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## 2024 GSA

### Employees of the Year

Congratulations to the 2024 Employees of the Year: **Seen Robinson**, Graphics Tech IV, Business Support Services, **Brittany Stephens**, Business Strategy Analyst, Administration, and **Julie Miller**, Assistant Procurement Officer, Procurement.

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# Great Service Always!

GENERAL SERVICES AGENCY NEWSLETTER



## FROM THE DIRECTOR

APRIL 2025



With only four months into 2025, GSA is about to go through some big changes.

After much reflection and discernment over the past several months, I have made the difficult decision to retire. My last day with GSA will be August 1, 2025. Serving as GSA Director over the past nine years has been one of the most rewarding and enjoyable experiences of my career. I am truly honored to have had the opportunity to lead such an incredible agency and to work alongside so many talented and dedicated professionals. One of the toughest parts of this decision is knowing that I will not be working every day with the outstanding GSA team — a group that takes immense pride in supporting County operations and serving our community with excellence.

As you may know, Chief Deputy Director Craig Clutts will be leaving us to focus on his growing private venture at the end of May. Craig has made a significant impact during his time with us. While we are sad to see him go, we are excited for his new chapter and wish him well. A new Chief Deputy Director, Thomas Hunt, has been selected and will start with GSA the beginning of May.

Apart from leadership changes, I also want to take a moment to celebrate some of the recent accomplishments across GSA. We recognized employees through the STAR Award. And that is not all! Parks made some amazing strides in beautification projects in our parks. Over in F&M, Special Services is quite busy preparing for the environmentally friendly annual Earth Day & E-Waste events. Fleet completed the full roll-out of the new Motor Pool reservation system, Launch Mobility, and it has been a huge success! In February, GSA announced the 2024 Employees of the Year. Seen Robinson, Graphics Tech IV, Business Support Services, Brittany Stephens, Business Strategy Analyst, Administration and Julie Miller, Assistant Procurement Officer, Procurement. Their nominating team members and coworkers had plenty to say about the great work they do every day.



Please take a moment to look through these pages and see the dedication, creativity, and excellence that make GSA so special. Though I'll be moving on, I know the future is bright and filled with more successes ahead. There will be more communications to follow in the coming months regarding leadership transitions and the road ahead for GSA. Thank you all for being a part of this incredible journey.

Until next time,

*David J. Sasek*  
David J. Sasek

### **In the category of Line/Field staff, the nominees were:**

- ◆ Matthew Arve, Courier III, Business Support Services
- ◆ Brent Clements, Certified Maintenance Engineer, Maintenance
- ◆ Saul de la Rosa, Maintenance Engineer, Maintenance
- ◆ Victor Flandes, Auto Mechanic I, Fleet
- ◆ Devin Osalde, Heavy Equipment Mechanic I, Fleet
- ◆ Seen Robinson, Graphics Tech IV, Business Support Services
- ◆ Nelson Salonga, Electrician, Maintenance
- ◆ Timothy Wiggins, Custodian II, Housekeeping

### **In the category of Administration, the nominees were:**

- ◆ Tim Baker, Office Systems Coordinator III, GSA IT
- ◆ Peter Berry, Purchasing Technician, Procurement

- ◆ Lieba Butler, Program Administrator, Assistant, Administration
- ◆ Magdalena Cervantes, Account Assistant II, Fiscal
- ◆ Emilia Contreras, Account Assistant II, Fiscal
- ◆ Tonya Gagnon, Communications Operator III, Maintenance
- ◆ Brittany Stephens, Business Strategy Analyst, Administration
- ◆ Ryan Stover, Principal Buyer, Procurement

### **In the category of Supervision/Management, the nominees were:**

- ◆ Scott Broggie, Facilities Operations Specialist II, Maintenance
- ◆ Lucy Fernandez, Human Resources, Fire
- ◆ Julie Miller, Assistant Procurement Officer, Procurement
- ◆ Chinna Nahabedian, Talent Acquisition Analyst, Human Resources
- ◆ Edgar Villasenor, Supervisor, Housekeeping



### **Seen Robinson, 2024 Employee of the Year, Line/Field Staff:**

Seen Robinson has been instrumental in furthering the GSA mission and vision for the entire agency and County in 2024. Seen's expertise in design, multi-media, video and customer service is unparalleled. Our customers rely on him to guide their projects to innovative and cost-effective outcomes. Seen has expanded the Creative Services' capabilities by using his video production skills to help several agencies with promotional videos. In April 2024, Seen started working with Gabriela Cazares from the CEO Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion department to produce a series of Training and Learning videos. Through November 2024, Seen has produced 13 videos for their department. He uses AI software to up-res low quality video clips into hi-res video so everything looks its best. Seen has also been instrumental in working with our vendor, Swagforce, who hosts online stores for promotional items. Providing this online store will save the Creative Services personnel approximately 1-3 work hours per order. With VC Shop, our customers search for the items they want, see an actual cost and place the order. This is real time savings for the Creative Services staff.

### **Brittany Stephens, 2024 Employee of the Year, Administration:**

Brittany was nominated for her contributions to the Agency that have been wide, deep and far-reaching. Among her most noteworthy accomplishments are her coordination of the complete update and revision of the Agency Strategic Plan, management of the Agency's Lean Six Sigma (LSS) program and Service Excellence programs, leadership in executing and analyzing the Agency's Employee and Customer Surveys, leadership in coordinating the Agency's Management Council and leadership in developing and completing the Agency's Annual Report. She also serves as the Agency's PIO POC, coordinating press releases, social media posting and many of our Agency's powerpoint presentations ensuring that our strategic messaging has the widest penetration with all target audiences.



