews worked hard in the aftermath of the very heavy winds and the Palisades Fire controlling traffic, repairing traffic signals and fixing street infrastructure.



Transportation Traffic Officers and repair crews worked hard in the aftermath of the very heavy winds and the Palisades Fire controlling traffic, repairing traffic signals and fixing street infrastructure.

Economic and Workforce Development

EWDD shared information that it would provide resources to businesses and workers at the newly opened Disaster Recovery Center. The center includes contacts from the federal Small Business Administration to help owners of small businesses.



Economic and Workforce Dev. set up Small Business Administration tables inside the City's Disaster Recovery Centers.

Rec and Parks

- Due to extensive fire damage, the Palisades Recreation Center on Alma Real Drive was closed. The grounds were used as a staging area for firefighters battling the blazes.
- Rec and Parks opened an Air Quality Relief Center at the Alpine Recreation Center in West LA.
- Many parks were closed, including Griffith Park, Echo Park, Lake Hollywood, Runyon Canyon and the Griffith Observatory.
- The department opened Family Support Camps at the Mar Vista and Oakwood Recreation Centers.
- The Westwood Recreation Center was open for evacuees and small animals. It also served as a shelter, allowing residents to remain overnight.
- All Citywide sports and fitness programs were suspended for health and safety.
- After-School Programs, where available, were held indoors.
- Major golf courses were closed, including Griffith Park, Woodley Lakes, Hansen Dam, Roosevelt, Encino/Balboa and Los Feliz.

LA WILDFIRES *Alive! Feature*

LAFD

The Fire Dept. was the major City department engaged in fighting the wildfires and rescuing those in danger.

The LAFD, which fought fires primarily in Pacific Palisades, Brentwood, Malibu, Sylmar, West Hills and the Hollywood Hills, reported the following daily numbers during operations (all numbers include guest agencies):

- 5,200 personnel
- 44 helicopters
- 540 fire engines
- 66 dozers
- 60 water tenders
- 115 wildland hand crews
- 57 others
- 2,400 California National Guard

Outside agencies came from throughout California, eight neighboring states, and Canada and Mexico. Those agencies included:

- LA County Fire
- Angeles National Fire
- Orange County Fire Authority
- San Benito Fire
- San Bernardino County Fire
- San Luis Obispo Fire
- San Marcos Fire
- Monterey Fire
- Santa Barbara Fire
- San Joaquin Fire
- CalOes Region 4
- Santa Clara County Fire
- Fresno County Fire
- Kern County Fire
- King County Fire
- San Diego County Fire
- Placer County Fire
- Grass County Fire
- California Corrections

Crews worked around the clock in three shifts. Operational briefings were held for each shift on a beach parking lot in Pacific Palisades.

Once the winds died down to operational levels a few days after the fires commenced, Air Operations Pilots and Ground Crews worked tirelessly around the clock to gain control of the LA City-based fires.

Fire Chief Kristin Crowley participated in televised daily press conferences.



Capt. II Erik Scott, PIO, made dozens of press conferences and informational videos to share current information.

The City and Club are indebted to the heroic work of the LAFD for their incredible efforts to gain control of the fires and put them out.



— CONTINUES PAGE 16

HELP FELLOW

LA City, LA County, and CA State Public Employees in Need

Financial Donation

100% of your financial contribution will directly support affected Club members and public employees.



Zelle

Scan the QR code in your Zelle app.

Please indicate it's for 'Club Angels'

When using Zelle, your payment will be facilitated by: **LACEA Insurance Services, DBA Employees Club of California.**

The recent fires in Los Angeles have severely impacted many of our fellow Club members and California public employees. We're reaching out to our members for urgent support through both essential supplies and financial donations.



CONTACT US
help@ClubAngels.org

Your Zelle payment will be sent to LACEA Insurance Services, DBA Employees Club of California, which facilitates this donation. 100% of your donation will be forwarded to Club Angels, a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization (EIN: 45-4735809), and is tax-deductible. Once funds are sent, they cannot be reverted. Please retain your Zelle payment confirmation as proof of your donation. **For donations over \$250, please contact Club Angels at help@clubangels.org for a receipt.**

THE CITY TAKES ACTION

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

Public Works/StreetsLA

- StreetsLA worked to ensure that public rights-of-way were safe, clear and passable. Crews worked around the clock to respond to tree emergencies and other service requests.



Public Works/StreetsLA crews kept streets clear and passable.

LADWP

Water and Power played a major role in the recovery after the wildfires destroyed major parts of Los Angeles.

Here's the department's status report from Jan. 15:

- Approximately 18,000 customers in the fire-impacted areas of Pacific Palisades, Encino and Brentwood remain without power. LADWP field crews continue to assess the work needed to be performed in the area and will begin restoration efforts there once fire officials have given us clearance to do so.
- Seven hundred power and water crews remain in Pacific Palisades to assess damage and begin repairs to water and power systems. Crews must first shut off services that were destroyed by fire to restore system pressure by fixing the customer and distribution system leaks and close all fire hydrants that were left open. This will help boost water pressure throughout the system, restoring flow to storage tanks at higher elevation and pipes in the Palisades area.
- More than 338,000 customers have been restored since the start of the windstorm Jan. 7.
- While the region remains under a Red Flag warning, LADWP remains in active fire response, and local fire authorities may ask LADWP to de-energize power lines to protect public safety.
- As of Jan. 13, Water and Power had more than six billion gallons of water available in four open-air reservoirs for aerial firefighting support. Encino and Hollywood reservoirs have already been heavily used. LADWP's Hollywood Reservoir, Lower Stone Canyon and the Encino Reservoirs have been critical in protecting lives and property throughout the firefight. They will remain a critical part of the firefight and are fully available.
- The department is supporting firefighting efforts with 19 water tankers, each holding 2,000 to 4,000 gallons, running continuously to supply water to firefighters. They'll keep supplying water ahead of forecasted high winds and continue until the fires are fully contained.



LADWP's Hollywood Reservoir, Lower Stone Canyon and the Encino Reservoirs have been critical in protecting lives and property throughout the firefight.



LADWP CEO Janisse Quiñones helps coordinate recovery efforts onsite.



