

NEWS

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For more information, contact
David Wert, Public Information Officer
(909) 387-5412
dwert@sbcounty.gov

Board appoints Ontario City Manager Devereaux as CAO

The Board of Supervisors today unanimously and enthusiastically appointed Ontario City Manager Gregory C. Devereaux to serve as County Administrative Officer effective February 13.

The board also approved a contract with Mr. Devereaux designed to ensure stability in the county's top non-elected post and in the execution of many long-term projects.

Supervisors cited Mr. Devereaux's many successes during his 12 years as Ontario city manager as their primary reason for approaching him to take the county's helm. Specifically, board members cited his emphasis on economic development and his ability to create a vision for a community and lead plans to fruition.

"I'm looking forward to articulating your vision for the future of this county, and working with this organization to move the county forward," Mr. Devereaux told the board following his appointment.

"Greg Devereaux's leadership has been instrumental in positioning Ontario as the economic engine of the Inland Empire," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Gary Ovitt. "His visionary approach and ability to effectively collaborate with his workforce has led Ontario to be one of the most consumer-friendly cities in our region."

"I publicly give my vote of confidence to Mr. Devereaux, and I make my commitment to work hard to form an honest, hard working relationship with him," said Board of Supervisors Vice Chair Josie Gonzales.

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During Mr. Devereaux's tenure, Ontario has seen the development of Citizens Business Bank Arena, the New Model Colony, the Ontario Convention Center, the construction of new public facilities, and the expansion of Ontario International Airport. He has effectively managed a workforce of more than 1,100 employees with an annual budget of more than \$450 million.

"Greg retains the respect of his employees, colleagues, and the public employee unions that serve the residents of Ontario," Chairman Ovitt said.

"This is going to be a very exciting time for our county and an opportunity to change direction," said Supervisor Neil Derry.

The CAO administers and coordinates the operations of the county in accordance with the policies established by the Board of Supervisors. The CAO also directs county operations through agency and department administrators, advises and assists the Board of Supervisors in long-range planning and development, and analyzes and recommends the county budget.

Chairman Ovitt said he and the rest of the board are looking forward to working closely with Mr. Devereaux to navigate the county through the current economic crisis, foster unity between board offices and county departments, and develop and implement a vision for the county.

"Greg has an excellent track record of working effectively with elected representatives in creating and implementing goals, which is vital to an organization as large and diverse as the County of San Bernardino," Chairman Ovitt said. "At no time are these qualities more important than during a fiscal crisis. Economic development is at the top of the board's agenda, and we believe Greg is someone who can move us forward in that direction."

"I don't think we could have found a better person," said Supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt. "I'm grateful that someone who has nothing left to prove would take on this challenge."

Mr. Devereaux has been in state and local government for more than 30 years, serving in various capacities. From 1993 to August 1997 he was the city manager of Fontana. During his tenure there he stabilized the city's finances and built its reserves, funded previously unfunded liabilities, and reduced city expenditures.

Mr. Devereaux became city manager of Ontario in September 1997. Since coming to Ontario, he has embarked on an aggressive program to grow the city's economy and restructure the city's staff to better serve its residents and the business community. The city's fiscal condition has improved markedly. Each of his years in Ontario has resulted in substantial surpluses allowing the city to build reserves, fund previously unfunded liabilities, and embark on the most aggressive investment in community facilities in the city's history.

"His expertise in redevelopment will be a big asset," said Supervisor Paul Biane.

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"We find ourselves facing an unprecedented time. We have witnessed the housing and financial markets crumble and the state raid our coffers. Demand for services has increased while revenue continues to remain anemic. Greg has been at the helm during times when Ontario experienced extraordinary growth as well as the current economic downturn," Chairman Ovitt said.

"He has a proven track record of navigating the city during downward cycles and anticipating the changing needs of the private sector and his constituents. For example, in 2009, the city found itself facing a \$13.8 million shortfall. However, the city was able to mitigate the shortfall and continue to provide essential services," Chairman Ovitt continued.

Even in a sluggish economy, Mr. Devereaux was instrumental in bringing development to Ontario, including Citizen's Bank Arena and the Piemonte project. He has been successful in managing the investment of several public facilities including the rehabilitation of city hall, experience that will help the county as it moves forward and plans the expansion or relocation of the County Government Center.

"I believe it's Greg's talent, skill, and expertise that make him qualified for the job, but his personal character that sets him above the rest. He is an individual of impeccable character. His demeanor in public is consistent with who he is in private," Chairman Ovitt said.