### **Julie Miller 2024 Employee of the Year, Supervision/Management:**

Julie was nominated for being a constant and backbone to her department. Last fiscal year, procurement processed 30,121 transactions. Even with the title of Assistant Procurement Officer, she is an operational manager too. She is still the listed buyer for 10 agencies in the County including complicated, high volume unique customers like Fire and the VCMC hospitals. The VC Fire Department acknowledged her remarkably adept skills and "outstanding dedication and integrity in the purchase of our new fire apparatus," noting her "ongoing guidance and insights remain invaluable." Julie played a crucial role in implementing baseline procurement which saved the County conservatively \$50k annually in primarily soft savings. More so, it improved relationships with County agency customers and vendors which truly benefits the community at large because sister agencies can deliver their missions more efficiently. Seen by the CEO's Service Excellence council, those efforts earned the Procurement team the 2023 SEAWARD. Through tumultuous times, Julie keeps stepping up to meet the moment and lead the procurement team with grace and poise. She kept the ship and team sailing forward.



# One GSA One Team



## GSA Strategic Planning Process

### THE COUNTDOWN BEGINS... STRATEGIC PLAN LAUNCH COMING SOON!

After 55 meetings, countless ideas, and incredible collaboration across all our departments, we're almost there! Our staff heard the outline and from each of the deputy directors who are championing one of the 6 strategic agencywide action items during the All-Hands meeting in February. Some of us have already joined teams and continue the efforts.

Now, it's nearly time to unveil the results.

In just a few weeks, we'll officially launch our new **2025-2030 GSA Strategic Plan**.

Centered around three key focus areas:

**One GSA, One Team | Customer Engagement | Sustainability of Resources and Assets**

This is more than a plan—it's our shared direction for the future. Get ready to see how our work contributes to something bigger, and how together, we're shaping what's next.

Stay tuned. The best is yet to come!



# MOVIN' & SHAKIN' – WHO'S COMING, WHO'S GOING IN GSA



## NEW HIRES

### Administration:

- \* Austin Koff, Inventory Management Assistant III
- \* Elizabeth Fajardo, Staff/Services Manager I
- \* Jonathan Hensley, Graphics Technician II
- \* Michael Wingate, Graphics Technician II
- \* Vanessa Trejo, Management Assistant II

### Facilities & Materials:

- \* Brandon Rodriguez, Custodian
- \* Gerald Urias, Facility Operation Specialist II
- \* Jeremy Kennedy, Maintenance Engineer
- \* Lauri Stevenson, Technical Specialist IV-PH

### Fleet:

- \* Austin Martinez, Heavy Equipment Service Worker
- \* Francisco Castillo, Automotive Systems Tech II

### Parks:

- \* Giovanni Sabido Aguilar, Maintenance Worker I
- \* Lee Russell-Hurd, Maintenance Worker III

### Procurement:

- \* Jose Becerra, Buyer
- \* Robert Willis, Buyer

## PROMOTIONS

### Administration:

- \* Beeta Lopez, Staff/Services Manager III
- \* Jim Fitzgerald, Office Systems Coordinator IV
- \* Kyle Zufalo, Graphics Technician III
- \* Peter Berry, Buyer

### Facilities & Materials:

- \* Joseph Rodriguez, Certified Bldg. Maint. Eng.
- \* Timothy Wiggins, Senior Custodian

### Parks:

- \* Adrian Bonilla, Park Services Ranger II

### Procurement:

- \* Irshad Ali, Senior Buyer
- \* Ryan Stover, Principal Buyer

## RESIGNATIONS / SEPARATIONS / TRANSFERS

### Facilities & Materials:

- \* Noemi Rodriguez Calderon, Communications Operator III
- \* Gregory Brian Napier, Clerical Trainee
- \* Kenyon Lamon Tobin Jr., Maintenance Plumber

### Fleet:

- \* Ramiro Cortez Roman, Garage Attendant
- \* Francisco Sanchez, Garage Attendant

### Procurement:

- \* Priscilla Anissa Cerda, Student Worker III
- \* Samantha Crostic, Principal Buyer

## RETIREMENTS

### Facilities and Materials:

- \* Jesus Chavez, Facilities Maintenance
- \* Sabino Benitez, Grounds

### *Congratulations Saul De La Rosa*

Saul De La Rosa's commitment to professional growth and community involvement further sets him apart. He recently earned his Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA) certification, demonstrating his commitment to continuous learning and professional development. Outside of his work at the JJC, Saul actively volunteers as an election worker, dedicating his time to supporting local elections and contributing to his community. His involvement in these activities showcases his dedication to making a positive impact both within and outside of the workplace.





## GSA Is Getting Ready to Say Farewell and Welcome a New Chief Deputy Director of Facilities & Materials



In 2022, Craig Clutts joined GSA as the Chief Deputy Director of Facilities and Materials. During his time with us, Craig has been instrumental in shaping GSA's new strategic plan and in launching the Leadership Academy for Facilities and Materials. His impact has been significant, and we are grateful for his dedication and leadership.

As Craig prepares for his next venture, we want to take this opportunity to truly thank him for his contributions and wish him all the best in his future endeavors. Craig's last day with GSA will be May 23rd.

We are pleased to announce that after a nationwide search, Thomas Hunt has been selected as the new Chief Deputy Director of Facilities and Materials. Thomas brings a wealth of experience and expertise to this role, and we are excited to welcome him to the team. He is scheduled to begin with GSA at the beginning of May.

