



# Laguna Woods WOOD WORKS

## Inside This Issue

### PAGE TWO

Ridge Route Linear Park Update  
Pilot Recycling Program in March

### PAGE THREE

Cityhood Goals — Did We  
Accomplish Them?  
Incorporation: Yes or No?

### PAGE FOUR

City Services  
A Few Good People Wanted



### NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Douglas Reilly, Assistant City Manager

### NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS

Leslie Keane  
Dave Blodgett



### CITY OF LAGUNA WOODS



WOOD WORKS is published by the City of Laguna Woods and is distributed as a public service to the homes and businesses of the City. The City of Laguna Woods welcomes your comments, suggestions and questions regarding WOOD WORKS. Please call or write:

Editor, WOOD WORKS  
City of Laguna Woods  
24264 El Toro Road  
Laguna Woods, CA 92637  
(949) 639-0500  
dreilly@lagunawoodscity.org



## THE CITY OF LAGUNA WOODS CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

Residents are invited to participate in the tenth birthday celebration of Laguna Woods in March. Laguna Woods will be ten years old on March 24, 2009.

Voters approved incorporation and selected the name, Laguna Woods, on March 2, 1999, by the narrow margin of 342 votes—52% to 48%. On March 24, 1999, Laguna Woods became Orange County's 32nd city.

The ten-year celebration will kick off in early March. A citizens committee worked with City staff for months to plan several events and activities:

A City Birthday Song contest is underway with entries due by March 10. Submissions must include lyrics and music to be performed by contestants at the City birthday party March 24 at Ficklin Hall, Laguna Country United Methodist Church. Those attending the party will choose the winning song.

A City-sponsored artwork contest for streetlight banners was conducted between September and December 2008. The winning banners will be installed in early March and will remain in place through April.

Clubs, businesses, service organizations and individuals are encouraged to send in celebratory cards, photos, letters, digital messages and other media to City Hall to be included in a Laguna Woods Tenth Birthday Remembrance Book that will be on display at City Hall.

The Historical Society of Laguna Woods will sponsor a formal dinner at 5 p.m. Sunday, March 22, in Clubhouse 5. The Meredith Hubbard Trio will provide entertainment with a Broadway musical revue.

The City will host a birthday party at 2 p.m. Tuesday, March 24, at Ficklin Hall of the Laguna Country United Methodist Church, 24442 Moulton Parkway. City Birthday Song contestants will perform, and those in attendance will select a winner. Birthday cake will be served, and entertainment will be provided by the Old Pros.

Phone City Hall at (949) 639-0500 or the Historical Society at (949) 206-0150 for more information about these events and activities.

## Greening the Woods

The City of Laguna Woods has a distinguished record of active commitment to the environment. In March 2007, the City signed the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. The broad goal of this agreement is to reduce manmade greenhouse gas emission by 7% below 1990 levels by 2012. In signing the agreement, the City Council made the decision to set the City on a path toward energy efficiency and overall environmental stability.

To begin to address the policies identified in the Climate (Please turn to page 2)

# Ridge Route Linear Park Update

The City of Laguna Woods began construction of the Ridge Route Linear Park along the unpaved portion of Ridge Route Drive in September 2008. Although planned for completion in December, the contractor has been delayed due to repeated rainfalls that have left the ground wet. Many of the plantings throughout the park and improvements to the dog park have been completed. The project now scheduled to be completed in March 2009 will provide:

🌿 A 10-foot-wide decomposed granite path that is American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant and will connect to existing concrete sidewalks at either ends of the park. Shrubs and trees that will be planted on both sides of the path.

🌿 Furnishings that will include benches, trash receptacles, tables and drinking fountains.

🌿 Up to ten community-designed gardens that will be spaced intermittently throughout the project with designs developed through a competitive process sponsored by the City. Approved designs will be installed and maintained by the City's landscape maintenance contractor.

🌿 Five Life Station exercise equipment areas with age-appropriate equipment.

🌿 A bioswale drainage channel planted with natural grasses that will run along the edge of the park. This environmentally friendly feature will filter impurities from drainage water before it enters the storm drain system.

🌿 A 42-inch-high wood rail fence that will be installed along the outer border of the park to provide a visual barrier for vehicles traveling the road.

🌿 Improvements to A Place for Paws dog park will include: 1) narrowing its width to accommodate the pathway but increasing its overall size; 2) replacing existing grass, wood chips and soil with artificial turf; 3) providing for a 50-foot "time out" area on the east end and a new, ornamental wire fence and drinking fountain; and 4) paving and increasing the size of the parking area.

Contact Assistant City Manager Doug Reilly at (949) 639-0500 if you have questions about the project. 🌿

# Pilot Recycling Program to Start in March

In March 2009, the City of Laguna Woods and Ware Disposal, the City's franchised waste hauler, will start a pilot recycling program to enable residents to dispose of recyclables separately from trash. The program is being conducted with cooperation from Third Mutual, United Mutual and the Golden Rain Foundation and The Regency assisted-living facility.

The City is providing large, blue plastic recycling bins through a grant from the California Department of Conservation. Ware Disposal will pick up the bins at no cost to residents. The bins will be placed in or near trash enclosures or newspaper recycling areas in 30 locations each in Third Mutual and United Mutual, at all clubhouses, the community center and the Regency. Bin locations were selected by housing board directors and interested volunteers.

Residents served by the recycle bins will be required to separate such recyclables as plastic containers, cardboard, glass and plastic bottles, cans, envelopes, sheets of paper, magazines, telephone books and plastic bags but no Styrofoam. All other trash will continue to be placed in wet-trash bins.

Ware will affix stickers to the blue bins listing materials that can be placed in them.

Newspapers will continue to be collected separately, and residents will be urged to take advantage of the City's free, door-to-door household hazardous waste and electronic waste collection program to avoid contaminating recyclables.

The success of the pilot program will determine if there is sufficient interest in recycling to expand the program citywide.

The curbside program now in effect in Third Mutual will continue. 🌿



## Greening the Woods, continued from page 1

Protection Agreement, the City Manager's office convened a broad-based blue ribbon committee to brainstorm and develop practical recommendations that could be presented to the City Council and homeowner associations within the City. The committee selected five issues on which to focus its efforts:

- Renewable energy
- Water quality and conservation
- Recycling
- Alternative transportation
- Green building

Members of the committee included Jim Davis, Margreta Roberto, Bevan Strom, Ray Gros, Russ Ridgeway, Marlene Bridges, Marion Levine and Mark Stein.

The committee released its final report in January. In the report, the committee notes the challenges associated with trying to maintain the spirit, natural charm and small-town atmosphere of Laguna Woods in the face of growth and development pressures. It adopted as its goal statement: "Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

The focus of the report and its recommendations are on the effort to achieve a vision of a prosperous, vital and environmentally friendly economy for the City of Laguna Woods. The report contains 110 recommendations, ranked in three categories based on importance and attainability. It is designed to serve as a guide to help the City pursue work plans that will address the identified issues areas.

Of the 110 recommendations, 30 relate to education and outreach and were marked as priorities by both the committee and the City Council; 21 are outside of the City's jurisdiction and require other organizations to embrace an environmental commitment.

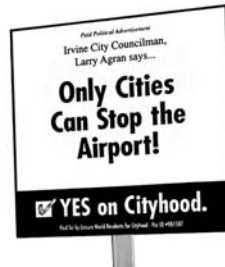
The full report is available at City Hall and on the Internet at [www.lagunawoodscity.org](http://www.lagunawoodscity.org). The City Council has asked staff to forward the report to homeowner and residential-management companies within the City, and to provide a matrix of action items that it can consider at its April 15, 2009, meeting. 🌿

# Cityhood Goals — Did We Accomplish Them?

Residents who voted for cityhood in 1999 had certain goals they hoped the new City would accomplish. How have we done?

■ **Stop a commercial airport from being built at MCAS El Toro.**

In 2004, the County finally abandoned its efforts to convert the former military base to a commercial airport. Under the guidance of the City of Irvine, this property will be developed someday as mixed-use residential, educational, open space and formal park.



■ **Stop the extension of Santa Maria Avenue to Laguna Canyon Rd.**

In 2008, the City of Laguna Woods annexed approximately 170 acres of open-space area at the edge of Santa Maria into the City. The City of Laguna Woods will now control development on that property and a major arterial highway will not be constructed.

■ **Prevent construction of a high-rise apartment complex at City's western edge at El Toro and Aliso Creek Road.**

In 2002, the City solicited and received a grant from the California Coastal Conservancy that allowed it to purchase the 10-acre site scheduled for development. The property will be maintained as open space and serves as a gateway to the Laguna Coast Wilderness Park.

■ **Increase law enforcement presence in the community.**

Prior to incorporation, traffic enforcement on public streets was provided by the California Highway Patrol and other police services by the Orange County Sheriff on call. Neither agency provided regular patrol in the City. The City now has a dedicated patrol car in the City 16 hours a day, seven days a week. In addition, a traffic officer spends 40 hours a week in the City.

■ **Control local taxes and local land use.**

When it incorporated, the responsibility to set and collect local taxes shifted to the City, as did approval of land use. In 2000, the City formed a citizen planning advisory committee to assure that residents' views were considered in land-use decisions. The Council has only overridden this committee two times, and on both those occasions the committee itself was split. No new taxes have been proposed since incorporation; and in fact, the City has waived the cable franchise fee on local subscriber services.

■ **Bring government services closer to residents.**

Prior to incorporation, residents who wished to deal with local government had to travel to Santa Ana. Now, local services are provided from an office centrally located within the City. Prior to incorporation, residents elected one supervisor who served a much larger area than Laguna Woods and who had to be responsive to the priorities of other communities. Now, residents elect five individuals whose priorities are Laguna Woods. In addition, City Hall contains a branch of the Orange County Public Library and satellite offices for Assemblyman Chuck Devore, Congressman John Campbell and the California Fish and Game Department.

■ **Spend local taxes locally – provide services for residents.**

Prior to incorporation only a small fraction – less than 1% of the 1% property taxes collected in the City – was spent on local residents. Because the gated community provided many services traditionally provided by local government, funds collected from Laguna Woods residents were spent elsewhere in the County, and in support of the commercialization of the El Toro airport. In its first ten years, \$86.2 million has flowed to the City to support local infrastructure and services, such as increased law enforcement.

■ **Save residents money – reduce daily living costs.**

During its first 10 years, the Laguna Woods City Council has suspended the cable television franchise fee and assumed financial responsibility for all streetlights in the City. In addition, the City provides subsidized taxi services for residents 60 years and older, energy improvements for low-income residents and free notary services. 🌳

# Incorporation: Yes or No?

Prior to the March 2, 1999, vote on incorporating the City of Laguna Woods, opponents voiced several concerns that have proven to be unfounded:

1. Fear: With an average age of 78, the residents of this community are too old to govern themselves.

Fact: Not only has the City governed itself well for ten years, but Laguna Woods City Councilmen also hold leadership roles in regional organizations: Mayor Bob Ring was elected by other Orange County cities to represent them in regional planning; Councilman Bert Hack chaired the San Joaquin Transportation Corridor Agency for two terms; Councilman Milt Robbins was recently elected Chairman of the Orange County Library Advisory Board for a second term, and former Councilman Bob Bouer chaired the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO).

2. Fear: There are too few residents to have a real city.

Fact: Laguna Woods is a midsized city. There are three cities in Orange County with smaller populations—Villa Park, Los Alamitos and La Palma.

3. Fear: Revenue will be insufficient, and the new City will be bankrupt in its eighth year.

Fact: During its first 10 years, Laguna Woods has substantially increased services for residents, and anticipates the City will have an unallocated general fund balance of \$10 million by July 2009.

4. Fear: Cityhood will change the gated community of Laguna Woods Village by 1) increasing homeowner-association dues, 2) removing walls and gates, opening the community to the public including the golf course and tennis courts and other recreational facilities, and 3) allowing children to move in.

Fact: None of these changes has occurred. State and federal laws protect senior retirement communities. The City has no power to interfere with the governance of Laguna Woods Village.

5. Fear: The City will add a layer of government that will cost residents time and money.

Fact: Rather than adding an additional layer, the City replaced county governance. Residents who need a building permit now travel a few blocks instead of 20 miles. The City has reduced the cost of services and added such services as subsidized taxi vouchers, free notarizations and expanded hazardous-waste disposal and recycling programs. 🌳



**Laguna Woods celebrates its 10th!**  
**March 24, 2009**



**CITY HALL**

24264 El Toro Road  
Laguna Woods, CA 92637

8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Plan Counter Hours: 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.

O.C. Public Library: 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Phone: 949-639-0500

Fax: 949-639-0591

Website and E-mail Links:

[www.lagunawoodscity.org](http://www.lagunawoodscity.org)

**CITY COUNCIL**

Bob Ring, Mayor

Brenda Ross, Mayor Pro Tem

Bert Hack, Councilmember

Marty Rhodes, Councilmember

Milt Robbins, Councilmember

Leslie A. Keane, City Manager

## Get Connected to City Services

### Attend City Council Meeting

3rd Wednesday of each month,  
2 p.m., Laguna Woods City Hall,  
Council Chambers, 24264 El  
Toro Road. Cablecast live on LW  
Communications Channel 31.

**Visit the City's Website**  
[www.lagunawoodscity.org](http://www.lagunawoodscity.org)

**Call us** at (949) 639-0500  
**TTY phone** at (949) 639-0535



**Tune In**  
Channel 31



**Write To Us**  
City of Laguna Woods  
24264 El Toro Road  
Laguna Woods, CA 92637



**Send Us an E-mail**  
[cityhall@lagunawoodscity.org](mailto:cityhall@lagunawoodscity.org)  
Share your thoughts and ideas.

**Apply to Serve on a Committee**  
Call the City Clerk's office at (949) 639-0500.

## A Few Good People Wanted



Volunteer Belle Glasser

Do you enjoy learning skills? Interfacing with people and answering questions? Then perhaps you would like to be a volunteer at the City of Laguna Woods. Our volunteers work the front desk to answer phones, help with mailings and assist the paid staff. The morning shift is 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and the afternoon shift is 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. We currently have shifts available and also need help to cover vacation shifts on call. Call Roz at 639-0512 if you are interested in our volunteer program. 🌳