

Mayor Donald Garcia

January 2012

With 2012 upon us, many of us will make the typical resolutions - dropping a few pounds, giving up our vices and striving to accomplish new things. That's all well and good but instead of making New Year's resolutions, I prefer to set realistic goals that are more within reach.

Like many, my personal goals for the coming year are to remain healthy, happy and surrounded by family and friends. As Mayor, I want our Council and staff to continue to forge our City ahead for the betterment of Aliso Viejo. That means ensuring that we maintain healthy reserves for rainy days, that our essential City services never falter, that we continue to be one of the safest cities in the county, and that we expand our cultural, educational and recreational programs for our community. Even though our City has weathered this economic storm much better than many others, we must continue to work to attract new business and create new jobs.

In the coming year, one of my goals will be to promote economic development in an effort to attract and retain businesses in the community. Our City will work with businesses to identify available retail and commercial office space; offer assistance in starting a new business; and provide vital resources to existing businesses. Providing facilities and enhancing the services to our youth will also continue to be a goal in 2012. We will work on improvements to Foxborough Park to benefit the sports groups and individuals who use this park. Those improvements include installing sports field lighting and restroom facilities. New lighting will allow opportunities for sports organizations to schedule games and practices at night. The Foxborough Park Restroom Project proposes to install a 256-square foot prefabricated restroom at the north end of the park. This improvement will provide a sanitary restroom facility in close proximity for park patrons. We will also continue to make emergency preparedness and public safety a top priority. Our Police Services recently added a mobile Command Post that will be used at various special events and incidents in the City should they arise. An array of programs and services through our Family Resource Center will continue to reach diverse segments of our community.

By spring, our Green City Initiative will be complete. The goal of the Aliso Viejo Green City Initiative is to increase energy efficiency, reduce energy and water consumption and reduce waste stream flow. Over this past year, we have conducted several workshops to garner public input, and residents and businesses have been invaluable to the success of the initiative, which will help our City demonstrate its commitment to a sustainable and healthy future. This initiative will be included in our General Plan Update as a new element – the “Green City Element.” The General Plan Update will be completed in spring 2013.

In the first part of the year, we will roll out a new, improved website that will be more user-friendly and offer features and information catering to residents, businesses and visitors alike.

For the past several years, we have used several proactive communication tactics - including social media - to educate and inform the community, and this year, we will expand on those to reach a broader segment of the community.

Indeed, in the coming year, our goal is to improve our quality of life even more through projects, programs and services. I look forward to the challenges and opportunities our City will face in 2012, and I am grateful beyond words for the opportunity to serve as your Mayor - once again.

I wish you and yours a happy, healthy and successful New Year.