**Please join us in celebrating Craig's accomplishments and in giving Thomas a warm welcome to GSA!**

Thomas is a highly experienced professional with over two decades of direct experience overseeing organizations responsible for maintenance, landscaping, custodial, projects, and energy/utilities services in both the public and private sector. Thomas was born and raised in northern California. He joined the U.S. Army out of high school and served four years as a soldier. After his service, he pursued a bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering from the University of Texas. Tom comes to us with vast experience as the principal facilities administrator on Higher Education Campuses and DoD installations. Most recently, he served as the Assistant Vice President (AVP) for Facilities Services at CSUCI and AVP for Facilities Management at Azusa Pacific University and at USMC Logistics Base Barstow for a combined time of over 15 years.

He also served in the U.S. Navy as a Civil Engineer Corps Officer at various locations in facilities management roles for 16 years. His first assignment in the Navy was at Naval Base Ventura County. One of his many other assignments was earning a master's degree in civil engineering from the University of Florida. He is registered Professional Engineer, Certified Energy Manager and Certified Educational Facilities Professional.



He and his wife have been blessed with five children. Thomas is excited to become our new GSA Facilities and Materials Chief Deputy Director and is looking forward to meeting everyone.

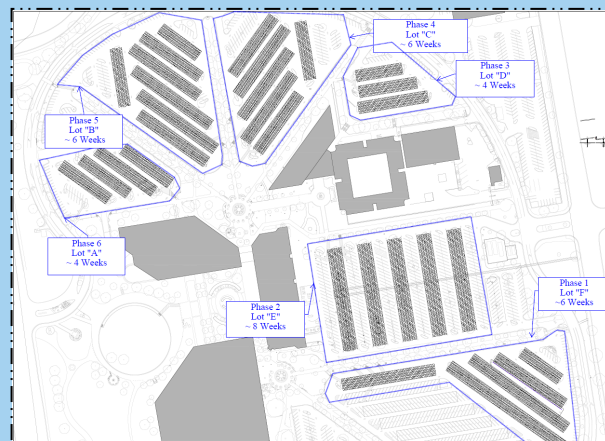
***Join us in welcoming Mr. Thomas Hunt!***

## POWERING UP FOR THE FUTURE AT GOVERNMENT CENTER

Get ready to see the County Government Center shine a little brighter!

Kicked off on March 10th, GSA is excited to launch the Government Center Parking Lot Solar Energy Installation Project. Helix Electric and Forefront Power mobilized this electrifying initiative to transform Parking Lots “A” through “F” into a renewable energy hub, boosting the County’s solar capacity by an impressive 5.8 megawatts (MW) and saving taxpayers over \$10.7 million in energy costs over the next 20 years.

“This project is a game-changer and a proud moment for our team,” said David Sasek, Director of the General Services Agency (GSA). “It’s a shining example of how we’re delivering on our Strategic Priorities of Reliable Infrastructure and Sustainability—while keeping Ventura County a great place to live, work, and thrive.”



Starting with Lot “F” and moving counterclockwise, the project will roll out in six phases through Summer 2026, with each phase lasting 4-8 weeks. The GSA’s Facilities & Materials team carefully planned to minimize disruption, ensuring parking remains accessible for employees and visitors alike. Lot “F” kicked off the effort, with completion expected by early May, and ADA and carpool accommodations will be kept front and center. At the end of this project, parking lots “A” through “E” will have solar panels looking a lot like the existing solar array in parking lot F.

Additionally, a newly installed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) at the east end of parking lot “E” will be capable of providing 1.9 megawatts of energy for up to 2 hours, even further reducing the cost of electricity being provided. Beyond the numbers – 5.8MW of new solar power – this project is about the people and the planet. It’s a major step toward slashing greenhouse gas emissions and building a greener future, all powered by the dedication of Ventura County’s GSA team. “This is One GSA, One Team in action,” Craig Clutts, Chief Deputy Director of GSA added. “We’re rallying together to make this a win for everyone.”

County employees and the public can look forward to regular updates as the project progresses, with the GSA team on hand at 805-654-3881 to answer questions. We are cheering on this sustainable milestone, and while we may park in a different lot for a few months, this is a chance to celebrate Ventura County’s bold step into a brighter, cleaner tomorrow.

## EARTH DAY AND E-WASTE COLLECTION

### EARTH DAY 2025

*Sustainability at Heart*



GSA Facilities Services will host its annual Electronic Waste collection on Monday, April 21st from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Bring your old computer, TV, lamps, etc. to the Service Building parking lot and we will take it from there. (We cannot accept Batteries, Large Appliances or Light Bulbs). Public Works will be offering free mulch, 2 bags per guest.

GSA Facilities will be offering sustainability tours of our Government Center campus on Tuesday, April 22nd. Explore sustainability efforts such as solar power, irrigation management, tree canopies, climate friendly gardens pollinator gardens, and pervious concrete. For questions, please contact Breanna Bertrand at 654.3730.





## Environmental Health Mosquito Fishpond at Service Building



Our Grounds and Surplus teams supported Eli Hernandez, Technician for the Vector Control Program to upgrade their pond system in order to breed and store mosquito fish in a more effective manner.

**Mosquito fish** are provided at no charge to the public, to stock ornamental ponds, pools, and other similar areas where mosquitoes might be breeding. Environmental Health, a division of the Resource Management Agency, previously stored a repurposed jacuzzi in a shed behind the GSA Service Building to keep mosquito fish for distribution to the public.

"I want to thank you again for your approval for us to install an outdoor stock tank for our mosquito fish." Eli wrote after the pond was complete. "Working with Lorenzo Villa and his crew was a great experience! They did an excellent job installing the pond at the described location and proper depth.

