

News & Notes



Derek Poultney joined VHC in 2010.

Ventura Hillside Conservancy names Executive Director

The Ventura Hillside Conservancy (VHC) has named Derek Poultney as its new executive director. Poultney, who has served as VHC's conservation manager for the past six years, has a Master of Science in Environmental Studies from CSU-Fullerton and brings more than a decade of land trust experience to the 12 year-old nonprofit conservancy organization.

"The Board of Trustees is pleased that Derek has taken on the mantle of Executive Director," said David Comden, VHC board president. "He has worked tirelessly for the organization and has the knowledge, vision and skills necessary to take VHC to the next level."

Poultney joined VHC in 2010, after working for five years as the project manager and conservation director at the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy (OVLC) and spending five prior years performing environmental consulting and field biology work. Poultney lives with his wife and two young children in Ojai.

"I am excited to build on VHC's recent momentum and preserve and improve more wildlife habitat and outdoor recreational opportunities," said Derek Poultney.

Warming shelter opens in Oxnard

With the opening of Ventura County Winter Warming Shelter in Oxnard, Community Action of Ventura County (CAVC) will be extending the hours of the daily transition center to provide additional access to services during day time hours, when the shelter is closed. The new hours began Thursday, Dec. 3 and the center will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Oxnard is expecting to see a rise in homeless individuals, as many will come from around the county seeking warm night time shelter during this forecasted harsh winter. CAVC is hoping that during the day their case managers and center staff may be able to provide access to services that may lead individuals out of homelessness.

"Services in our transition center range from basic needs, such as showers, bathrooms, and basic hygiene, to being an entry point back in to society by helping the homeless secure identification, social security documents, and basic healthcare," said Ron Irwin, Director of Community Services. "During these extended hours we are also looking to work with our community partners to offer, expanded services."

Irwin said CAVC is grateful for the community and business support CAVC has been receiving as we work together to address the issue of chronic homelessness.

Peter Brown, Community Services Manager City of Ventura stated "Now we need to put our collective heads together to work toward some sort of shuttling system/service to get folks from CAVC to the shelter on "K" Street each weekday evening after the 4:30pm closure of CAVC. This service is not budgeted as part of either the newly extended CAVC day service, or the winter warming shelter (so please don't suggest our friends at Gold Coast Transportation). We need vans and volunteer drivers! Faith-based organizations?"

"Questions about the CAVC extended hours can be referred to Ron. Inquiries/ideas about shuttling can be referred to me at pbrown@cityofventura.net."

Ventura City Council appoints mayor

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Councilmember Erik Nasarenko as mayor and Neal Andrews as deputy mayor. Both will serve a two-year term in their appointed roles.

Nasarenko was first elected to the Ventura City Council in 2013. He recently completed two years as the City's deputy mayor and will serve as mayor for two years. In addition to his City Council responsibilities, Nasarenko serves as a deputy district attorney for Ventura County where he prosecutes child molestation and rape cases. Prior to becoming a prosecutor, he worked in public education for more than a decade, serving as chief deputy to the Los Angeles school board president and as a communications director to the L.A. and Pasadena schools districts. Nasarenko and his wife have two children, and are actively involved in local service organizations.

As a member of the Council, Nasarenko serves on the Finance, Audit and Budget Committee.

"I am excited about the future of Ventura," said Nasarenko. "As residents, business owners, parents and property owners, we share common goals for our community," he continued. "I am looking forward to working together to make sure our city is safe, clean and attractive, and that we are maintaining our unique quality of life and our economic and cultural infrastructure for the next generation."

Rotary Clubs collect coats

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Rotary Clubs of Ventura (Downtown), and Ventura South, collect the donated coats and jackets, deliver them to Four Seasons Cleaners for cleaning and then distribute them to service organizations and schools in the community. Some of the beneficiary organizations include Boys & Girls Club of Oxnard and Ventura, Project Understanding, The Rescue Mission, The Salvation Army, local churches, the county Sheriff's Departments and Casa Pacifica.

Last year over 5,000 coats and jackets were given to children and adults in the greater Ventura community. Last year over 70 needy elementary school students were able to select coats for themselves. The students' entire families will feel the warmth of the Rotary Club's project. This year the club will again distribute coats and jackets to children from local schools.

For questions, donations or more information, please contact Kristin Taylor at 643-3800. Coats, jackets and heavy sweat-shirts are welcome donations. Information and collection sites can be found on www.venturarotary.org.

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