



SEP. – OCT. 2026

Orange County Cemetery District

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Board Approves \$1 Million Huitt-Zollars Engineering Agreement For Gypsum Canyon Memorial Park

Over the course of the next 12-16 months, there will be a lot of activity for the Gypsum Canyon Memorial Park and the Southern California State Veterans Cemetery Development Project.

At the August Board Meeting, the Board approved a \$1,086,690 professional services agreement for Huitt-Zollars to perform land surveying and civil engineering for the rough grading, backbone infrastructure improvements (roads, bridges, water, electrical, storm drain, sewer, etc.) and the Phase 1 development of the Gypsum Canyon Memorial Park, based on the Phase 1 Mass Grading Study.

Huitt-Zollars will be preparing multiple documents for review by the District development team. We are expecting to submit plans to the City of Anaheim with the goal of having approved plans for the bidding process sometime in the summer of 2027.

Along with the Huitt-Zollars agreement, the Board also approved an on-call agreement with RJM Design Group who has been the project principal since we began surveying and studying the site in 2019. The District is also working on approving agreements with GMU Engineers & Geologists and LSA Associates (Environmental) who are also integral parts of the development team.

One of the first activities on the site will be the capping and removal of a non-active gas line that runs in an easement which enters the lower part of the parcel and exits through the upper parcel. The easement for the non-active gas line will be relocated outside of the development area so that its owner can still maintain the easement in perpetuity. It is highly unlikely that this easement will ever get used for anything in the future. RJM and the District are coordinating the capping and removal of the gas line which should take place in October and November.

In the weeks ahead, a contractor working for the Anaheim Public Utility (APU) will begin construction activities to extend the existing electrical infrastructure underground to the entry of the property line. This work will take place on E. Santa Ana Canyon Road beginning about 1½ miles from the entry of the cemetery development. It is anticipated that the work will be completed in the Spring of 2027.

APU has sent out project notifications to the homeowners and businesses in the areas as well as installed construction notification boards near project area to notify travelers of potential traffic delays.

The District is also coordinating the construction of a groundwater well that will provide non-treated groundwater for the irrigation of the entry area and first

phase of the landscape in the public cemetery. More details to follow, however the installation of the well will coincide with the completion of the electrical system to the site.

In October, the APU will also be approving a contract for the design/build of the water infrastructure that will connect 1½ miles down E. Santa Ana Canyon Road to the development site entry which will serve water for the facilities, landscape and fire protection. The development team is working with the County, State, City of Anaheim and Anaheim Public Utility to ensure that this water line can serve a “heli-hydrant – heli-tank” that will allow Orange County Fire Authority Firehawks, along with other fire agencies, to draw water to help fight fires in the area in a more prompt and efficient manner.

It was also recently announced that Assemblymember Sharon Quirk-Silva successfully secured an additional \$9 million from the State for the direct purposes of supporting the cost of the utility infrastructure, bridge and road access to the site!

The District is hopeful that Gypsum Canyon Memorial Park’s first phase will be operational sometime in 2028. As work progresses, updates will be available in future newsletters.

Celebrate Dia de los Muertos! Anaheim Cemetery, Nov. 2nd from 5-7 pm



Mark your calendars for Monday, November 2nd from 5 pm to 7 pm, when Anaheim Cemetery will once again be hosting a live Dia de los Muertos celebration!

Rev. Cao from St. Anthony Mary Claret Catholic Church will be leading off the program with a short blessing. Then the talented dancers and musicians from Ballet Folklorico Donaji and R.H.Y.T.H.M.O. Mariachi Academy will take turns sharing the stage and entertaining the audience with a variety of traditional dances and mariachi performances.

While supplies last, District staff will be providing free small bouquets of marigolds and guests can stop by a

refreshment table providing free coffee, hot chocolate and pan de Muertos.

Children will enjoy spending time at the crafts tent where we will have an assortment of Day of the Dead arts and crafts projects available. We will also have free face painting available throughout the evening.

OFRENDAS WELCOME!

An important tradition of Dia de los Muertos for many families is the creation of a gravesite Ofrenda that honors their loved one. In order to allow for this tradition, the District will relax its flower regulations to allow for multiple items to be placed in the Ofrenda. Ofrendas may be placed starting on Thursday, October 22nd and must be removed by Tuesday, Nov. 17th.

To allow for mowing and proper maintenance of the grounds, these personal altars must not overflow onto neighboring gravesites. They should not extend more than 1 foot below the marker. Decorations should not exceed 21" in height. We appreciate your cooperation.



DIA DE LOS MUERTOS "TO GO"

**Santa Ana Cemetery &
El Toro Memorial Park**

Monday, Nov. 2nd

Starting at 1 pm

until supplies run out.

If you can't attend Anaheim Cemetery's event on Monday night, Santa Ana Cemetery and El Toro Memorial Park will be holding Dia de los Muertos "To Go" that afternoon.

Starting at 1 pm, while supplies last, you can pick up a free small bouquet of marigolds, craft kits for the kids, and individual bags of pan de Muertos. Please be advised, parking in the cemeteries is challenging on Dia de los Muertos, so plan to arrive early if possible.

Join Us at El Toro Memorial Park to Honor Our Veterans on Wednesday, November 11th at 11:00 a.m.

Plans are underway for El Toro Memorial Park's 37th Annual Veterans Day Observance.

Don't miss this opportunity to show our Veterans your gratitude and appreciation for the sacrifices they make every day to protect our freedoms.

A Mistress of Ceremonies from the NSDAR Mission Viejo Chapter will lead the program which includes: a combined color guard, patriotic musical performances, the playing of "Amazing Grace" on the bagpipes and "Taps" performed by a bugler. There will be a keynote address and councilmembers from local area

cities will participate in a wreath laying ceremony. Members of the VFW Post 6024 Rifle Team will perform an Honor Guard Firing Salute to conclude the program.

Our Veterans Day observance could not take place without the support of many volunteers. Thank you all!!

District Staff Transition to New PlotBox Cemetery Software on Sept. 24th

The potential opening of Gypsum Canyon Memorial Park in 2028, may seem far away, but the District is already taking steps now to ensure that staff will be fully prepared to meet the needs of families when the new public cemetery is operational.

One step the District is taking, is to transition to a new cloud-based cemetery management software system called PlotBox. An international industry leader in deathcare management, PlotBox will bring improved deceased records management with an easily searchable data base with advanced filters to help staff and families find what they need quickly and easily.

The real-time scheduling module will allow staff to abandon physical calendars and book and manage both burial times and arrangement appointments more accurately and efficiently.

Dubbed the "Google Maps for cemeteries" PlotBox's innovative mapping and verification process connects our physical locations directly to the District's business systems for accurate inventory management.

Through PlotBox's Everafter website portal, families will be able to search on line for a loved one's gravesite location and get accurate "walk to site" directions.

As with any software transition, it will take time for staff to learn all the nuances of the new work processes. There will also be a period of testing and correcting any errors or omissions in the data migration from the current system to PlotBox.

As we make these adjustments, please be patient with staff. For the first few weeks it may take us a little longer to complete arrangements or answer questions over the phone. We appreciate your understanding.

We will have more information in the November/December newsletter about the PlotBox Everafter portal and how to use it to find loved ones.

El Toro Memorial Park's Garden of Innocence Service on August 8th Provided an Eternal Home for Six Little Ones

Garden of Innocence services were held for six children whom the Garden of Innocence has named: Evelyn, Madelyn, Brianna, Hannah, Hope, and Norman.

The Garden of Innocence is a non-profit organization that provides respectful burials for abandoned or unidentified deceased children.

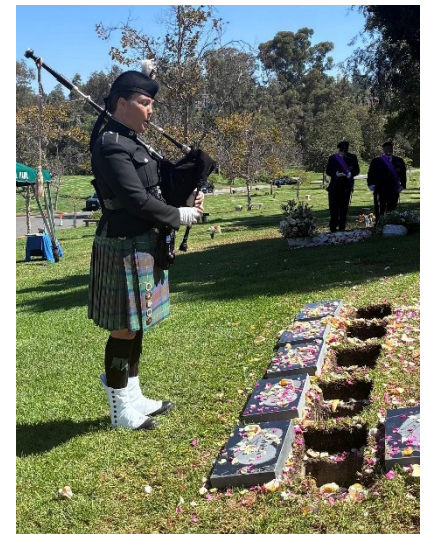
The service includes a processional by the Knights of Columbus and the Orange County Sheriff's Department. Urns of the children are passed from

person to person in a chain of love. There are poetic readings for each child, special music, and a white dove release.

Garden of Innocence could not exist without the support of volunteers and donors. It is these organizations, volunteers and donors who make these services possible.

If you would like to learn more about the Garden of Innocence for Orange County, please visit their website at:

www.gardenofinnocence.org/goi-orange



Bagpiper Tress Maksimuk plays "Amazing Grace"

Extended Visitation at El Toro Memorial Park Ends November 1st



Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour on Saturday, October 31st. Also, please remember, the end of Daylight Saving Time, also means the end of extended visitation hours at El Toro Memorial Park. Starting on Sunday, November 1st, El Toro's gates will close

at 5 p.m. Please be sure to plan your visits accordingly so that you are exiting the park before 5:00 p.m.

This will allow security staff to lock the gates in a timely and efficient manner. We appreciate your cooperation!

ORANGE COUNTY CEMETERY DISTRICT September/October Board Meetings

The Board of Trustees for the Orange County Cemetery District typically holds regular meetings the first Tuesday of every month at 10:00 a.m. at the District Office located at 25751 Trabuco Road, Lake Forest, CA 92630. Members of the public are welcome to attend and may also join Board Meetings remotely. Instructions to join remotely are posted on the agendas.

Agendas are available at least 72 hours prior to each meeting and are also posted on our District website at: www.occemeterydistrict.com. In September and October, meetings will be held as follows:

- **Tuesday, September 1st at 10:00 a.m.***
- **Tuesday, October 6th at 10:00 a.m.**

If you have any questions or need additional information please contact the District Secretary, Mary Funk at (949) 951-9102 ext. 110.

CEMETERY VISITATION HOURS

**Anaheim Cemetery and
Santa Ana Cemetery**
are open for visitation, seven days a week,
from 8 am to 5 pm.

El Toro Memorial Park
is open for visitation, seven days a week,
From 8 am to 7 pm.

Beginning on Sunday, November 1st,
El Toro Memorial Park will be open for visitation
from 8 am to 5 pm.

Cemetery Offices are open M-F, 8 am to 5 pm.

**All offices are closed on the
weekends and on holidays.**

The Orange County Cemetery District provides affordable interment services for County residents and taxpayers. We strive to maintain the beauty and dignity of the grounds while preserving their historical and cultural value for the benefit of all.

The Trustees and staff of the Orange County Cemetery District are committed to the following values:

Integrity ■ Respect ■ Responsiveness
Empathy ■ Transparency

Flower Removal and Holiday Schedule

Every Wednesday, groundskeepers remove and discard flowers and decorations throughout all three cemeteries. Families are encouraged to remove their flowers and/or decorations on Tuesday night. You can then place the flowers back on the space on Thursday morning. Please remember that the District policy only allows for three items to be placed on gravesites. This includes the use of in-ground flower vases. If gravesites exceed the number of allowed items, staff may remove and discard the excess items at any time. Items should not exceed 21" in height. Items should be placed within 12" of the bottom of the marker. Please do not leave items of great monetary or sentimental value on gravesites as the District cannot prevent theft.

Throughout the year, various holidays are recognized with extended periods between full park clean-ups. During these times, we ask that you place fresh water in the vase every four to five days to eliminate mosquito breeding sources, which can cause serious health issues. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.



Decorations for Patriot Day may be placed on Thursday, September 3rd and must be removed by Tuesday, September 22nd. Decorations for Halloween and Dia de los Muertos and Veterans Day may be placed on Thursday, October 22nd and must be removed by Tuesday, November 17th.

During this time, light clean-ups will still occur each Wednesday and only flowers that are obviously wilted will be removed. **During full park clean-ups everything on gravesites is discarded. Please be sure to remove items you do not want discarded before the cemetery closes on Tuesdays.**

The 2026 Cemetery Grounds Wednesday Clean-up Calendar is available on our website at www.occemeterydistrict.com. Click on the tab for Flowers, Markers and Rules for more information.