Lorenzo helped me pick the location and recommended the pond be buried to help provide some insulation for the fish and keep them warm during the winter. Not long after that discussion, we purchased the new stock tank, and soon after, Lorenzo's crew was quick to install it in the ground. We filled the stock tank with water, added mosquito fish, and set up a filtration system. We installed a

BOG Filter to further help with the filtration. Lastly, today we transferred all the mosquito fish from our old jacuzzi to the new stock tank! Later, Ruben Silva, with his trusty forklift, moved the old jacuzzi to the dumpster to properly dispose.

With the removal of the old jacuzzi from our storage shed, we now have more room for our tools, equipment, and boat. Additionally, now that the mosquito fish are outdoors in more direct sunlight, we anticipate maintaining a better supply of mosquito fish year-round to provide to the public for backyard ponds or unmaintained pools and Jacuzzis. Thank you again! We greatly appreciate your assistance for us to continue to provide this service to the public."



*GSA Uniquely Supports our County Agencies and the Community Everyday*



# Staff Compliments

Diana Ly wanted to give a shout out to Senior **Custodian Jose Nunez, Custodian Timothy Wiggins, and Custodial Supervisor Cinthya Santos** for the great work they did on the flooring of the break room in the Service Building. The flooring underneath the old vending machines had years of dirt built up underneath, the custodial staff went above and beyond to get the floors cleaned and waxed with short notice before the installation of the new vending machines. The floors look great! Great partnership and thank you for providing Great Service Always and demonstrating outstanding Customer Engagement!

Colter Chisum and Jeri Cooper would like to thank **Peter Acero, Vanessa Varela, Jared Rohlfing, Elmer Mayor-ga, JonCarlo Guzman, and Mason King**. Your extra work and dedication during the holidays ensured that our county parks were open, safe, and clean for everyone to enjoy. Your efforts in maintaining a welcoming environment allowed people to celebrate the holidays with peace of mind. Going the extra mile this holiday season to cover scheduling gaps is a great example of excellent team work and Customer Service."

Shirley Scott of the Probation Agency at the Juvenile Facility wrote in to thank **Joey Carmona**, "On behalf of our medical team, we thank you and your wonderful GSA team for the beautiful new sink and counters." Per Joey, "All the credit goes to **Vidal Fuentes** for the countertop installation, and **Paul Rodriguez & Mike Palacio** for the sink and plumbing installation." Great job, team, for the excellent Customer Service and high quality of your work!

For many years, Central Motor Pool users were allowed to swap out and park their personal vehicle in the Motor Pool reserved parking spot of the Motor Pool vehicle they were using. The only requirement was placing a copy of their reservation on the dash, visible to GSA Security. With the transition to the Launch Mobility phone app, Motor Pool users no longer get a printed email to place in their vehicles. This program was popular, so GSA Fleet Dispatch staff **Daniel Flores, Carol King, and Maggie Moore** came up with the idea of a hanging placard that can be hung on the rear-view mirror. With Fleet supervisor Aron Ruiz overseeing this project, Fleet Dispatch staff, led by Daniel Flores, designed a hanging placard that will replace the old, printed reservation. Now, Motor Pool customers can take the placard, which is stored in the Motor Pool vehicle, and hang it from the mirror in their personal vehicle when they swap places with their Motor Pool reserved vehicle. With this upgraded parking "permission" placard, Fleet is now rolling this program out to all Central and Remote Motor Pool vehicles for use by any Motor Pool customers. Thank you to Daniel, Carol, Maggie, and Aron for spearheading this improvement, which continues to provide Great Service Always to our customers and is an excellent example of Leadership and Innovation! Great job team!!!

Veronica Graybill, Sheriff's Senior Deputy wrote to Scott Broggie: "For the past few months, your team has been working tirelessly on the deep cleaning project in Housing Unit A, where we house some of the most challenging individuals. Your team's dedication and efficiency in staying on top of things and swiftly addressing potential housing issues have not gone unnoticed. I truly appreciate everyone's hard work and commitment to maintaining a clean and safe environment." Kudos to the Todd Road Jail team: **Darren Downey, Jeff Ellis, Wade Lyle, Matt MacLaren, Clint McGauley, Kevin Monroy, Phil Siping, Miguel Unzueta, and Jeremy Kennedy**. Great Customer Engagement and One Team focus!

A shout out to **Chinna Nahabedian** for her outstanding recruiting efforts. Our vacancy rate is now 6.9% one of the lowest rates I can recall and has been declining for months now! This is due to Chinna's diligent hard work and creativity in recruiting! Great work Chinna!!! This is a true testament to Chinna's commitment to One GSA, One Team and the long term Sustainability of our Agency! Thank you Chinna, your efforts are helping all departments in GSA Serve Great People who deliver great services!

Scott Rudolph at CompuWave requested that Fiscal provide him with Purchase Order numbers so he could place an order right away to avoid a 10% tariff increase slated for the upcoming week. **Chastity Gaynor, Andrew Smith, and Alex Zarate** expedited entering and approving the VCFMS documents. It took the team 6 hours to enter 4 quotes with multiple lines, resulting in a savings of \$1,770. This is a great example of One GSA-One Team and it ensured fiscal responsibility and assisted GSA IT with the mission to provide support for County operations.

## Staff Compliments Cont.

"At the PTDF several customers complained about a bad odor in their areas. Our maintenance team found some cracked cast iron drain vent pipe inside an air shaft that was contributing to the source of the odor. Our contractor, MTM was on-site doing plumbing work in other areas of the facility. We asked **Dwayne Conary** if he could have MTM perform the repair for us ASAP and he arranged for the repair to take place within a few days. A big thanks goes out to Dwayne, MTM and the Projects Group for the quick response!" Great demonstration of One GSA, One Team!

