

## Agencies Get CSAC Honors

The County of Orange was one of 38 counties to be recognized through the 2004 California State Association of Counties (CSAC) Challenge Awards.

"Last year, CSAC received 163 entries from various counties, making the 2004 Challenge Awards competition the most diverse in its history," said Steven C. Szalay, Executive Director of CSAC. "From farm worker vanpools to risk mitigation practices to programs that strengthen adoptive families, this year's Challenge Award recipients exemplify the ingenuity and innovative spirit that resides in each of the Golden State's 58 counties."

Five County of Orange programs were honored with Merit Awards and another six received honorable mentions. The programs include:

### Merit Awards

- **Delivering Megan's Law to the Community**  
Provides public access to information on registered sex offenders  
*Probation Department*

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## Archives Become Time Capsule of County History

Phil Brigandi has been interested in history for as long as he remembers. He was on the board of directors of the Orange Community Historical Society at age 18 and on the County Historical Commission at age 24.

As the County archivist, Brigandi is a second generation County employee whose father worked with the Probation Department for 26 years. As a City of Orange native, Brigandi has been researching and writing about Orange County history since high school. As a historian, he strives to find what information can be gained and what

questions can be answered by searching archived materials.

The archives were created by the Board of Supervisors in 1983. They were originally a part of the Orange County Public Library and were first organized by Gabrielle Carey in 1984. Carey, a professional archivist, introduced a detailed system for organizing the archives. Dennis McGuire, a librarian, followed Carey as archivist and focused on making the archives accessible to the public.

During post-bankruptcy funding shifts, the archives were moved



Phil Brigandi, County Archivist, peruses pictures from the County's colorful past at the historical repository on the ground floor of the Old Courthouse.

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- **EMS Week - A Salute to Everyday Heroes**  
 A weeklong celebration designed to raise awareness of the critical services provided by the County in keeping families safe from harm  
*Health Safety Advocates/OC Medical Services*
- **Forensic Science Services eServices Initiative**  
 Provides around-the-clock, electronic access to forensics results in a secure and confidential manner  
*Sheriff-Coroner*
- **Living Room Dialogues**  
 An initiative that brings together residents of various backgrounds and gives them the opportunity to learn about one another in three sit-down, community sessions  
*Human Relations Commission*
- **Talbert SAR Watershed Urban Runoff Diversion Project**  
 County-designed and built diversion facilities at four flood control channels to minimize bacteria exposure along the county's beaches  
*Resources and Development Management Department*

**Honorable Mention**

- **Orange County District Attorney Trial Attorney Partnership**  
 Provides well qualified, experienced trial attorneys on a volunteer basis at no additional cost to the taxpayer  
*District Attorney's Office*

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to the Clerk-Recorder's office. They were available to the public on an appointment-only basis because the budget couldn't accommodate a full-time staff person. Nearly two years ago, however, Clerk-Recorder Tom Daly decided to revive the archives and searched for a full-time archivist. After numerous sources alerted Daly to Brigandi's passion for Orange County history, he hired him as the County Archivist.

"I try to find a balance between preservation and use," said Brigandi. "We want people to use what we have. We don't save everything, just items that are unique and of historical value."

The archives consist of items that date back to 1889, including County records, maps, aerial photos, Board minutes, tax rolls, deeds, voter registration and much more. The warrant registers from the Auditor-Controller's office that date from 1889 are very informative. During that time, a signature was required to obtain a County payroll check. The records consist of signatures from County officials and employees, which help to determine when individuals were hired.

There are many uses for the archives. People come in to conduct historical research, reference Environmental Impact Reports, research homes, conduct genealogical research and to collect information for municipal anniversaries.

"I am pleased with the response we've had since re-opening the Orange County Archives in 2003," said Daly. "Since the re-opening, more than 2,000 people have visited the archives, and hundreds more have contacted us by phone and e-mail. Those who walk through the door to view the ar-

chives range from the general public interested in the history of Orange County to scholars, authors, historians, reporters, students, genealogists and County staff doing specific research on historical issues."

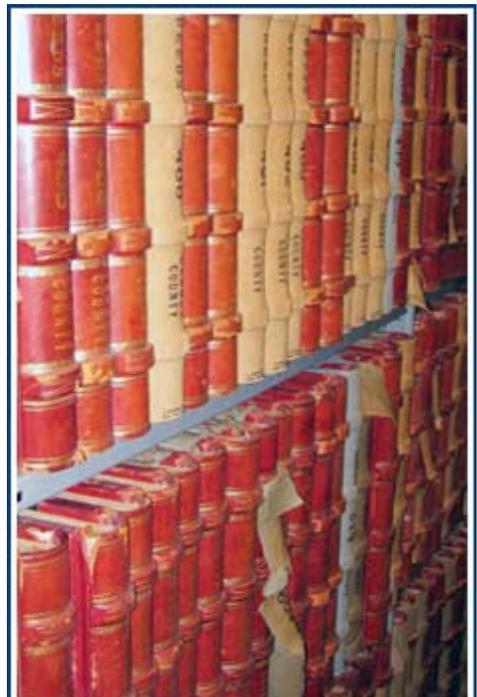
The archives are open from 9 a. m. - noon and 1 - 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. They are located in Room 101 of the Old County Courthouse. "Our goal is to help people find items that we have," said Brigandi. "If we don't have what they are looking for, we'll try to point them in the right direction."