The LADWP worked to restore power throughout the City, often repairing or replacing power poles damaged by the extremely high winds.

Library

- The Los Angeles Library suffered one of the most catastrophic losses of City property with the destruction of the Pacific Palisades branch.
- "We are mourning the Pacific Palisades Branch Library, which has been destroyed in the Palisades Fire," staff posted on the branch's social media. "Here is a message from Palisades Branch Sr. Librarian Mary Hopf: 'Thank you to everyone for your kind words, concern, and support. Our staff is family and we are sad for our community and our library. We have the most beautiful memories of the Palisades Library and all the people who have made it wonderful. Please stay safe!'"

In general, the Library helped with recovery efforts in multiple ways:

- N95 masks were available for the public at all Library locations.
- Outreach Librarians set up temporary Pop Up Libraries at shelters at the Westwood Recreation Center and Stoner Recreation Center, which offered tables, seating, books and activities like games and crafts for all ages. They also provided laptops, printers, internet access, Jackeries (portable power stations) and charging stations, and shared information on recovery resources.
- Regular Library services including public computers, borrowing hotspots, charging stations, wifi, remote access to streaming books, movies, music and more, were also offered.



The Pacific Palisades branch of the Los Angeles Public Library was destroyed in the Palisades Fire. Efforts are under way at press time to rebuild it.

Building and Safety

- Building and Safety set up information tables at the area's two Disaster Recovery Centers – one in Westwood, one in Pasadena.
- In general, the department is expected to play a major role when the City enters into rebuilding phase.
- It rescheduled its in-person appointments during the first week of the wildfire crisis, and resumed them Jan. 13.
- Building and Safety set up information tables at the two Disaster Recovery Centers.



LADBS set up this information table at the Disaster Recovery Center in Westwood.



THE CLUB STEPS UP, TOO

As the catastrophic wildfires spread, the Club Care Team was reactivated and put together a plan to take care of Club Members and any public employee victimized by the devastation.

“To those who have lost loved ones, homes, or cherished belongings, you have our deepest sympathies,” wrote Club President and CEO Robert Larios. “To the firefighters, first responders, and public servants protecting our communities—your courage is an inspiration, and we are forever grateful.”

“The Employees Club exists to honor, celebrate, and express gratitude to public service employees. This mission is especially vital during crises like this, as we focus on providing aid to those in need.”

- The Club is:**
- Donating clothing from the web store warehouse to frontline and first responder employees.
 - Using the Club’s warehouse as a hub to collect and distribute vital supplies, including face masks, hand sanitizers, and food and water to support these employees.

Club Hosts Donation Day

On Jan. 19, the Club teamed with fellow associations the Los Angeles County Asian American Employees Association and the LA unit of the Filipino American Law Enforcement Officers Association to gather, sort and donate clothes, canned goods and Club merchandise to victims of the wildfires.

The event was held at the Club warehouse.

Special thanks to all those who joined the charity project, and all those who donated.



Arlene Herrero (second from right) and some of FALEO-LA's Executive Board members stand with a small portion of items donated to wildfire victims.



Associations gathered at the Club Warehouse to collect and sort items to be donated to wildfire victims.



Sorted clothes to be donated to wildfire victims.

Club’s Arlene Herrero Gives Through LACCEA

Additionally, Arlene Herrero, Club Vice President of Business Development, joined with colleagues in the Los Angeles County Chicano Employees Association to donate to those affected by the Eaton Fire in Altadena. The Employees Club donated baby wipes, masks and bags to help those in need.

“It was heartwarming to see so many affinity employee associations come together for this cause,” she wrote, “including the Los Angeles County African American Employees Association, the Los Angeles County Asian American Employees Association, the Chinese Employees Association of Los Angeles County, the Los Angeles County Hispanic Managers Association, the Los Angeles County Management Council, and others. In



times like these, every bit of support makes a difference.”

On hand for the donation event were County Supervisor Hilda Solis and LA County Dept. of Public Social Services (DPSS).



YOU CAN HELP: DONATE TO CLUB ANGELS

Club Members can help their fellow public employees.

Club Angels, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charity led by the Club’s Arlene Herrero and dedicated staff, is managing Club outreach in two ways:

- **GROCERY ASSISTANCE:** Club Angels is donating groceries to public service employees facing hardships as a direct donation of the Club.
- **DONATING:** Give directly to Club Angels, and the Club will dedicate 100 percent of your gift toward buying groceries for public service employees in need. Your gift could be tax deductible; consult your tax professional.

Follow this QR code to give via Zelle:

zelle



If you or someone you know needs support, please contact the Club at help@employeesclub.com or call (800) 464-0452.

TELL US WHAT YOU’VE LOST

Alive! wants to know what you lost in the LA wildfires. Share your stories so we can share with Club Members.

alive@employeesclub.com



Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc.

RLACEI

CONTACT INFORMATION



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2025 Executive Board of Directors

Ann Seales, President
Beverly J. Clark, First Vice President
Mark Blunk, Second Vice President
Loucin (Lucy) Artinian, Treasurer
Nancy Hammoudian, Secretary

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RLACEI RETIREE HELPLINE:

(800) 678-4145, Ext. 0

For retirement assistance, call the Retiree Hotline and leave a message. A Director of RLACEI will return your call and assist you with your concerns.

RLACEI WEBSITE

Visit the RLACEI website www.RLACEI.org to find the latest news.
Call (800) 678-4145 Ext. 0 to make suggestions.
EMAIL: Contact@RLACEI.org

MAILING ADDRESS:

Retired Los Angeles City Employees Inc.
Terminal Annex
P.O. Box 86264
Los Angeles, CA 90086

Change of Address?

Please notify Ann Seales, Membership Chair, at (800) 678-4145 ext. 706 or Ann.Seales@RLACEI.org for a change of address or to add or change your email address. Also notify LACERS, ACEBSA, LAPCU, and LAFCU as applicable.



Send in your Interesting News Contributions!

Contact: **Beverly J. Clark**, Publicity Director
Email: Beverly.Clark@RLACEI.org
Phone: (800) 678-4145 ext 716

RETIREE EVENTS

The RLACEI Board is preparing another year of fun and socializing. Dates and locations to be published soon. Look for events in May, September and December. STAY TUNED!