Dave Fishman, GSA Maintenance.

"Cross-coverage is essential in maintaining County Operations when our co-workers are out of office. Recently, the warehouse and surplus team stepped up during the personnel absences—**Ruben Silva, Ryan Pimentel, Joel Landin, Rigo Martinez, and Austin Koff**—demonstrated this with the professionalism, teamwork, and stewardship that Business Support Services is known for. Great job!" Still another example of One GSA, One Team!

Steve Nelles, Business Support Services Manager

From Rebecca Moak (GSA F&M) who worked with **Zulema Covarrubias** (Creative Services) on Solar Project signage here at the Government Center, noting Open Communication: "I just wanted to let you know that I've been hearing lots of positive buzz about the posters for the solar project! The Sustainability group was here yesterday and commented about how great they look. Thanks for bringing our vision to life and making it even better than I could have imagined." Great job Zulema!!!

Eli Hernandez, Environmental Health Technician for the Vector Control Program, worked with **Lorenzo Villa and the Grounds team (Carlos Nicasio, Antonio Barajas, Juan Rivera, Ruben Centeno)** to install a new outdoor mosquito fish pond behind the Service Building. This was a big upgrade from their previous method - a jacuzzi stored in a shed. The Environmental Health team is now better equipped to share these mosquito fish with the public, an important effort in limiting mosquito-borne diseases around the County. Eli wrote in to say, "Working with Lorenzo and his crew was a great experience, and they did an excellent job installing the pond at the described location and proper depth... Thank you again. We greatly appreciate your assistance for us to continue to provide this service to the public." Superior Customer Engagement to find an innovative solution for this essential service.

Francine Kursumis, with the Juvenile Services Bureau, at the County of Ventura Probation Agency, submitted a time-sensitive request to temporarily increase the daily limit on her County Procurement Card in order to purchase grant-funded lockers for youth at the Juvenile Facility. The vendor was offering the items at a deeply discounted price through March 31, 2025. Purchasing Technician **Geraldine Johnson**, received the request at 1:32 PM on Friday, March 28th, and processed the temporary increase by 1:45 PM, so Probation could order before the vendor closed for the weekend. Geraldine's swift action and coordination ensured that the department was able to take advantage of the limited-time savings. Her work directly supported the Juvenile Services Bureau by securing critical equipment for youth programming. Francine wrote in "I appreciate the fabulous customer service I always get from GSA!" A great example of Customer Engagement! Great job Geraldine!

**Eric George, Scott Broggie and Charlotte Cubitt-Serrano** provided excellent customer service to the Simi Valley Library for a Roof Rain leak concern. From the initial request at a location GSA does not service, Charlotte contacted Scott who agreed to send someone out to check out the concern, and Eric responded quickly. He was taking special care to check out, repair and test the roof for leaks. He took pictures and gave a detailed report of his findings and repairs. We then provide those details to the requestor to share with whomever would be handling the future call through the City Of Simi. Great example of providing Essential and Dedicated Service!

Danielle Montesanto with Camarillo PD/VC Sheriff's office called to give a shout out to **Aron Ruiz**. She said, "I called looking for Melissa and this was the last number I had for her. Aron answered and was very pleasant to speak with. He gave me the correct phone number". Thank you Aron for representing Fleet Customer Service to our customers. Another great example of Customer Engagement!



# WHAT'S NEW IN PARKS?

## Parks Beautification Projects

### **Soule Park Mural**

Our Parks Beautification series continues with the addition of another beautiful mural, featuring hiking trails, picnickers, children and dogs playing, and detailing

all the birds you could find within the park. A detailed key provides information on

each bird species to inform the novice birdwatcher. Lisa Kelly Murals successfully added another beautiful work of art to our community. Lisa Kelly also made repairs to the Rincon Parkway mural, after damage from a bonfire made too close to the wall, using her talents to brighten the Parks and keep the Parks artwork fresh for all to see.



## New Employee Spotlight

**Giovanni Sabido Aguilar** joined the Parks team on January 21, 2025, as a Maintenance Worker I and quickly made a positive impact on the team. His excitement for the position and his ability to learn the job has allowed Gio to jump right in!

During his time off, he loves to birdwatch, is an avid soccer player, enjoys hiking, biking and spending time outside with his daughter. We are excited to have Gio as part of our team. Welcome!





## Positive Examples of Team Flexibility

Over the last quarter, the Parks Ranger Team has shown immeasurable flexibility as issues have arisen from weather and contractor-related issues.

In January, the Park Ranger Team supported efforts to reschedule hundreds of camping reservations to accommodate a change in schedule by Caltrans for the permeable surface project on the Rincon. Rangers Vanessa Varela, Elmer Mayorga, Adrian Bonilla and JonCarlo Guzman, along with Chief Ranger Chad Bowie jumped in without hesitation to make sure that the guests were accommodated, and Caltrans was able to move forward with their project.

The Park Maintenance Team has also shown dedication and flexibility throughout their work this spring. With multiple rainy days, the team was able to address park related issues while still running their allocated work release crews. Donning rain gear, the team ventured out to Dennison, Oak Park and Kenny Grove Campgrounds to perform scheduled maintenance closures to ensure that the parks were ready for peak season. Efforts led by Maintenance Supervisor, Dave McCarthy and team members Peter Acero, Daine

Grace, James Jordahl, Jose Velasco, Orlando Martinez, Caleb Newcomb, Lee Russel-Hurd, Peter Bellasario, Andrew Hawk and Giovanni Aguilar helped to ensure that work progressed even when the weather was a factor.



