What an exciting year for the City of El Centro! On August 5, 2014, the City Council consolidated three departments (Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, and the El Centro Public Library) into the Community Services Department. This action has led to the improvement of the coordination of projects and services for the community.

A few of the highlights for this year include:

- Mardi Gras Light Parade & Street Festival was held on February 21, 2015. Over 3,000 spectators lined up along the Civic Center area to view the impressive entries in the parade.
- On March 26, 2015, the City and business sponsors hosted the 8th Annual IMAGINE Business Recognition Awards.
- Over 3,600 children participated in the City’s “Summer Camps” from June thru August, 2015.
- Several hundred people attended the grand opening of the “Sidewinder Skate Park” on September 10, 2015.
- El Grito De Independencia took place on September 19, 2015, and approximately 4,000 people attended this event.
- The Department participated in the Fiestas Del Sol in Mexicali, Mexico on September 25, 2015.
- From November, 2014 thru September, 2015, with the Project CHAMPS program, 30,531 meals were served to children at the El Centro Community Center, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Sports Pavilion, and the El Centro Public Library.
- In September the El Centro Public Library launched its “1000 Books Before Kindergarten” reading program for children under five years old.
- City staff is currently working with Kimley-Horn to design the future El Centro Aquatic Center. This project is expected to be completed in March 2018.

The City of El Centro strives very hard to offer recreational opportunities for all age groups to enjoy in a healthy and safe manner. With much excitement on September 10th the City along with hundreds of individuals who attended the grand opening ceremony of the Sidewinder Skate Park celebrated the opening of this skate park. When a new public facility opens, the City hopes that any individual visiting such facility has a pleasant and safe experience.

Safety is a message I would like to highlight in this newsletter edition. It’s been over a month since the opening of the Sidewinder Skate Park and City staff has received many calls from individuals visiting the skate park expressing their concern regarding safety issues. One of the main concerns expressed is the decision of many to not wear a helmet, elbow pads, and knee pads while using the skate park. There is also the concern that children under the age of 12 are at the skate park unaccompanied by an adult. The Sidewinder Skate Park is an unsupervised facility and it is up to those using it to make sure they are using it responsibly. The Sidewinder Skate Park is a beautiful facility and our desire would be that the same community that once approached the City about constructing this type of recreational facility works together with the City to create a safe and fun facility for all to enjoy.

Marcela Piedra, Community Services Director
On September 10, 2015, the long awaited grand opening for the “Sidewinder Skate Park” finally came to fruition. Several hundred people lined up to watch the opening ceremonies, the skating demonstration team, and the BMX’ers.

The $2.5 million skate park includes 35,000 square feet area of skating space. The skate park was a vision and a goal of the Desert Skatepark Coalition, which included active members Anastasia Miki and Brett Driscoll.

As well as sponsoring the grand opening, California Skateparks, Erickson Hall Construction, and Kimley Horn were all in attendance for the ribbon cutting of the skate park. California Skateparks provided the “world’s largest skateboard” for the public to view and pose for pictures on the large 34 ft. skateboard.

Dan Evers of the RainForest Project was in attendance at the unveiling of the Sidewinder Skate Park mosaic at the entrance to the park. Father Mark Edney provided the invocation for the event as well as being the first official skater for the skate park.

On January 21, 2014, the City Council approved the “Designated Skateboard Areas Rules and Regulations” which are posted at the entrance to the skate park.
The City of El Centro conducted the IMAGINE 2015 Business Recognition Awards on March 26, 2015 at the Barcelona Event Center. This was the 8th year of the Business Recognition Program that recognizes outstanding businesses through a public nomination and selection process. The public is invited to nominate a business that they believe encompasses all the attributes and characteristics of the IMAGINE award – an innovator, motivator, architect of change, a genius, industrious, noble, and entrepreneur. All seven characteristics combined create the prestigious IMAGINE Business Recognition Award.

Businesses contribute to the economic well-being of the city, and each year the award recipients demonstrate a strong commitment to the future of our community. On behalf of our IMAGINE sponsors each year, and the City of El Centro, we honor and thank these businesses for their contribution in making El Centro a great place to do business!

To nominate a special business for next year’s IMAGINE 2016 awards, please visit www.cityofelcentro.org/communityservices and fill out the form online. If you have any questions regarding the IMAGINE Business Recognition Program, please contact the Economic Development Division at 760.337.4543 or email dharrold@cityofelcentro.org.
Thank you to all our IMAGINE 2015 Sponsors
The City of El Centro Recreation Division held their summer programs from June 22, 2015 through August 15, 2015. Approximately 3,600 children participated in activities such as:

- Half Pint Camp (ages 3-5 years)
- Mini Day Camp (ages 6-7 years)
- Discovery Camp (ages 8-10 years)
- Sunnyville Day Camp (ages 11-14 years)
- Sunrise Camp (5 – 12 years)
- Youth Attaining Leadership Skills Program (9th – 12th grade students)
- Nothing But Net Basketball (5-14 years)
- Open Gymnasium (all ages)
- Swim Lessons (6 months to adults)
- Open Swim (all ages)
- Junior Lifeguard Program (10-15 years), among others.

During all these recreational programs this summer, another program was offered to children ages 3 to 18. Project CHAMPS is a feeding program that provided nutritional snacks at the community center, sports pavilion, and the El Centro Public Library. During the months of June, July and August, 15,739 nutritious snacks were provided to children free of charge.

Project CHAMPS was funded by the National League of Cities in September 2014 and the City of El Centro was one of ten cities across the nation to receive $50,000 in funding for the nutritional feeding program. Calexico Neighborhood House was the agency that provided the snacks for Project CHAMPS.
After School Enrichment Program

The City of El Centro Recreation Division offers a great service to children and their parents for after school activities at the Community Center located at 975 S. First Street. The “After School Enrichment Program” is available Monday through Friday after school beginning at 2.30pm and ends at 5.30pm. Currently, there are 50 children who daily attend the “After School Enrichment Program.”

Children can receive an early supper that is a well-balanced meal with protein, fruit and vegetables with milk, juice, and water. After their meal, City staff is available to help the children with tutoring if needed, in order to finish their school homework. Once the homework is completed, there are arts and crafts activities, and/or games, gardening, and exercise until the parents pick up their children at the community center.

This program is offered by the City of El Centro for a fee of $30.00 monthly, and $10.00 for each additional child. To learn more about the program, please visit the city’s website at www.cityofelcentro.org (click on Parks and Recreation) or call the Recreation office at 760.337.4555.
at El Centro Public Library
and give your child a head start in school!

• Program for children under 5 and their parents.
• Help your child get ready for school.
• Earn prizes and FREE BOOKS!
• Instill the love of reading.
• Spend some quality time together.

Call us for more details at (760) 337-4565
THE PROGRAM IS FREE!