RLACEI EVENTS RESERVATION LINE

Call: (800) 678-4145, ext. 701
or Email: contact@rlacei.org
Due to staffing, telephone confirmation cannot be provided.

Ruth Perry:
A Lifetime of Service

RLACEI Past President Ruth Perry honored at Club luncheon.

At the Club's 96th annual luncheon Jan. 8 at the California Endowment downtown, Past President Ruth B. Perry received the Club's Lifetime Achievement award. The honor was presented to her by Club CEO Robert Larios for her accomplishments during her tenure as president of the Retired Los Angeles City Employee's Inc Committee from 2018 to 2024. Congratulations Ruth!

Read more about the prestigious award in the story on the Club's luncheon on pages 8-9 in this issue of Alive!

Ruth Perry, Past President, RLACEI (right) holds her Lifetime Achievement Award, presented by the Club. With her is RLACEI First Vice President Beverly Clark.



In Memoriam

ELLIOTT PORTER

1941-2024

37 Years of City service

T

he RLACEI Board regrets to announce the passing of Elliott Porter, who brought joy to our 2023 and 2024 Holiday parties as Santa Claus, accompanied by his wife Esther as Mrs. Claus. Many Retirees delighted in taking pictures with Santa. Elliott passed away the Sunday after Christmas 2024.


Elliott began his esteemed City career in January 1959 and Retired as the Recreation and Parks Personnel Director in 1996 on his 55th birthday, after more than 37 years of service. He served as a mentor to many City Employees and provided guidance and support as they sought promotional opportunities in their City careers. Elliott's dedication to his work was evident, and he was recently featured as an "Employee on the Move" in *Alive!*


In retirement, Elliott continued to share his expertise by teaching supervisory classes in the evenings for 25 years and working as a training consultant for 15 different City departments until 2008. Elliott was an enthusiastic Dodgers and Lakers fan, and he also had a talent for entertaining children with his puppets. One of his greatest joys was presenting a Christmas puppet show every Christmas Eve morning on the 13th floor of City Hall East, followed by taking pictures with employees and their children in his Santa outfit. He also had other talents including poetry and songwriting.

Elliott's jolly personality mirrored that of Santa Claus. He deeply cherished life and loved his family. Of his wife Esther, he lovingly said, "Esther is a special lady in my life and a wonderful mother to our two daughters, Jennifer and Sheryl."

Elliott Porter is survived by his wife Esther, daughters Sheryl and Jennifer, son-in-law Jason, grandsons Mitchell and Owen, and many nephews and nieces. He will be missed dearly by many. Per his wishes, no services will be held.

The RLACEI Board extends its heartfelt condolences to the Porter family.



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Call (800) 678-4145 x706 or visit our website at RLACEI.ORG

Join today!

RLACEI Board Vacancy


Qualifications:

- Retired City Employee
- Enjoy working to improve and maintain City Benefits
- Want to make a difference
- Enjoy being involved

Contact:

Beverly Anderson

At Beverly.Anderson@RLACEI.org or leave a message at (800) 678-4145 ext. 702



For Retired Club Members



GET HAPPY SERIES

By Arnette Travis
Author/Activist/Advocate, RLACEI Contributing Author

Giving Is The Main Thing!



Arnette Travis

For many people, the start of a new year is the time for starting something new, setting goals, or eliminating something (or someone) undesirable from their life. Beneath the resolutions is a desire to be happy. That's the main thing.

Let's be clear about the main thing: Being happy is a choice – not a goal. As human beings we achieve true happiness when we do something (big or small) that matters and is of benefit to ourselves and/or to others. True lasting happiness comes only from an inner state of being content and satisfied.

Here are the keys to achieving happiness: You have the freedom to choose your own path in life: Do what matters to you. Your life, your rules.

Maintain positive relationships with the people in your life. Keep good friends close and make new ones. Be content with what you have and with your situ-

ation; don't compare yourself unfavorably to others. Maintain a positive attitude. Don't allow yourself to be upset by the changes that happen in life. Be consistent in working toward the goals you set for yourself. Every step counts. Prioritize mental and physical fitness to reduce the likelihood of developing illness and to increase the likelihood of being happy.

ONE LAST THING

Author and happiness expert Arthur C. Brooks offers these words in the closing chapter of "From Strength to Strength" that helps me maintain my happiness:

- Use things (don't let them use you)
- Love people (and let them love you)
- Worship the Divine (whatever that means to you).

Happily yours,

— Arnette Travis



LACERS BOARD UPDATE

by Michael R. Wilkinson, LACERS Commissioner MikeWilkinson4LACERS@gmail.com

LACERS Reports on Private Equity Returns



Michael R. Wilkinson

Now is a suitable time to turn the spotlight on private equity, one of LACERS' largest investment classes. Private equity is a class that represents a part of a highly diversified investment portfolio.

Diversification is needed to reduce the risk of market downturns that may affect different investment types in different ways. For instance, one economic cycle may cause downturns to long-term bonds but boost stocks. Another cycle may give a boost to US stocks, but cause losses to foreign stocks in developed economies.

It is tempting to say that we should just research all the available data and put all our money out where it will get the highest returns with the lowest risk. Ah, spoiler alert here: There is no such investment. The trick is to spread out the investments among various investment classes and seek a long-term return matching our 7.0 percent assumed rate of investment return.

Looking at our most recent report from our private

equity consultant, Aksia, private equity for the period ending June 30, 2024, LACERS had a target allocation to private equity of 16.0 percent. However, because of the timing of the investments, our actual allocation was 19.3 percent.

The private equity program returned (Internal Rate of Return, IRR) the following:

- 6.0 percent for 1 year,
- 6.8 percent for 3 years,
- 15.1 percent for 5 years,
- 12.7 percent for 10 years,
- 13.0 percent for 20 years, and
- 12.0 percent from inception.

The program's returns exceeded the benchmark in all periods except for 10 years when it matched the benchmark and since inception where it trailed.

