

LAFD

Civilians Honored

Fire Dept. honors its top civilians at a luncheon.

Story by Liz Montes, Club Counselor; Photos by Robert Larios, Club Director of Operations



Fire Chief Douglas Barry and Michael Prendergast.



Fire Chief Douglas Barry and Dishan Chaudhuri.



Fire Chief Douglas Barry and Angela Lee.

Fire Chief's Group Award of Excellence
DATA MANAGEMENT UNIT
Fire Prevention Bureau

The Data Management Unit consists of extremely talented and dedicated members of the LAFD. They assist in the billing and collection of hazardous material facility inspections, Division 5 permit requests, underground storage tank plan checks, telephone requests, and walk-in customers. The billing process for each customer can take anywhere from 30 minutes to two days, depending on the nature and complexity of the service provided. Each of these members is responsible for contributing to many state-mandated monthly and annual reports.

This team was formed approximately six months prior to recognizing the need for immediate action. It was found that uncollected funds were monies from mis-billed customers, incomplete data, and transfer of ownerships in fiscal year 2005-06. When awareness of this issue was determined, this team – through its contributions and commitment to the success of the LAFD – managed to bill and collect more than \$2 million of outstanding invoices for hazardous materials in approximately 30 days.

The group members are:

- Eva Bencomo, Principal Clerk;
- Sandra Guerrero, Sr. Clerk Typist;
- John Heredia, Accounting Clerk;
- Ernie Dizon, Accounting Clerk;
- Elva Davila, Clerk Typist;
- Joy Emanuel, Clerk Typist;
- Kacy Williams, Clerk Typist;
- Beatriz Pelayo, Sr. Clerk Typist; and
- Eloy Luna, Geologist.

It is through the character and work ethic of the team members that we are able to exist as one of the most progressive, efficient and effective fire service providers in the nation. Data management group members have not only demonstrated their commitment to this department, but have shown a concern for its financial success.



The Data Management Unit.

On May 28, Fire Chief Douglas Barry and other top brass headlined the annual Civilian Employee Luncheon.

The event pays tribute to the LAFD's best civilian employees.

This year's event honored three individuals and one group.

Congratulations from the Club to all who were honored.

Here is some background on the honorees:



Fire Chief Douglas Barry and Eric Vander Broek.



Fire Chief Douglas Barry and Elizabeth Borunda.

Shop Maintenance Category
FRANCISCO VELEZ
Carpenter, Supply and Maintenance

Francisco Velez has 22 years of employment with the City.

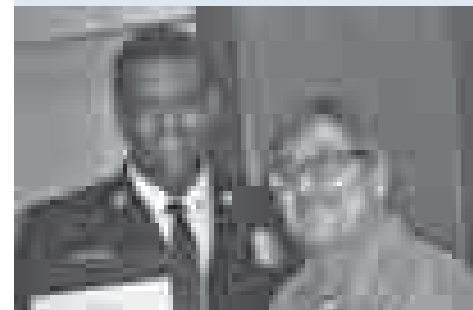
He began his City career June 1, 1986, at the Hyperion Treatment Plant. He began as a maintenance laborer and soon was promoted to Maintenance and Construction Helper in the Carpenter shop, where he was able to use his woodworking skills.

In December 2004, Francisco took a job as a Building Repairer at the Convention Center. Then in May 2005, Francisco was hired by the LAFD as a Carpenter.

As a Carpenter at the LAFD, Francisco has a lot of important duties, one of which is the inspection and repair of the wooden ladders used by Fire personnel. By Francisco taking the time and care that he puts into these inspections and repairs, Fire personnel have one less worry when responding to incidents.

Francisco always makes a variety of furniture and cabinets, which can be seen at many of the Fire Stations.

Francisco is well known and liked around the shops. When any of his co-workers or Fire personnel need his assistance with wood projects, be it a broken cabinet door inside an ambulance, a broken leg on a table, or a piece of wood cut for a wedge, he is always there to assist you.



Fire Chief Douglas Barry and Francisco Velez.



Fire Chief Douglas Barry and Craig Bissett.

Clerical Category
KATEY ZAMORA-RODRIGUEZ
Senior Clerk Typist, Fire Prevention Bureau

Senior Clerk Typist Katey Zamora-Rodriguez has been employed by the City for 20 years and has faithfully served the citizens and the City in a variety of capacities.