Left to right: Orlando Martinez, Peter Bellisario, Andrew Hawk, Peter Acero, Diane Grace, Giovanni Aguilar, Lee Russell-Hurd

## Contact Us

If you have questions about park projects, please e-mail Jeri Cooper at [Jeri.Cooper@ventura.org](mailto:Jeri.Cooper@ventura.org). All other inquiries can be directed to the appropriate e-mail address or phone number listed below.

Park Reservations Line:

(805) 654-3951  
(to reserve group day-use areas and individual campsites)

Park Ranger Desk:  
(805) 672-2071

Park Maintenance Desk:

(805) 672-2073  
General Questions and

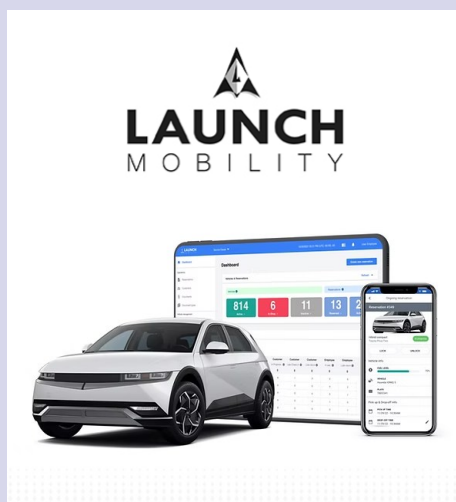
Comments:  
[county.parks@ventura.org](mailto:county.parks@ventura.org)

Visit us on the web at:

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general-services-](http://www.ventura.org/general-services-)



## Fleet Motor Pool's New Reservation System

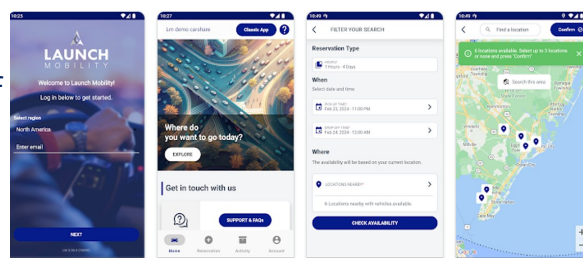


GSA Fleet successfully completed the full roll-out of the new Motor Pool reservation system, Launch Mobility.

Our Motorpool Customer Service and Operations personnel, headed up by Melissa Lorenzen, along with Daniel Flores, Carol King, and Maggie Moore led this effort. This project started as a pilot in December 2023 testing vehicles, the phone app, and customer access. Multiple meetings with hands-on testing of both the reservation app and the app tested on a variety of vehicles led to the selection of Launch Mobility as our new Motor Pool vendor. On the Operations side, the persistent and competent staff in Fleet's Upfit Shop outfitted the vehicles and created the ability for this successful roll-out. With the Upfit shop being as busy as they are, this team worked on their days off and on Saturdays to complete the project, in most cases, traveling to the vehicle location to work on site. Thank you to Kenny Schmidt, Gabriel Martinez, Warren Falk, Richard Medina, and Fermin Ontiveros.

A "Welcome to Launch Mobility" message for access to the new system and seamlessly continue their use of the Motor Pools was all customers had to click.

Our staff behind the scenes worked hard prior to the rollout, crafting the communications plan to all Motor Pool customers for the upcoming transition. Staff moved all customers' data into the new system and created FAQs. Motor Pool staff also transferred all reservations from the prior system into the new system in order to make the transition as smooth as possible for our customers.



We began this new program with our Remote Motor Pool (RMP) vehicles and customers in August 2024. We welcomed Aron Ruiz to the Fleet Customer Service team in September, and in November 2024, he shepherded the transition of our Central Motor Pool (CMP) customers into the system.

As of the end of November, all current Motor Pool customers are in the new system and all new customers were directed to the new Motor Pool reservation system with time to spare, as the old system "sunset" on December 31, 2024. Overall, and by all measures, this was a well-coordinated and smooth transition to this new system.

**Thanks to all the personnel at Fleet Services whose hard work made this a success!**



# Procurement

## WELCOME NEW BUYERS!

Please join us in welcoming 2 new members to our team — Robert and Jose — We're excited to have both of you on board! Welcome to the team!

### Robert Willis

Robert comes to us with an impressive background as a retired Air Force Technical Sergeant from Port Hueneme, where he trained new recruits in vehicle mechanics making him a perfect fit as a Buyer for GSA Fleet! He's married with three kids, enjoys hiking, gaming, and spending time with family. Big congratulations to Robert as well - he just became a new homeowner in Camarillo this past February!



### Jose Becerra

Jose brings valuable experience from his time as a federal purchasing agent at the Naval Construction Training Center in Port Hueneme, and as a supply technician supporting unmanned drone programs in Point Mugu. Outside of work, he's a foodie and a Harley Softail rider who enjoys hitting the road whenever he can.



We're excited to have both of you onboard — welcome to the team!

## GSA Uniquely Supports our County Agencies and the Community Everyday

### Part 2: Innovative approach to bird abatement with Hawk on Hand

**Hawk on Hand reflects VCMC's commitment to sustainability, patient care, and operational excellence.**

Ventura County Medical Center (VCMC) through a contract negotiated by GSA Procurement is working with *Hawk on Hand*, a specialized vendor using trained birds of prey for sustainable, humane bird abatement. The hospital faced ongoing issues with ravens nesting on its rooftop, leading to health concerns and operational challenges. Traditional methods with well-known abatement vendors proved ineffective. Other proposed solutions, like installing large rooftop nets, posed both aesthetic concerns and ethical issues, as trapped birds could be left without food or water for extended periods.