LACERS' private equity program has been largely cash-flow positive over the period since 2006. Cash flow compares the money going into the investments with payouts as distributions from the investments. Increased capital calls and reduced payments have driven the cash-flow negative in recent years. The cash flow has been negative recently due to increased capital call (investments from LACERS) and reduced distributions. ●

MEET YOUR BOARD

by Beverly J. Clark, Publicity Director

Larry Tinson, RLACEI Board Member



RLACEI incoming Director Larry Tinson, Retired, Finance, 34 years of City service; and Sudie Rover Tinson, Retired, Finance, 32 years.

The RLACEI Board welcomes its newly elected Board Director Larry Tinson. Larry was unanimously elected to the Board at its 2024 annual December meeting.

Larry retired in 2007 from City Clerk, Office of Finance after more than 34 years of City service as a Tax and Permit Field Representative II, Management Analyst I and Tax Compliance Officer II.

During his City career, Larry had the opportunity to work in various departments in many positions/ His departments and positions include

- Messenger Clerk
- LADWP: Clerk
- City Clerk: Sr. Clerk
- Treasurer's Office: Sr. Clerk
- General Services: Sr. Clerk
- City Clerk: Parking Meter Collector
- Building and Safety: Vehicle Nuisance Inspector
- City Clerk/Office of Finance: Tax and Permit Field Representative II, Management Analyst I, Tax Compliance Officer II

Larry is married to his wife, Sudie, who also Retired from the City of Los Angeles. He has three adult children and two grandchildren.

In retirement, Larry enjoys gardening, attending concerts and plays, and visiting art museums and botanical gardens. He loves UCLA football games, riding his bicycle, going on picnics and going to the movies. He loves adventure and is always looking for a new place to visit.

During retirement he has had the opportunity to visit Paris; Sidney, Australia; Barcelona; London; Edinburgh, Scotland; Dublin, Ireland; and various cities in the United States He has cruised in Alaska and the Mediterranean with ports of call to Naples, Rome, Vatican City, Pisa, Tuscany, Cannes, and Spain.

He has been active as the Church Congregation Past President, member of the Homeowner's Architectural Committee, a member of his high school 50th class reunion committee, adult Sunday school/ bible study teacher and a realtor with Keller Williams Realty, Antelope Valley.

Larry, why did you decide to join the Board, and what do you plan to accomplish serving on the Board?

"I miss the interaction with co-workers and the sharing of achievements, so I chose to join the RLACEI board to explore something new and different for a refreshing change of pace in 2025," Larry says "My aim is to become more engaged with the inner workings of RLACEI by exploring new concepts and models for the ever-evolving Retiree landscape. I also hope to inspire my fellow Retirees to become more active participants."



Become an RLACEI Member!

RLACEI is dedicated to advocating for retiree interests. Members of the Retired Los Angeles City Employees, Inc. enjoy all RLACEI events such as, member picnics and holiday party.

"Protecting Retirement Benefits since 1973"

Call (800) 678-4145 x706 or visit our website at RLACEI.ORG and

JOIN TODAY!

Alive! AROUND THE WORLD

Letter From Belgium

Beer and Chocolate

The Kingdom of Belgium is one of Europe's smallest countries, and its Medieval towns and villages are full of beautiful classic buildings to photograph and explore; it also has the highest number of castles per square kilometer (six-tenths of a mile) in the world (a total of 3,000) due to constant wars between Holland, France and Germany taking place around it. Today, it has three official languages: Dutch-speaking Flanders to the north, French-speaking Wallonia to the south and a German-speaking community to the east. However, like all European cities, English is the dominant business language.

The country takes its name from a group of nomadic Celts called the Belgae, who settled in the region during pre-historic times. At that time, it was a vast forest where deer, boars and wolves roamed freely. Few large, wooded areas and wildlife remain today, although a wolf was recently spotted for the first time in 100 years.

Belgium was the first European country to have a public rail system, so it is easy to move around the country; like the rest of Europe, buying train tickets is simple. On the day, go to the station ticket machine or ticket office. The prices stay the same regardless of whether they are purchased in advance or not and are often cheaper than buying pre-paid train passes from an American online travel agent, especially if you are traveling off peak or with a small group of friends (4). You can even purchase an overnight ticket locally to avoid paying for a hotel room (not recommended), which is almost impossible to get with overseas pre-paid rail passes.

Belgium is renowned for its high-quality chocolates. The first cacao beans arrived in 1635 from South America during



Captain's Log

Traveling with Capt. Michael Barnes, Retired, Harbor



A Beer Temple



Chocolate Store.

the Spanish occupation, brought by monks. The Abbey of Baudeloo monks in Ghent are credited with mixing cocoa with sugar to create a hot chocolate-like drink. To be called chocolate, it must contain 35 per cent cocoa. Today, there are more than 2,000 chocolatiers in the country.

Also, the country brews more than 1,500 different beers, ranging from Trappist (monks again) and abbey beers with their velvet taste and high alcohol content to the more traditional Old Flemish browns, Saisons, Pils, India pale ale (IPA, nothing like American) and a wealth of other styles, all with their special glasses. Unlike the USA, voting is compulsory for Belgian citizens from the age of 16, but it is also the legal drinking age; admittedly, this applies only to "light" drinks such as beer, wine, or champagne; for spirit drinks, you have to be 18 years old!

Belgium's national dishes are "steak and fries" or "mussels with fries." By the way, Belgium invented French fries, not France or the USA. American soldiers stationed in Belgium during WWI were said to have discovered the fried meal of potato strips used as a substitute for fish when the river was frozen. They named it "French fries" because French was the dominant language in the area.

Fun Facts: The saxophone was invented by a Belgian named Adolphe Sax from Dinant, and Belgium has the fewest McDonald's per capita in the developed world.

Tourists often overlook Belgium as they speed through on the sleek Euro express trains or the Autostradas to other European destinations. Stay a day or two and be pleasantly surprised.

— The Captain



Start at St Pancras, London.

Send in a travel picture holding Alive!



- Snap a high resolution photo of you holding Alive!
- Go to: alive.employeesclub.com/alivearoundtheworld. You'll find an online form to send your text and pics for publication.

Hyperion Headworks Heroes

ENGINEERING TEAM'S ODOR CONTROL UPGRADE PROJECT WINS BEST REGIONAL HONOR.

