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Ventura City Attorney Greg Diaz announces retirement

Ventura, Calif. – After more than seven years as Ventura’s City Attorney, Gregory Diaz has announced his retirement, effective February 14, 2022. Diaz’s last day will be December 23, 2021.

“City Attorney Greg Diaz has had a significant impact in our organization and led the City’s legal services team with the utmost professionalism and integrity,” said Mayor Sofia Rubalcava. “On behalf of the City Council, I thank him for his exemplary legal contributions that have greatly benefited our community. We wish him all the best in his retirement.”

Since joining the City in 2014, Diaz has led the City Attorney’s Office in achieving many notable accomplishments, including providing homeless shelter agreements that allowed the City to open its first permanent, City-sponsored homeless shelter in the County; and leading the Citizens Charter Review Committee in updating the Ventura’s Charter Amendment, which transitioned the City’s at-large election system to geographic district elections for Councilmembers in 2017. This substantial change to the Charter Amendment proactively avoided an expensive and time-consuming California Voting Rights Act lawsuit.

“It has been my honor to serve the City Council and the City of Ventura through many complex initiatives,” said City Attorney Greg Diaz. “One of the accomplishments I’m most proud of is the work our City Attorney’s Office did during the tragic time of the 2017 Thomas Fire. The City’s legal team came together to perform their duties at the highest level of excellence. They provided tools, expertise, and legal guidance to help decision-makers and leaders navigate through the devastation caused by the fire.”

Under Diaz’s leadership, the City Attorney’s Office recovered \$8 million from Southern California Edison for Thomas Fire damages. Diaz also supported the Council-sponsored initiative, Measure O. The half-cent sales tax increase has provided vital funding to essential public safety services and increased maintenance of City facilities, roads, and sidewalks.

“The success I have had during my career in Ventura is a direct result of the excellent work of our legal professionals and support staff in the City Attorney’s Office. I have been blessed to work alongside talented elected leaders, department heads, and professional staff at the City,” said Diaz.

Prior to coming to Ventura, Diaz served as the City Attorney for the City of Merced from 2001 to 2014. He also served as the contract City Attorney for the cities of Lake Forest, Stanton, and Lomita. In addition, he had the opportunity to assist with the incorporation of nine new cities from Temecula in the south to Buellton in the north, with his most significant efforts involving the new cities of Dana Point, Chino Hills, and Lake Forest. He was admitted to the California State Bar in 1991 and is admitted to practice before the Central, Eastern, and Northern Districts of the Federal District Courts in California; the Ninth Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals; and before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Diaz has had the opportunity to speak and write on various municipal law during his career, focusing the last few years on legal issues associated with emergencies and disasters. He had the honor to prepare a “Disaster Playbook” on managing legal issues during an emergency that was presented for use by both County Counsels and City Attorneys in California. For the last two years, he has served as the Chair of the City Attorneys Department of the League of California Cities Ad Hoc Emergency Response Committee.

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Upon retirement, City Attorney Diaz plans to relocate and join his wife, Angela, in their new home in Tampa, Florida. He looks forward to a few months of rest and relaxation and then finding new challenges.

The City Attorney is one of two positions, along with the City Manager, appointed directly by the City Council. The City Attorney represents and advises the Council, advisory bodies, and City departments in matters of law related to City business. The Council will begin discussions on next steps for hiring a new City Attorney in the coming weeks. A recruitment effort will be conducted to fill the City Attorney vacancy.

Upon Diaz's last day on December 23, Andy Heglund will be acting City Attorney. Heglund joined the City Attorney's Office in July 2019 as Senior Assistant City Attorney, where he specialized in planning and land use. He spent his early years in private law practices in Los Angeles and Bakersfield, specializing in litigation. He was the primary attorney for Bakersfield's aggressive freeway expansion program, capital improvement projects and right-of-way, and entertainment facilities. He was also instrumental in developing Bakersfield's deployment program for installing wireless cellular equipment on the city's streetlights.

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