With *Hawk on Hand*, nature takes the lead. Raptors such as Harris's Hawks and Eurasian Eagle Owls deter ravens by establishing a natural predator presence, pushing them out of the area. Each visit the birds of prey are released at different locations around the hospital, ensuring the ravens never settle back in. This eco-friendly approach has significantly reduced the need for extra cleanings caused by bird droppings being tracked into the facility, improving overall sanitation and safety.

Special to the program is the occasional need for handlers to walk the birds through the hospital to access rooftop areas, which has become a highlight for patients, particularly in the pediatric unit, where handlers have graciously provided brief educational demonstrations.

#### "Marty McFly" : Harris's Hawk

- Only species of raptor that lives in a family group.
- Female birds of prey are larger than males.
- **Wingspan:** 3 feet
- **Weight:** 1.6 lbs



Samantha Crostic, GSA Principal Buyer with "Marty McFly"



#### "Dexter"

Eurasian Eagle Owl

- Second-largest owl species in the world
- Can rotate its head 270 degrees (¾ of the way around)
- **Wingspan:** 5 feet
- **Weight:** 3.5 lbs



# Celebrating GSA Staff



**SPECIAL THOUGHT AND ACTION RECEIVES RECOGNITION**

The intent of the award program is to encourage individual employees to develop suggestions that will save money, increase effectiveness, increase revenue, improve safety and generally improve County operations.

## **SURPRISE! and Congratulations!**

We are so excited to recognize three exceptional employees for their outstanding contributions to the repair of the Juvenile Justice Center's rolling steel fire door. **Scott Blair**, Certified Maintenance Engineer; **Joseph Saffa**, Maintenance Engineer; and **Joey Carmona**, Facility Operations Specialist, each played a pivotal role in devising and implementing a cost-effective solution that saved the County over \$12,000. Their ingenuity, expertise, and teamwork ensured compliance with fire codes while avoiding the need for a costly replacement, exemplifying the highest standards of public service.



On Tuesday, February 18th, 2025, each team member was presented with a STAR Award Certificate by Director Sasek in recognition of their dedication and problem-solving skills. Their collaboration and resourcefulness reflect a commitment to operational excellence and serve as a shining example of how teamwork drives success in County operations. We hope you enjoy this monetary award and we thank you - Scott, Joseph, and Joey - for your efforts and continued service to the community.



**NEXUSMAIL EXPRESS**  
WHERE CONNECTIONS MEET CONVENIENCE

## ***From Idea to Impact: Tim Baker Launches NexusMail Express***

What began as a simple idea has grown into a full-fledged business—NexusMail Express. Congratulations to Tim Baker, Office Systems Coordinator III in GSA IT, on turning his vision into reality! Tim developed the concept of creating a secure, convenient location offering mailboxes, shipping, and notary services all in one place.

Although NexusMail Express officially opened its doors on November 1, 2024, Tim marked the occasion with a grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony on February 13th. The event was proudly supported by the Ventura Chamber of Commerce and Ventura City Councilmember Rynn Schumacher, who joined in cutting the ribbon.



Tim shared, "Launching this business has been an exciting journey. I'm incredibly grateful for the support from colleagues and the community alike. I look forward to continuing to serve Ventura, both in and outside of the County!" Please join us in celebrating Tim's accomplishment and wishing him continued success with NexusMail Express!



***Entrepreneur Tim Baker***

# From Flour to Connection: Why Baking is Essential in Our Lives – By Chinna Nahabedian



People often ask me, "Why on earth do you spend so much time baking for others?" There's something undeniably magical about the art of baking that can turn a ho-hum day into a delightful escape. When I'm measuring flour or kneading dough, I'm converting any residual stress into a delicious treat. The world slows down and my senses are tuned in to taste combinations, textures and smells. Seriously, does anything beat the smell of freshly baked cinnamon rolls permeating the house?

Baking is my creative playground. It's like an edible art gallery where every cake, cookie, or loaf of bread becomes a masterpiece. Each batch of baked goods gives me a chance to

experiment with new tools and techniques, from wafer flowers to edible printers. Let's face it, stagnation is dull! Baking constantly pushes me to learn, grow, and break free from my comfort zone. I am a true believer that creative exploration nourishes your soul.

But let's get to the good stuff, the MOST important reason I bake is because it builds connections. There's nothing like the pure joy

of seeing someone take a bite of a perfectly balanced chewy cookie or a decadently rich brownie and watching their eyes light up. Baking is the *ultimate* way to say, "I care about you" without even needing to use words. It can lift someone's spirits on a bad day, be the reason for a random conversation, or spark a new friendship. The topic can even break the ice during a job interview – how can you not smile talking about baking? To me, baking isn't just about food — it's about making someone feel special and showing them that you've taken the time to create something just for them.

Connection is everything. And if my cookies can make someone's day a little brighter and their heart a little lighter, then that's my version of success.

Trust me when I say that anyone can bake. Sure, having the right tools helps, but the secret ingredient? Drum roll... baking with JOY and LOVE are the key to creating scrumptious baked goods!

If I have inspired you to dabble in the art of baking, it's my pleasure to share one of my absolute favorite recipes with you — perfected during my stay-at-home-mom days. I often bake these for GSA oral panel members and they're my go-to choice whenever I need to impress a crowd. Have fun getting those measuring cups out and, if you're like me, getting a little flour smudge on your face!