PUBLIC WORKS: Environmental Engineering Division's Hyperion Water Reclamation Plant Headworks Odor Control Upgrade project was recognized last year as among the ENR California Regional Best Projects in the water/environment category.

This prestigious award was given after an independent panel of AEC (Architecture, Engineering and Construction) experts reviewed 90 projects from across California and Hawaii, selecting only 30 as best projects.

Experts said the Hyperion Odor Control Upgrade project stood out for its innovative approach to improving air quality around the plant by installing a cutting-edge biotrickling facility (BTF) and eight carbon scrubbers to remove hydrogen sulfide and other foul odors from the influent sewer and Headworks Facility. The project scope included the demolition of five chemical scrubbers, three carbon scrubbers, and two chemical storage tanks, as well as the installation of new state-of-the-art technology aimed at improving the breathability of air for the surrounding community.

This critical \$14 million project, constructed by Murray Company Mechanical Contractors, was completed in 2023. It not only enhances the efficiency of the plant but also contributes significantly to environmental sustainability and public health.

Several key members of the project team attended the awards ceremony to accept the award at the ENR Best Projects Award ceremony Oct. 15 at the Omni Los Angeles Hotel. They were:



From left: Ethan Wong, Rymbeau Rosell, Ibrahim Hafeez holding the award, Kenneth Frere, Michael Vanwagoner, Rick Andelin, Zafar Kassai, Armond Badkerhanian and Artin Oroujian.

- Alfred Mata, Clean Water Infrastructure Deputy City Engineer
- Ethan Wong, Environmental Engineering Division Manager
- Ibrahim Hafeez, Project Manager
- Rick Andelin, Kenneth Frere and Michael Vanwagoner, Construction Managers
- Zafar Kassai and Artin Oroujian, Mechanical Design Engineers
- Armond Badkerhanian, Instrumentation and Control Design Engineer
- Rymbeau Rosell, Structural Design Engineer

The award reflects the dedication and collaborative effort of the EED team, which brought the project to successful completion. This achievement reinforces BOE's commitment to delivering high-quality engineering solutions that not only meet project goals but also prioritize the health and well-being of our communities.

Congratulations to the entire EED team! ●



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In 2022, Sanitation and Environment clothing drive team members delivered some of what they collected to the St. Francis Center downtown and to Sanitation charity programs.

Give to a
Clothing
Drive

SANITATION'S
RECYCLING
PROGRAM HOSTS
A CITYWIDE
CLOTHING DRIVE.

PUBLIC WORKS: Public Works/
Sanitation and Environment's City Facilities
Recycling Program (CFRP) is collecting new
and gently used children's, men's and wom-
en's clothing in a charity effort.
Donated clothing will be provided to
the St. Francis Center, Sanitation's Livability
Services Division and Inside Safe partici-
pants, agencies that provide support to the
City's unhoused neighbors and low-income
individuals.

The drive runs through March 1.
Donated items can be dropped off at all
Sanitation yards. Please be generous! ●

TIMES:

Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
(through March 1)

LOCATIONS:

*Locations will be closed Mon., Feb. 17
(President's Day)*

Public Works Building
1149 S. Broadway - Lobby
Los Angeles, CA 90015

East Valley District Yard
11050 Pendleton St.
Sun Valley, CA 91352

West Valley District Yard
8840 Vanalden Ave.
Northridge, CA 91234

North Central District Yard
452 San Fernando Rd.
Los Angeles, CA 90031

West LA District Yard
2027 Stoner Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90025

South LA District Yard
786 S. Mission Rd.
Los Angeles, CA 90023

Harbor District Yard
1400 N. Gaffey St.
San Pedro, CA 90731

Washington Yard
2649 E. Washington Blvd.
Building B
Los Angeles, CA 90023

EMPLOYEES
AT WORK



Sanitation tree recyclers Ronnie Calhoun and Katina Adams, collecting trees in Westchester Park. Both are Club Members.

Tree-mendous Job

The Club caught up with Club Members Ronnie Calhoun, Truck Driver, 31 years of City service, and Katina Adams, Administrative Clerk, 5 years, collecting used Christmas trees for recycling at Westchester Park in early January. Both work for Public Works/Sanitation and are Club Members. We honor them for their service!

Welcome, New Officers

THREE JOIN THE
PORT POLICE.

HARBOR: On Jan. 10, the
Port Police welcomed three new
Officers who had just graduated
from the LAPD Academy.

The new Port Police Officers
are Murad El Massry, Alex Van
Thiel and Oscar Viramontes.

Congratulations, new Officers!
Thank you for your dedication to
keeping us safe. ●



New Officer Alex Van Thiel (center) with Chief of Public Safety and Emergency Management Thomas Gazsi (left) and LAPD Chief Jim McDonnell, Club Member.



New Officer Murad El Massry (center) with Chief of Public Safety and Emergency Management Thomas Gazsi (left) and LAPD Chief Jim McDonnell, Club Member.



New Officer Oscar Viramontes (center) with Chief of Public Safety and Emergency Management Thomas Gazsi (left) and LAPD Chief Jim McDonnell, Club Member.



Life’s Important Moments

Share your news... and send in a photo!

Have you gotten married? Had a baby? Graduated? Is a family member in the military? Send in a photo and a paragraph, telling us the details. We love to share your good news.



- Births
- Weddings
- Graduations
- Special Achievements
- Military Service
- Tell Their Story



Send your photos and text online:
alive.employeesclub.com/lifsmoments

Retirements*

We honor the people who have spent their working lives building, managing and imagining a better LA, and are now Retired. We thank and appreciate all you have done!

Below is a listing of those who Retired from the City. To all we say, welcome to the best years!

NAME	TITLE	DEPT.	YEARS	NAME	TITLE	DEPT.	YEARS	NAME	TITLE	DEPT.	YEARS
Barber, Lesley M.	Librarian	Library	3	La Cour, Michael G.	Customer Service	LADWP	–	Peters, Thomas H.	Chief Asst. City Attorney	City Attorney	5
Barrier, Frederick L.	Security Services	LADWP	–	Lopez, George	Maintenance Laborer	LADOT	7	Phillips, Carolyn N.	Deputy City Attorney	City Attorney	18
Blow, Dale L.	Custodian	Airports	19	Lorenzo, Vincent D.	Transp. Planning Ass.	LADOT	18	Regilski, Christophe	Geotechnical Engineer	Public Works	14
Campbell, Daniel W.	Dir. Maint. Operations II	Airports	36	Lucas, Joseph	Equipment Mechanic	LAPD	21	Rivera, Angelo N.	Water Operations	LADWP	–
Chavez, Victor H.	Refuse Coll. Truck Op.	Public Works	36	Macias Maldonado, Angel	Refuse Coll. Truck Op.	Public Works	23	Rojas, Esther	Accounting Clerk	LAFD	26
Clark, Michael J.	Animal Keeper	Zoo	32	Maldonado, Noe M.	Parking Attendant	Gen. Services	16	Ruiz Barrera, Florentina	Special Program Asst.	Rec and Parks	8
Dacumos, Giovanni O.	Dep. Supt. of Buildings	Bldg. & Safety	23	Malone Brown, Peggy	City Planning Associate	Planning	12	Santiago, Nereida V.	Administrative Clerk	PW/LADWP	21/–
Dalton, Renee	Recreation Coordinator	Rec and Parks	15	Marquez, Lucia O.	Special Program Asst.	Rec and Parks	11	Silva, Rea P.	Executive Admin Assistant	LAPD	36
De Sa Valente, Cindy C.	Water Quality	LADWP	–	Meier, Daniel T.	Firefighter	LAFD	30	Sosa, Valentin Z.	Street Lighting Electrician	Public Works	34
Farhang, Farsheed	Environmental Engineer	Public Works	45	Mitchell, Aaron C.	Recreation Coordinator	Rec and Parks	24	Tse, Chi Wing Dannis	Detention Officer	LAPD	23
Farrow, Yvette L.	Comm. Info Rep.	LADOT	24	Murray, Alan E.	Maintenance Laborer	Public Works	20	Williams, Donna L.	Executive Admin. Asst. II	Airports	36
Feldman, Gregg E.	Env. Lab	LADWP	–	Orozco, Eduviges R.	Messenger Clerk	Library	11	Young, Stephanie Y.	Management Analyst	Airports	33
Force Jr., Charles E.	Power C&M	LADWP	–	Palmer, Brian W.	Systems Analyst	Library	16				
Fuller, Wendy E.	Fingerprint ID Iexpert III	LAPD	25								
Genuth, Larry M.	Systems Administrator	Airports	34								
Gonzalez, William R.	Power Transmission	LADWP	–								
Goodman, David	Crossing Guard	LADOT	8								
Grimes, Eric L.	Security Officer	Airports	22								
Hassien, Diane E.	Sr. Administrative Clerk	LAPD	20								
Henderson, Jennifer S.	Environmental Affairs	LADWP	–								
Hernandez, Edward F.	Survey Party Chief	Public Works	10								
Holland, Jeff S.	Zoo Curator	Zoo	27								
Hotchkiss, Margo B.	Custodian	Airports	21								
Kaeding, Neal T.	Supply Chain	LADWP	–								



FREE!* CLUB RETIREMENT PLAQUE

Retired or Retiring Soon?

Receive your own personalized Club Retirement Plaque, free! (You must be a Club Member for at least five consecutive years.)

***a \$499 value!**

Get started here:



* **NOTE:** If you wish to have a listing deleted from our online posting of Retirement notices, please email us at admin@aliveemployeesclub.com, stating the name and department of the Retired person. The request must come from the actual Retired person. We derive our lists from official public records provided by the City and LADWP.

IN MEMORIAM



We honor those who have passed away and recognize their lifelong service to the City of Los Angeles. Their lives mattered to our City and our region. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of the following current and Retired City employees who were reported to have passed away.



DEPARTMENT	YEARS OF SERVICE	DEPARTMENT	YEARS OF SERVICE	DEPARTMENT	YEARS OF SERVICE	DEPARTMENT	YEARS OF SERVICE
ACTIVE							
Brown, Dominique R.	LAPD 10	Courtney, Edward J.	–	James, Sharon O.	LAPD 31	Rosique, John E.	LADWP 22
Brown, Willie G.	Public Works 6	Derry, James M.	LADWP 35	Jenkins, Christopher	Public Works 25	Ruiz, David A.	LADWP 20
Escobar, Raymond G.	LADWP 16	Donohugh, Patrick T.	Harbor 34	Jimenez, Jose L.	Public Works 29	Safarian, Hrand	–
Gutierrez, Anthony R.	Public Works 29	Duran, Jeury R.	General Services 12	Kathary, Jeanne L.	Airports 20	Schlotman, Edward A.	City Attorney 39
Peloner, Catherine	LADWP 2	Esguerra, Wilfredo D.	Public Works 29	Kim, Sylvia C.	Economic/Workforce 31	Spencer, Leland C.	LADWP 30
Rivera, Roberto A.	Library 7	Euzarraga, Louis F.	Rec and Parks 20	Dev.	–	Steinberg, Elsie D.	–
Sannes, Michael W.	LADWP 22	Evans, Robert A.	LADWP 32	Knott, Roosevelt D.	–	Tafoya, Roger L.	Public Works 23
Washington, Anthony	LADOT 1	Faircloth, David E.	LADWP 30	Lee, Israel J.	LADWP 31	Takahashi, Kazuko	Airports 10
RETIRED		Flores, Arthur T.	General Services 33	Lopez Murillo, Maria E.	LADOT 14	Taylor, Carl W.	LADWP 39
Alipio, Javier C.	Bldg. & Safety 40	Fowler, Reginal E.	Public Works 40	Martin, Shirley J.	Zoo 38	Thompson, Steven R.	Public Works 30
Allton, Greg D.	Bldg. & Safety 24	Gallardo, Rosalio	–	Mattingly, Peter P.	–	Torres, Joaquin	Public Works 37
Aparicio, Sandra D.	LADWP 24	Gay, Melanie E.	LAPD 21	McPherson, James E.	–	Turner, Charles T.	LADWP 29
Ardon, Renee	Library 34	Gibson, Robert E.	–	Medearis, Jerry R.	LADWP 30	Turner, Debra A.	Airports 18
Brailo, David G.	LADWP 33	Hain, Robert R.	LADWP 30	Meza, Francisco F.	LADWP 35	Uzes, Robert L.	LADWP 34
Carl, Warren A.	LADWP 34	Henderson, Cheryl L.	LAPD 15	Miranda, Peter	–	Valdez, Ronnie	LADWP 34
Carpentero, Rolando T.	Airports 30	Henning, Roberta A.	–	Moore, Kenneth D.	Bldg. & Safety 26	Wagoner, John E.	Public Works 21
Carter, Mary J.	Airports 6	Higgins, Patricia A.	Library 34	Myers, Harold L.	LADWP 33	Walker, Robert L.	–
Cheung, Susan F.	LACERS 17	Hill, Marie F.	–	Nakao, James I.	–	Warner, Judith A.	–
Claiborne, B'Elma	LADWP 14	Hoefle, Harold D.	ITA 19	Nishimuro, Joyce K.	Rec and Parks 30	Warren, Kenneth C.	Rec and Parks 36
Clarke, Judith A.	City Attorney 42	Hoing, Gerald H.	–	O'Daniels, Calvin W.	–	Whitmore, Jeffery D.	Econ/Workforce Dev. 29
Coia, Perry J.	LAPD 30	Horton, Jerry L.	LADWP 38	Porter, Willie E.	–	Wilson, Robert G.	LADWP 32
Cole, James R.	LADWP 32	Ikeda, Masao D.	Harbor 18	Rad, Behzad H.	Public Works 37	Zapata, Eliseo C.	Public Works 28
		Inamine, Morio	LADWP 34	Rawson, Russell H.	LADWP 30	Zollman, David	LADWP 32
		Jackson, Wayman P.	LADOT 34	Robinson, Richard T.	ITA 18		

