



VCPPOA NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE VENTURA COUNTY PROFESSIONAL PEACE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION
VCPPOA

WINTER 2014

Negotiations Update:

County Officials Continue to Deny Reality Of Expanding Responsibilities of County Peace Officers

After more than eight months of contract negotiations, Ventura County representatives have still failed to bring any significant proposals to the bargaining table. Although recent negotiation sessions have had to be re-scheduled for various reasons, the two sides continue to be at odds for what it will take to reach a contract agreement.

Members of the VCPPOA Board of Directors participating in negotiations have expressed frustration with the County's position that continues to deny the reality of the expanding responsibilities of County peace officers.

VCPPOA President Don Douglass explained that some VCPA executives have been doing a better job at educating County officials of the evolving duties of probation and corrections services officers. Likewise, Douglass indicated that a few County officials are also conveying a better understanding of the lack of priorities given to the County's harbor patrol officers, park rangers and airport operations officers.

"We're just trying to show our County officials, agency and department executives the reality of our jobs and the impact that Public Safety Realignment is having on our professions," Douglass said. "If our County leaders want to preserve the kind of quality public safety services Ventura County residents deserve, they are going to have to start recognizing that pay disparity and understaffing leads to higher turnover and a longer learning curve for new hires. The best place for our County leaders to recognize this continuing reality is at the bargaining table," Douglass said.

With conflicting schedules and the holiday season being a factor, VCPPOA representatives closed out 2013 with no

progress by year's end. The organization that represents the County's deputy sheriffs is also at the bargaining table and experiencing many of the same frustrations as the VCPPOA.

The contract for VCPPOA members pay, benefits and working conditions expired on June 23, 2013. For nearly six years, VCPPOA members have only seen pay reductions and a growing gap between their pay and benefits, as compared to other counties. VCPPOA members continue to have the lowest pay and benefits package in the Southern California market. Douglass and his Board of Directors will continue their efforts to educate County officials, the press and the public about the evolving responsibilities of Ventura County peace officers represented by VCPPOA.



VCPPOA members gathered at the December 10 association meeting to say farewell to Rob Wexler, VCPPOA counsel, labor negotiations representative. Wexler has played a key role in VCPPOA labor relations for the last ten years. VCPPOA labor representation services will be taken over by Steve Silver, of Silver, Hadden & Silver. Silver also represents the Ventura County Deputy Sheriffs and the County firefighters in legal and contract negotiations services.



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We Set Out To Make Negotiations Different, It Still Is...



By Don Douglass

In May of 2013, we set out to show County officials and department heads that this year's contact negotiations would be different than it had been in the past. We outlined an approach to negotiations that would show the County's representatives that we were prepared to back up our proposals with data justifying our demands. We showed them respect and we expected them to show our representatives the same.

What we didn't expect was for this year's contract negotiations to be nearly a year in the making, and it's still not finished yet. Not by a long shot. Unfortunately, even with the data to support our salary and benefits position and the realities our members continue to face in the wake of California's Public Safety Realignment, County officials have yet to acknowledge the importance of our role in the public safety services provided to the residents and businesses of Ventura County.

We've started the process of educating County officials, stakeholders and the public that the job of probation officers, corrections services officers, harbor officers, airport operations officers and park rangers is much more critical to the safety and security of Ventura County than ever before. VCPPOA has published a number of ads and articles in local papers (see the VC Star ad on this page) and statewide peace officer publications to further this education. This educational process will continue into the future.

While the VCPPOA Negotiations Team holds the line at the bargaining table, our members deserve special recognition for maintaining their patience and profes-

Don't Cut Corners on Public Safety

An Important Message from Your Ventura County Professional Peace Officers:

The decision by Governor Brown and our legislative leaders to send thousands of prison inmates to County custody and probation supervision has drastically changed our jobs and the work we do to keep Ventura County residents safe.

All too frequently, the newspaper headlines tell the story of violent crimes committed by a Post Release Offender (PROs), one of the **higher-risk, more sophisticated, more violent career criminal who should have been in state prison.**

County officials continue to ignore the expanding gap between the jobs our probation officers were hired to do, and the much more challenging job that often involves **physical altercations and dangerous environments with the people that we supervise, adults and juveniles alike.**

County officials should stop pretending that nothing has changed and focus on the challenges facing our Probation Agency.

If you share our concerns, send us an email to vcppoa@aol.com, or visit our website at www.VCPPOA.org.

VIOLENT CRIME IS INCREASING IN VENTURA COUNTY

Violent crimes in Oxnard, Ventura and Santa Paula are on the rise.

