

March 2016

Birthstone: Aquamarine  
Flower: Daffodil

# Pathfinder



CITY OF SANTA MARIA EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER



*Word has it ...*

*From your City Manager*

Rick Haydon



Usually when you think of March, you think of St. Patrick's Day (and the dreams of finding that elusive treasure or prize); the Ides of March, otherwise know as that date in history when a powerful force (Julius Caesar) was stopped in his tracks; or the excitement associated with March Madness and the Sweet 16. Well, earlier this month, the men and women of our Police Department found their own elusive prize by tracking down and arresting 16 suspects all affiliated with the notorious international Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) criminal street gang, thereby taking down a deadly powerful force in our community. This was a very good day for Santa Maria.

Since early 2015, the City has seen a spike in homicides as never before. Our Police Department knew that something was different with these crimes. They had an inkling that a new criminal element was afoot and responsible for these shootings, but because of the sensitivity of this case, they were not at liberty to express their theory. Consequently, the absence of any public statement conjecturing a new criminal element or motive led a number of people to criticize the Police Department, the City, and the City Council. And during those times of public doubt and speculation, our unwavering response was that "we had full faith and confidence that the Police Department is doing everything within their ability to solve these cases." And we did, and they proved their mettle.

In the early morning on Thursday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> our Police Department assembled the largest multi-agency law enforcement operation in not only the City's history, but

probably in the bi-county area. What is being referred to as "Operation Matador" consisted of over 150 law enforcement personnel from both Federal and local law enforcement agencies that simultaneously served search warrants on 11 separate locations. Those that assisted our department in this operation included representatives from the FBI, ATF, ICE, the Santa Barbara District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's deputies from both Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties, and officers from the cities of Oxnard and Lompoc. Eleven separate SWAT teams assisted in this effort and it resulted in the arrest of 16 individuals and the detention of an additional 40 individuals.

Later that afternoon, Mayor Patino made a statement at the press conference regarding her debriefing from Police Chief Ralph Martin, and the tour of the station with all the suspects being detained. The Mayor stated, "what I witnessed, the magnitude of this case and what our Police Department has been able to do in collaboration with other local and Federal law enforcement agencies – was truly remarkable."

Over the last year, the City has come under some criticism regarding the cost of our new police station. That the station was too large and too spacious, that there was no need for a sally port, etc. Well, truth be told, without this station and without its sally port, the logistics of this operation would have been overwhelming. Based on the magnitude of this operation, this new facility was a blessing.

So, on behalf of the City Council, your fellow City employees, and the residents and businesses of the City, I would like to personally thank those men and women in our Police Department that had a hand in Operation Matador– we all had faith and confidence that you would resolve this issue and you did, and we thank you for taking back our City. We are all very proud of you and your efforts.

*Rick*