

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 16, 2020

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Jason Benites Named Oxnard's Next Police Chief

OXNARD, Calif. – City Manager Alexander Nguyen has named Assistant Police Chief Jason Benites as Oxnard's next Police Chief, effective December 29, 2020 upon the retirement of Chief Scott Whitney.

"We are very fortunate to have two great chiefs-in-waiting, Eric Sonstegard and Jason Benites, both of whom would be great Chiefs here or in any other city," said City Manager Nguyen. "It speaks volumes of the quality and excellence of the Oxnard Police Department. The community is very fortunate that Jason is accepting the appointment to be our next Police Chief."

"We have a high-performing and forward-looking police department with many talented people," said Benites. He added, "I am very proud to have served my entire career here. We also have a great relationship with a community that supports us. I feel extremely fortunate, as well as humbled, to have been presented with the opportunity to continue serving Oxnard as its next Chief of Police."

A 27-year police department veteran, Benites started his career in Oxnard in the Patrol Division, working in the field and serving as a detective. He continued to work his way through the ranks and was promoted to Assistant Chief in November of 2006, where he oversaw various department bureaus and supervised staff.

Benites will be sworn in as the twenty-second Police Chief in Oxnard's history. He will oversee a department of 356 employees, which includes 238 sworn officers and 118 civilian staff. He will be recognized by the City Council as Oxnard's new Police Chief at the January 5, 2021 meeting.

Benites' previous experience included overseeing the Oxnard Violent Crimes Task Force, a multi-jurisdictional team that partnered with the Federal Bureau of Investigation to address gang violence. He was also instrumental in developing the *Neighborhood Policing Strategy*, a staffing plan whose purpose was to further strengthen the Oxnard Police Department's neighborhood policing and problem-solving practices.

Benites added, "Community policing, neighborhood problem-solving, and community engagement all go hand in hand with each other. They have long been foundational to what defines the Oxnard Police Department and its culture. In moving forward, we will continue to dedicate ourselves to furthering these efforts."

Benites attended the United States Naval Academy and is a graduate of the University of California at Los Angeles. He is also a 2008 graduate of the California POST Command College.

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