## Chinna's Currant or Cranberry Scones

### Ingredients

2 cups flour  
4 teaspoons baking powder  
¾ teaspoon salt  
1/3 cup sugar  
4 tablespoons butter  
2 tablespoons shortening  
¾ cup heavy cream  
1 egg  
Handful of dried currants or dried cranberries

### Directions

Heat oven to 375 degrees.  
Line cookie sheets with parchment paper. In a large bowl, combine flour, baking powder, salt and sugar. Mix well. Cut in cold butter and shortening until they are the size of peas. In a separate bowl, combine cream with beaten egg then add to dry ingredients. Stir in fruit. Turn dough onto a lightly floured surface. Roll dough out and cut into biscuit size rounds. Instead of rolling dough out, I prefer to use a large cookie/cupcake scooper (about ¼ cup) and scoop the dough onto the cookie sheets. Leave about two to three inches of space between scones. Bake for 15 minutes or until lightly golden.





County of Ventura's 22nd Annual

# EMPLOYEE, RETIREE, FAMILY ART EXHIBITION

JURIED ART EXHIBITION | March 10 - April 25, 2025

GSA STAFF EXHIBIT THEIR ARTISTIC TALENTS AND TAKE HOME PRIZES AT  
THIS YEAR'S EMPLOYEE, RETIREE, AND FAMILY ART EXHIBITION



**"Pink Taurus Moon"**  
Zulema Covarrubias  
Graphic Designer

3rd Place:  
Professional Category



**"Somis October 30<sup>th</sup>"**  
Nancy Nazario  
Administrative Officer

3rd Place:  
Amateur Category



**"Summer Peach"**  
Olivia Lorenzen

Melissa Lorenzen daughter,  
Senior Procurement Specialist

3rd Place:  
Youth (12&under) Category



**"Chaos in Color"**  
Jonathan Hensley  
Graphics Technician II



**"Bike Ride in Shinjuku"**  
Daniel Flores  
Technical Specialist IV-PH



**"County of Ventura Seal"**  
Julie Miller  
Assistant Procurement Officer





## Back in Action!

Colter Chisum and his son Lander participated in the Touchstone Climbing bouldering competition held in Burbank, CA on March 29<sup>th</sup>. Colter placed 15<sup>th</sup> out of 238 competitors and placed 4<sup>th</sup> in his age division. Once a climbing regular in Yosemite, Colter has not competed since 2010.

"It was so much fun getting back into climbing this season. I was able to piece together a preparation program that delicately fit around my normal commitments. I am most happy that I got to do the event with Lander and avoided any injuries! Looking forward to the next one."



## Honoring History: Ethan Leighton Lays Wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

Each year, many schools organize 8th-grade trips to Washington, D.C., offering students unforgettable educational experiences. These trips often include visits to national monuments and memorials, the U.S. Capitol, museums, and other important historical sites.

Ethan Leighton, son of Kenny Leighton, GSA's Safety Officer, recently had the opportunity to take part in one of these trips from March 15th through March 22nd. As part of the experience, students are encouraged to write an essay about why they should be selected to lay the wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. From those essays, two students are selected to take part in a truly special honor: laying the wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier during their visit.

We're proud to share that Ethan was one of the students chosen for this meaningful role. This is a rare and moving experience, and we commend Ethan for representing his class—and his family—with such distinction.



Ethan Leighton with fellow classmate laying a wreath at the Tomb of Unknown Soldier.

Below is Ethan's thoughtful and reflective essay that earned him this meaningful opportunity:

### The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier By Ethan Leighton

To be buried at Arlington Cemetery in Arlington Virginia, you have to meet certain criteria which are more stringent than all other national cemeteries and determined at the time of death.

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is the burial place of an unknown soldier from WWI, WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam War. Although the soldier from the Vietnam War was identified as Micheal J. Blassie and his remains were removed from his casket and moved to Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery. The casket is still there, just empty.

A soldier from the Third Infantry Regiment, also known as "The Old Guard", guards the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier 24 hours a day 7 days a week, rain, snow, shine, even during hurricane Sandy. The changing of the guard happens every 30 minutes during the summer and during the winter, it takes place every 1 hour. When the cemetery is closed, it takes place every 2 hours. When changing guards, they will march exactly 21 steps down the black mat located behind the tomb, and face east for 21 seconds. Then they turn again this time facing north for 21 seconds. After this they take 21 steps down the mat and repeat this process. The 21 steps and 21 second pause represents the 21 gun salute, the highest military honor. During the guard change, the new guard will have the commanding officer come over to him and do what is called a white-glove inspection, where the officer will inspect the new guard and his gun. Once this is completed, the 2 guards and the commanding officer meet in front of the tomb. They then salute to the soldiers in the tomb and the first guard leaves and the new guard takes his position. If anyone interrupts the soldiers during this procedure or when the guards are guarding the tomb, the guards will very firmly reprimand the individual as this is a sign of disrespect towards the Unknowns. The tomb symbolizes the memory of all military members throughout American history. It also represents the value of service, sacrifice, and valor of our service members.

I want to lay the wreath at the tomb because I feel it would be a great honor and experience to be one of the few people who will have this truly amazing experience of helping to lay a wreath at such an important memorial as this. It will also be a proud moment as I show respect and gratitude to the many family members who have served in the Armed Forces, including my Dad, sister, two of my great grandfathers, and many aunts, uncles and cousins. I hope that I am chosen to help in laying the wreath. It will truly be an honor I would never forget..



Ethan Leighton pictured at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier