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Larry Gonzalez Named Police Chief in Riverside

Veteran law enforcement professional has been Interim Chief since mid-September

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – Larry Gonzalez, a 27-year law enforcement veteran who has spent the past 15 years working his way through the management ranks of the Riverside Police Department, has been named Chief of Police by City Manager Al Zelinka.

“I believe in Larry as Riverside’s Police Chief because of his demonstrated performance to address important matters in the city and his trusted relationships throughout the community, department, and law enforcement agencies,” Zelinka said. “As Chief of Police, Larry has committed to me that he will implement the pillars of 21st Century Policing, evolve the Riverside Police Department to reflect Riverside’s diversity, and carry out organizational refinements around efficiency and effectiveness.”

Gonzalez was chosen after a comprehensive search and an unprecedented amount of community input and a series of interview panels with law enforcement professionals, community leaders and neighborhood groups. The multiple community meetings asked Riversiders what they wanted in their next Police Chief, and their responses were used as criteria for evaluating candidates. The responses also were documented and shared online for the public.

“I appreciate the meaningful input by the community this past fall to define the desired attributes for Riverside’s next police chief,” Zelinka said. “That input framed the whole recruitment effort and was reflected in the composition of the interview panels and the questions asked of the candidates. When making my selection, I took to heart the complete record of information contributed by the community and all participants, as well as the input provided by the candidates themselves.”

Gonzalez has served as Interim Police Chief since mid-September, following the retirement of Chief Sergio Diaz. In that role, he had daily responsibility for 576 employees, including 372 sworn police officers, as well as management of a \$135 million budget. His promotion to Chief takes effect Feb. 7.

“The Riverside Police Department has been my life’s work, and it always has been my dream to lead this incredible group of men and women,” Chief Gonzalez said. “I am honored to have been selected as Police Chief, and I look forward to making a great department even better.”

Before becoming Interim Chief, Gonzalez had worked for more than three years as Deputy Chief/Administration. In addition to providing executive-level leadership to Chief Diaz, he also directed and supervised multiple divisions of the department, including Support Services and Civilian Personnel, and managed the Records Bureau, Communications, and Internal Affairs.

Before that, Gonzalez served as Captain of the Support Services Division, where he provided management oversight of the Field Officer Training Program and the Intelligence Unit, which works regularly with similar agencies around the region and the country, including the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force.

As a Lieutenant, Gonzalez served as a watch commander, the Neighborhood Policing Center East Area Commander and as a SWAT commander. He also worked in Aviation, K-9 and other specialized units, as well as other assignments. He has been an instructor at the Riverside County Sheriff's Academy since 1999 and has taught rising officers in use of force, internal affairs, laws of arrest, defensive tactics, civil liability and more.

Gonzalez holds a B.S. in workforce education from Southern Illinois University and attended the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Va. He is president of the Riverside County Law Enforcement Administrators Association; past chairperson of the Law Enforcement Appreciation Committee; and has served and is serving on multiple law enforcement associations around the state and nation.

More information about the process that led to Chief Gonzalez being named to this position, including the feedback from the community, can be found at: <https://www.riversideca.gov/press/hiring-riversides-next-police-chief>