At the request of Board Chairman Bill Campbell, Brigandi gives monthly historical presentations at the start of Board meetings. Upcoming topics include:

May 24 – Disneyland's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

July 26 – City of Dairyland (La Palma) Incorporated, 1955

August 2 – Orange County officially opens for business, 1889



**The County Archives store property deeds dating back to 1889.**

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- **Orange County's Senior Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Program**  
 Provided 40,000 trips for seniors to doctor, dental, counseling and other health-related, non-emergency appointments  
*Office on Aging and Health Care Agency*
- **Mower Wildfire Hazard Reduction Program**  
 A procedure that extinguishes any spark that may be caused by accidental contact with mower blades  
*Resources and Development Management Department*
- **Elder Abuse Forensic Center**  
 Advances the awareness of elder abuse while creating new standards for collaboration with the public and educating the community regarding effective intervention and prosecution  
*Social Services Agency*
- **County of Orange Child Abuse Video Project**  
 Trains and familiarizes staff about the legal aspects and responsibilities for reporting child abuse  
*Social Services Agency*
- **Samantha's PRIDE**  
 A public awareness and child-watch program designed to keep children safe and parents informed in neighborhoods and communities  
*Sheriff-Coroner with the Joyful Child Foundation*

"I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to each recipient of the 2004 CSAC awards and to thank each of you for your department's efforts," said Thomas G. Mauk, County Executive Officer. "The County's continued success is largely due to the innovation and dedication of County employees like you."

## Harvesting Families... One Miracle At A Time



Jane and Ralph Portillo prepare to go to church with their adopted children (in front, from left) Rachel, Matthew, Joseph and Anthony.

Imagine that you've had a nightmare and you cry out for someone to comfort you, yet, no matter how loud you scream, no one comes to wipe away your tears. Sadly, there are many children in Orange County who don't have anyone to hold them when they cry. Last year, 442 adoptions were finalized -- down from 570 in 2003. Currently, there are 2,963 children in out-of-home placements including foster homes, relatives' homes, adoptive placements, foster family agency homes and group homes.

The Social Services Agency's (SSA) Foster and Adoptive Development Team is committed to placing each child in a home. Unfortunately, the task of finding the perfect fit for each child is a daunting one since babies and toddlers are much easier to place than the older children.

SSA's Foster and Adoptive Family Development Team and Families and Communities Together, in

collaboration with the Orange-wood Children's Home, are focusing on a door-to-door effort to raise awareness about the need for foster parents. The campaign is taking one city at a time and is currently targeting Anaheim. The team just completed efforts in Tustin and Santa Ana. The foster care unit focuses on finding temporary placements for children, and the adoptions unit concentrates on placing children in permanent homes.

"Our goal is to raise awareness of the need and importance of foster homes for children," said Roylyn Burton, Community Program Specialist. "Foster parents play a crucial role in the welfare of children and work closely with social workers, agency staff, teachers, doctors and other professionals dedicated to helping these children. Although foster parents will never replace the children's biological families, they do provide for the children's needs. Kids re-

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**Linda Darden prepares to dig with her adopted daughters (in front, from left) Priscilla, Monica and JessieSue, and her biological children, (back row, from left) Christopher and Vanessa.**

quire more than just food and shelter. They also need support, encouragement, reassurance, stability, and, most importantly, a safe and loving environment."

Foster parents can provide a ray of hope in a world otherwise shadowed by issues that are dangerous to the child's physical and mental health. Physical abuse, neglect, abandonment, drug addiction, alcohol problems and sexual abuse are just some of the reasons that result in a child being removed from his or her home. Understandably, the child is often afraid, angry, confused and heart-broken by the events that led to their removal. Some foster children come into the system with special needs, such as emotional, behavioral, physical or developmental problems.

"Foster parents need to act as any other parents, yet with the ability to manage a child who has a troubled background and an already inflated fear of rejection," said Jim Deming, Senior Social Services Supervisor. "They need to provide a sense of belonging,

acceptance and love. Our goal is to place the children in a safe haven until a more permanent solution becomes available."

In many cases, foster parents decide to adopt the child, which results in a lifelong bond between the child and adoptive parents. SSA's social workers dedicate themselves to finding homes for children as well as providing support during the transition period.

Once a foster parent/family decides to adopt, SSA takes the lead in finalizing the process and in providing ongoing support.

"Our experience first as foster parents, then as adoptive parents has been excellent, although not without the expected challenges. Fortunately, our SSA social worker was really helpful and willing to answer all of our questions," said Jane Portillo, adoptive mom. "We started as foster parents for three brothers and their sister. Before we knew it, we were in love and decided to adopt all four. If we could do it all over again, we would not change a thing because the benefits overshadow the obstacles. SSA was always there to guide us."

According to the Administration for Children and Families, more than a half million children in the United States find love and security in a foster home each year. May is National Foster Care Month, which is a time to recognize the 170,000 foster families who have opened their hearts and homes to children in need. It is also a time to acknowledge the myriad of educators, social workers, professionals, and volunteers who form a nationwide

web of support that sustains these children.

Orange County foster parents were recently honored with a tree grove planted in their names at Irvine Regional Park. The dozen trees were planted to recognize those families, volunteers and companies that have contributed time, effort and money to caring for foster children.

Linda Darden was just one of 19 individuals who were honored by the tree planting. Darden has been a foster mom for 29 years and has fostered hundreds of critical care babies.

"I take the babies who most people are afraid to take. They are the babies in most need," said Darden. "It's a challenge because some of these babies can not bear to be touched. There is nothing in the world like nurturing them and seeing them smile for the first time."

Through SSA, prospective foster and adoptive parents get training prior to taking a child into their homes. SSA provides an orientation, adoption assistance and monthly medical insurance for the child. For more information about foster care or adoptions, call 1-888-871-KIDS (5437) or visit [www.oc4kids.com](http://www.oc4kids.com).



**Dr. Michael Riley, Director of Children and Family Services in the Social Services Agency, greets foster mom Rhonda Foster at the Tree Garden event at the Irvine Regional Park.**

# Departments Increase Online Service

As Paul walks into the restaurant and inhales the aroma of steak and veggies, his mouth begins to water and his stomach starts to growl. He walks over to a small booth, sits down and begins to unfold the crisp, white napkin and places it gently on his lap. The waitress hands him the menu, briefly describes the evening's specials and takes his order.

After what seems like hours, Paul's meal finally arrives and he begins to delicately slice the steak to savor his first bite. At that moment, a scuttling movement catches his eye and he spots the culprit. It's fat and brown with long, skinny legs and seems to be staring right at him. In disgust, Paul flees the restaurant and vows never to return.

The would-be diner could have avoided this by checking out the Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA), Environmental Health department's new website. The department has recently launched an enhanced website that provides the public with inspection violation information on all restaurants operating in Orange County. So before you dine out, make sure to log on to [www.ocfoodinfo.com](http://www.ocfoodinfo.com).

"This new feature allows the public to search for their favorite restaurant and view inspection history and any violations found during routine checks," said Patricia Gentry, Program Manager for the Food Protection Program. "Restaurant closures and Award of Excellence recipients are already available online as part of the Food Protection Program's Public Notification System. The new enhancement provides additional useful information for the dining public to assist in making informed choices. We hope to better serve the community and communicate with them through this medium."



To find out more about the new inspection information feature or the Orange County Food Protection Program, visit the new web site or call 714.433.6000.

Harbors, Beaches & Parks (HBP) has also enhanced online services to better serve the public. The department has launched its automated parks reservation system enabling the public to reserve picnic shelters, campsites and wedding locations at its various County regional facilities. The best part about the new, improved website is that it is being implemented at no cost to the County. Customers will be able to place a reservation in real time, 24 hours a day, seven days a week by logging on to [www.ocparks.com](http://www.ocparks.com). The public can also call 1.800.600.1600 to place a reservation through the call center.



"HBP's customer-based philosophy is dedicated to offering value to our clients. For instance, by providing round-the-clock access, the online reservation system will offer 'anytime, anywhere' opportunity to customers, moving them from standing in line to being online," said Mike Brajdic, Special Programs/Parks District Supervisor. "We're quite happy to report that the new system was free for the County since there were no up-front application development costs," said Brajdic. "Instead, the system pays for itself with user-based transaction fees, which are charged at the Board-approved, non-refundable processing rate of \$12 for general reservations."

HBP is a division of the County of Orange, Resources and Development Management Department. For more information, log on to [www.ocparks.com](http://www.ocparks.com).



## 25 Years

**Alee Barcenas**  
Social Services Agency

**Denise Bell**  
Social Services Agency

**Edward Berakovich**  
District Attorney

**Vicki Briles**  
Public Defender

**Jose Castro**  
Resources & Development  
Management Department

**Robert Christopher**  
Social Services Agency

**Cynthia Edes**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Elizabeth Fonseca**  
Child Support Services

**Rodolfo Garcia**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Stanley Gualrapp**  
Resources & Development  
Management Department

**Russell Harmon**  
Resources & Development  
Management Department

**Judy Harris**  
Auditor-Controller

**Michael Kehtel**  
Health Care Agency

**Bich Le**  
Social Services Agency

**Xay Lee**  
Social Services Agency

**Rosa Maffey**  
Social Services Agency

**Lisa Martinez**  
Resources & Development  
Management Department

**Yvony Richards**  
Public Defender

**Kenneth Smith**  
Social Services Agency

**Shirley Strosaker**  
Social Services Agency

**Cynthia Viall**  
Clerk-Recorder

**Mary Wuerfl**  
Social Services Agency



## 35 Years

**Paul Sedgwick**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Kevin Whelan**  
Health Care Agency

## 30 Years

**Richard Chamberlain**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Gene Hyatt**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Jose Lopez**  
District Attorney

**Charles Walters**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Lyni Yen**  
Resources & Development  
Management Department

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