Katey began her City career as a Clerk Typist in Animal Regulation (Animal Services) in 1988.

In 1989, she transferred to the LAFD. Since then, she has worked in the Fire Prevention Bureau for 19.5 years. Katey began as a Clerk Typist in the Underground Tanks Unit, then transferred to the Engineering Unit, and then transferred to the new Construction Unit. She was promoted to Senior Clerk Typist in 2005 in the Public Assemblage Unit.

It was in the Public Assemblage Unit where Katey's many skills and talents were utilized. In this capacity, she developed the Division 4 and Division 5 permit database, working closely with Sr. Accountant II Cynthia Kho (who was also honored at the luncheon). This database has helped the Public Assemblage Unit as well as the Accounting Services Section.

Working under very tight timelines, she also conducted countless permit and file searches for documents requested by the Accounting Section and the Controller's Office. It is noteworthy to mention that, right before her interview for this biography, Katey was given the task of identifying and auditing LAFD overtime permit charges from a two-inch-thick printout containing City-wide information.

Because of the sensitivity of the Public Information, Katey is required to undertake all of these duties with the highest degree of confidentiality. She is privy to information that the residents and even visitors of Los Angeles trust the LAFD with.

Katey's office duties include timekeeping, inspection hiring for public events, collection of fees for candle permits, special events, Division 4 and 5 permits, and pyro permits. Again, she maintains confidentiality on public work during public events.

In addition to her office duties, Katey has very capably served the LAFD in the past and present by participating as a coordinator for the March of Dimes program, a volunteer for the American Cancer Society Daffodil Program, and as a member of Los Bomberos.

Away from work, Katey is newly married to Robert Rodriguez for one year. Katey is also the proud mother of Katey Beth, Alfonso, Belinda and Lori. Katey enjoys being a mom and is very involved in all aspects of her children's lives.

She also participates in the LAUSD mentoring program. In addition, Katey has helped at the San Gabriel Mission with toy donations during the holiday season.



Fire Chief Douglas Barry and Katey Zamora-Rodriguez.



Lorraine Kwiatkowski, LAFD Civilian Employee Recognition Committee.

Professional / Specialized Skills Category
CYNTHIA ONG KHO
Senior Accountant II, Administrative Services Bureau

Prior to City employment, Senior Accountant II Cynthia Kho earned a Bachelor of science degree in business administration with a major in accounting, and began her 25-plus-year career in the accounting field.

Cynthia started as a bookkeeper in an accounting firm, and then moved on to work for a midsize manufacturing company as a controller for seven years. As controller, she supervised 45 employees and oversaw the daily operation of the entire accounting department. She also prepared financial statements and assisted with preparation of the corporation's tax return.

She also handled internal and external audits and human resources matters, and served as payroll administrator. In the absence of the owner during business trips to the company's main office in Hong Kong, Cynthia was in charge of the company's daily business operations.

In October 1999, Cynthia left private industry for employment with the City. She started her City employment as an accountant for the Department, handling special fund monies. Her first assignment was to set up an accounting application for film safety watches. Even though she had no actual training or background in database application design, she taught herself and established the database.

In March 2001, Cynthia transferred to the Accounts Receivable section as a supervisor. She started to implement new accounting procedures to automate all accounting bookkeeping. With the implementation of various system improvements, the Accounting Section started performing more efficiently with faster access to accounting information. This allowed employees to process more transactions in the same time period, and also streamlined accounting processes by reducing the number of steps and simplifying procedures. As a result, management had quicker access to information and more accurate financial data.

In July 2003, Cynthia was promoted to the Office of the Treasure as an Accountant II, and, in October 2003, was promoted to Senior Accountant in the LAPD.

In August 2004, Cynthia was promoted back to the LAFD as a Senior Accountant II, where she personally supervises and manages the daily operations of the General Accounting, Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, and Special and Grant Accounting Sections. She works closely with the Chief Accountant and senior management of the Administrative Services Bureau to oversee the LAFD's complex \$500 million annual budget.

With a financial and systems background, Cynthia plays a vital role in the streamlining of Accounting operations by setting up new and modifying existing accounting procedures and applications in the Accounting Section. With her strong experience, knowledge in the accounting field, and dedication to her work, she is the go-to person in accounting.

Away from work, Cynthia has been married to Danilo Kho for 17 years, and they have two sons, Kevin and Jeremiah.



Fire Chief Douglas Barry and Cynthia Ong Kho.