Strafford Is New CFO

PORT PROMOTES JEFFREY STRAFFORD TO CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER.



Jeffrey Strafford

HARBOR: On Jan. 13, the Harbor Dept. appointed Jeffrey Strafford as its new Chief Financial Officer. A long-time City of Los Angeles employee, Strafford will oversee a wide range of the Port’s financial affairs, including the Port’s Accounting, Debt and Financial Analysis, and Financial Planning and Analysis divisions.

“Jeff brings nearly three decades and an incredible resumé of work to this executive position, one that plays a key role in managing the Port’s financial performance and strategic direction,” said Deputy Executive Director of Finance and Administration Erica M. Calhoun. “His strong work ethic, proven track record of excellence and outstanding leadership qualities make him the perfect choice for our new CFO. It’s a well-deserved promotion.”

Before assuming the interim CFO role last spring, Strafford served as the Port’s Director of Financial Planning and Analysis, overseeing professional staff across the division’s two sections: Financial Analysis and Budget. His duties included administering the Port’s \$2.6 billion budget, improving fiscal systems, and overseeing forecasting, resource allocation and revenue optimization, among other financial processes at the nation’s busiest trade gateway.

Prior to that, he was successively promoted to the Port’s budget manager, a position responsible for formulating and implementing the Port’s annual adopted budget. Before joining the Port in 2011, Strafford served as the purchasing manager for Rec and Parks, and as a tax compliance officer for the Office of Finance.

Strafford earned his Bachelor’s degree in business management economics, with a minor in legal studies, from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Congratulations on the promotion, Jeffrey! Thank you for your service. ●

Noelle Kauffman,
Club Sports
Commissioner

CLUB SPORTS

Club’s Coed Softball League Starts Summer 2025!

Get ready to hit the field and join the fun! The Employees Club is proud to introduce an exciting new Coed Softball League, launching this summer.

Starting June 2025, this league is your chance to stay active, enjoy some friendly competition, and connect with fellow Club Members. Whether you’re a seasoned player or just someone looking to spend summer evenings outdoors, the Coed Softball League is perfect for all skill levels.

The league welcomes both full teams and free agents, so whether you’re rounding up coworkers or signing up solo, there’s a place for you. It’s an incredible opportunity to meet new people, bond with friends, or sharpen your skills.

Reservations close March 31.
Reserve your spot today!

Stay Active. Have Fun. Be Club.

Coed Softball League

DATES: JUNE 3 TO AUG. 12TH 2025
GAME NIGHTS: Every Tuesday night
LOCATION: Glassell Park – 3650 Verdugo Rd. Los Angeles, CA. 90065

HOW TO JOIN: Participation is open to all current Club Members. Not a member? No problem! Joining the Club is quick and easy, so you can get in on the action.

To secure your spot, email Noelle Kauffman, the Club Sports Commissioner, at nkauffman@employeesclub.com. Noelle is happy to answer any questions and assist with team registrations or individual sign-ups.

Noelle Kauffman, the Club Sports Commissioner, at nkauffman@employeesclub.com.

WHY YOU SHOULD PLAY: The Coed Softball League is about more than just competing. It’s about staying active, having fun, and making lasting memories with fellow Club Members. Whether you’re looking to improve your fitness, enjoy a laid-back evening of softball, or expand your social circle, this league offers something for everyone.

Grab your glove, lace up your cleats, and get ready for an unforgettable summer on the diamond!

Helping Pets Go Home

ANIMAL SERVICES PROVIDES ESSENTIALS TO EASE RETURN AFTER WILDFIRES.



ANIMAL SERVICES: With residents allowed back into evacuation zones after the devastating wildfires, LA Animal Services led the efforts and worked with many outside agencies to ensure that families returning to their residences had what they needed to care for their pets. From providing pet food, water, hay, and kitty litter, field teams are going door-to-door to ensure that families returning to their residences have the essentials they need to take care of their pets.

Well done, Animal Services. ●

Arlene on the Scene

Alive! follows Arlene Herrero as she meets Club Members.

by Arlene Herrero
Vice President of Business Development

Dec. 20

On Dec. 20, Arlene and Lupe Lira, Club Director of Retail and Ecommerce, stopped by the Harbor Dept.’s C&M yard for its holiday party.

Arlene with Maria Garcia, Custodian, 25 years of City service and Club Member since 2007.