In Santa Paula, year-to-date **violent crime increased by 32%**

The Ventura County Professional Peace Officers Association—VCPPOA—represents nearly 300 of Ventura County's deputy probation officers, corrections services officers, park rangers, harbor patrol officers and airport operations officers.

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sionalism throughout this process. This process is not easy for our members, who are seemingly unappreciated and certainly undervalued for the risks and responsibilities that they take on and for the hard work that they deliver day in and day out. On behalf of the VCPPOA Board of Directors, I want to thank our members for their continued support and confidence in our leadership.

And finally, I want to thank the growing number of residents and business owners of Ventura County who have reached out to VCPPOA and thanked our members for the valuable public safety and rehabilitative services that our professions provide. We appreciate the public's support and encouragement, as we work our way through educating everyone in the County, and finally, our own Board of Supervisors. It's been said that our five County Supervisors might be the last people in the County to understand our jobs and why our members deserve better recognition at the negotiations table. As this process continues, that certainly may be the case.



COUNTY PEACE OFFICERS IN ACTION

Ventura County Airport Operations Officers, Cross-Trained for Public Safety



Ventura County's Airport Operations Officers serve 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in a multi-role capacity, providing land-based security – including enforcement of airport ordinances, F.A.A. federal flight regulations and air rescue firefighting (ARFF).

At the County's Camarillo and Oxnard airports since the 1980's, VCPPOA-represented Airport Operations Officers have been the all around public safety officers. Land-based security responsibilities for the officers include property protection of the airport terminals, hangers and their valuable contents. The officers also patrol and inspect the airport facilities and, even though they are non-uniform public safety personnel, they enforce vehicle code sections and issue citations.

Unlike public safety officers at most airports in California, Ventura County's Airport Operations Officers are cross-trained for Air Rescue Firefighting. Recently the County has chosen not to provide official training required for Air Rescue Firefighting as defined by the F.A.A. Normally the officers are fully trained firefighting professionals who respond in specialized vehicles and equipment in the event of a plane crash or other airfield emergency raising the question - Is the safety of the public a top priority?

Because of reported budget concerns, deployment of

the County's Airport Operations Officers has diminished significantly over the years. The County has continually and intentionally left the Airport Operations Officers short staffed. Currently, there are only 9 Airport Operations Officers employed by Ventura County between both Airports. That low number, spread over two airports, means that airports are not properly patrolled by officers much of the time. In fact, in July of this year, there were more than 49 unattended shifts. Fortunately, there have been no major incidents during lapses in coverage resulting in lost or damaged property at the airports, and no major airplane mishaps have occurred during the unattended shifts.

The unattended shifts and recent lack of official Air Rescue Firefighting training has provided a budget windfall for the County Department of Airports. Where the unspent funds are directed if a work shift is left unattended because of short-staffing was not immediately clear.

The Ventura County Department of Airports is one of the few proprietary departments in Ventura. Between landing fees and hanger rent payments, the Department of the Airports is self-funding.

Even with those resources, the Department of the Airports suffers from an extremely high turnover rate among Airport Operations Officers. Reports indicate that, in the last 18 months, the County's crew of Airport Operations Officers has experienced a turnover rate of 120%. Nevertheless, the VCPPOA-represented Airport Operations Officers remain dedicated to the safety of lives and property at the County's airports. Near-constant training is necessary to ensure that the newly hired officers are fully capable to serve as the police and firefighter rescue professionals for Ventura County's airports.

For more information and archive photos from the County's airports, visit <http://www.ventura.org/airport-photographs/archive-photos>.



**UP COMING EVENTS
MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

**JAN
27** **PORAC Tri-Counties Meeting
Santa Barbara**

**FEB
11** **VCPPOA Board of Directors Meeting
Members Welcome!
VCPA Offices—Oxnard // 6:00 PM**

**MAR
11** **VCPPOA Board of Directors Meeting
Members Welcome!
VCPA Offices—Oxnard // 6:00 PM**

**MAR
24-26** **SCOPO Legislative Day and
Bi-monthly Meeting — Sacramento**

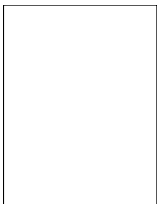


VCPPOA 2014 Board of Directors

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- Julianne Germain**, DPO Representative
- Rogelio Cruz**, DPO Representative
- Nancy Vallejo**, CSO Representative
- Richard Gallarza**, CSO Representative
- Dan Smock**, Patrol Officers Representative

The VCPPOA welcomes new Board Member,
Julianne Germain, the new
Board DPO representative.

Moved? Make sure the VCPPOA News keeps up with you!
Send your updated contact information to vcppoa@aol.com



VCPPOA
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