Lupe Lira (right) with Zonia Lima, Custodian, 19 years of City service, and Club Member since 2003.

Cooking with the Club

with Chef Robert Larios



Photos:
Patty M.
Larios



INGREDIENTS

Serves 2

- ½ cup jasmine rice
- 1 yellow onion
- 1 long green pepper
- 1 tomato
- ¼ ounce cilantro
- 1 lime
- 1 can black beans
- 1 can veggie stock concentrate
- 1 tablespoon Southwest spice blend
- 2 flour tortillas (contains soy, wheat)
- ¼ cup Monterey Jack cheese (contains milk)
- 4 tablespoons smoky red pepper crema (contains milk, soy)
- 4 tablespoons guacamole
- 6 ounces ground turkey (optional)
- Water
- Salt and pepper

UTENSILS

- Small pot
- Small bowl
- Zester
- Large pan
- Paper towel

Food Lover's Dictionary:



Pico de Gallo [PEE-koh- day GUY-yoh] – Spanish for “rooster’s beak,” pico de gallo is a relish made of finely chopped ingredients like jicama, oranges, onions, bell peppers, jalapeño peppers and cucumbers along with other seasonings. This condiment was so named because it was once purportedly eaten with the thumb and finger, and an action that resembles a rooster’s pecking beak.

Bibliography: Herbst, Sharon Tyler, and Ron Herbst. The New Food Lover’s Companion. 2nd ed., Sourcebooks, 1995. Recipe: <https://www.hellofresh.com/recipes/black-bean-green-pepper-burritos-62fb9f0dc06d329eeb007135> Accessed Jan. 10, 2025

Cooking Tidbit

When making rice, rinse it under cold water until the water runs clear before cooking. This removes excess starch, preventing the rice from clumping, giving you perfectly fluffy grains every time.

Ultimate Black Bean and Poblano Burritos

Master the art of black bean and green pepper burritos with Monterey Jack, pico de gallo, cilantro lime rice and guacamole for creative and flavorful cooking.

There’s something magical about crafting a burrito. It’s not just a meal; it’s your edible masterpiece, a celebration of your tastes and creativity. You’ve got this, and it’s going to be incredible.

Start with the essentials — your fillings. Imagine this: warm, fluffy cilantro lime rice that feels like a hug for your taste buds; black beans kissed with spices for a hint of depth; crisp green peppers adding vibrant crunch; and a generous handful of gooey Monterey Jack cheese that melts into perfection. These are your building blocks, and they’re nothing short of amazing.

Now, it’s time to level up the flavors. Lay out those salsas and condiments. How about a smoky red pepper crema that brings bold, smoky charm? A bright, zesty pico de gallo that feels like a burst of sunshine? And of course, guacamole—the buttery crown jewel that turns anything it touches into pure gold. These little wonders make every bite sing.

And finally, the pièce de résistance— assembling your burrito. Pick up that tortilla (warmed, because you deserve it). Pile it high with as much or as little of each element as your heart

desires—you’re in charge, and you’re doing great. Wrap it snugly, hold it close, and take a moment to admire your work. Look at that—you’ve just created something absolutely spectacular.

This isn’t just food. It’s a moment to savor, a chance to celebrate your culinary confidence, and a delicious reminder that you can create something truly wonderful. Bon appétit!

¡Buen provecho!

Robert Larios

Food Quote:

“Cooking is just like jazz – you start with a recipe, but the true magic happens when you taste, improvise, and pray the smoke alarm stays quiet!” – **Chef Robert Larios**

DIRECTIONS Total prep time is 40 minutes



Step 1: Boil the Rice

Clean and dry all the produce thoroughly. Measure ¾ cup of water (or 1 ½ cups for 4 servings) and pour it into a small pot along with the rice and a pinch of salt. Place the pot on medium-high heat and bring the water to a boil. Once it starts boiling, cover the pot with a lid and lower the heat to simmer gently. Allow the rice to cook until it’s soft, which should take around 15-18 minutes. After cooking, turn off the heat but leave the pot covered until it’s time to use the rice in Step 4.



Step 3: Combine Veggies and Meat (optional)

Arrange the lettuce leaves on plates and spoon the turkey mixture into them to create turkey lettuce wraps. Top each wrap with candied peanuts and fresh cilantro for a burst of flavor. Serve with lime wedges on the side for an extra zest. Tip: For a fun and customizable dinner, serve the turkey mixture, peanuts and cilantro in separate bowls so everyone can assemble their own wraps!



Step 5: Build Your Burrito Magic

Place each warmed tortilla on a clean surface. Add about 1/3 cup of rice onto the lower third of the tortilla and spread it in a line. Spoon 1/2 cup of the filling on top (save any extra filling to serve on the side) and sprinkle with Monterey Jack cheese. Add a dollop of smoky red pepper crema (or replace it with sour cream, if preferred), a scoop of pico de gallo, and a spoonful of guacamole, keeping the remaining guacamole for later. Fold the bottom part of the tortilla up over the filling, then fold in both sides. Roll the tortilla tightly upwards to create a burrito. For easier handling, you can place each tortilla on foil or parchment paper before rolling and wrap them up for a neater eating experience.



Step 2: Prepare the Veggies

While the rice cooks, start preparing the vegetables. Cut the onion in half, peel it, and slice it thinly. Set aside a small portion and finely mince until you have about 2 tablespoons (or 3 tablespoons for 4 servings). Dice the tomato, chop the cilantro roughly, and zest the lime before cutting it into quarters. Once everything is prepped, combine the minced onion, diced tomato, half of the cilantro, and a splash of lime juice in a small bowl. Add salt and pepper to taste, and mix well.



Step 4: Rice Zest and Tortillas

Fluff the cooked rice with a fork, then stir in the lime zest and the rest of the cilantro. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Wrap the tortillas in damp paper towels and microwave them for about 30 seconds, or until they are soft and flexible.



Step 6: Enjoy

Slice the burritos diagonally in half and arrange them on plates. Serve with the leftover rice, filling, smoky red pepper crema (or sour cream), pico de gallo, guacamole, and any remaining lime wedges for squeezing.

Follow this
recipe online:

