

GOVERNMENT

# Mesa Water denied copyright for pricey logo



COURTESY MESA WATER  
Mesa Water District's logo is part of a branding effort.

District officials will appeal ruling that design isn't distinct enough.

**COSTA MESA** • Mesa Water District invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in a "rebranding" campaign that centered on a revamped logo and name. After all that, the U.S. Copyright Office rejected the logo design.

If Mesa Water is unable to register a copyright, it could still use the logo on signs and other materials, **UC Irvine law professor Dan Burk said**, but officials could be hampered if they want to stop someone else from using it. Either way, the rejection is another setback to the branding effort, which saw its budget cut by more than \$200,000 after outside criticism of excessive spending.

A design must have at least "a minimal degree of creativity" and it cannot be "familiar symbols or designs" to be granted copyright, the rejection letter said.

Stacy Taylor, the district's public and government affairs manager, said she plans to appeal and explain the "differences and nuances" of the logo. She said denials are common for initial copyright applications.

**Not so, says Burk:** "The threshold to get copyright is very low."

While the rejection letter

**DID YOU KNOW?** Mesa Water officials fought a "cybersquatter," someone who wanted the district's Web domain name and tried to "usurp" its logo, district Director Shawn Dewane said at a recent meeting.

does not go into specifics, Burk believes the Copyright Office might be balking at the phrase "Mesa Water," which could be considered insufficiently original to obtain copyright.

The district's trademark application for the phrase, though, has been approved pending a public review process (it's no longer Mesa Consolidated Water District).

Typically, companies trademark logos instead of copyrighting them, but the United States Patent and Trademark Office has restrictions on public agencies, Burk explained.

In Mesa Water's case, the trademark is just for the words, and not for the logo.

One public relations consultant charged the district about \$30,000 to advise it on logo design. Other companies, including graphic designers, charged a total exceeding \$25,000.

CONTACT THE WRITER:

714-796-2254 or mreicher@ocregister.com

use this grant to provide much needed revitalization to our restoration project, creating a healthier, more sustainable ecosystem for wildlife and local families who come here to enjoy nature." See **backtonatives.org**.  
**Ron Gonzales**  
714-796-6999 rgonzales@ocregister.com

**SEAL BEACH**  
**Road closures:** I-405 will be closed from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. nightly through Friday, and from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. Saturday night through Sunday morning, due to the reconstruction of the Seal Beach Boulevard bridge. That work will cause the closure of Seal Beach Boulevard nightly from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. through Saturday. On- and off-ramps of the I-405 will be realigned in the coming weeks, when crews will also be pouring concrete foundations for the carpool lane connector between I-405 and I-605.  
**Asher Klein**  
714-796-2390 aklein@ocregister.com

**TUSTIN**  
**Mayor's speech:** The annual State of the City address is Thursday, and Mayor Al Murray is expected to provide updates on Tustin's finances, city services, finances and development at the Legacy. Justin Stone, chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, the event's host, will also speak.  
**Joshua Stewart**  
714-796-2212 jstewart@ocregister.com

**VILLA PARK**  
**Budget review:** The city has posted online the draft 2013-14 budget. Residents can review it by visiting **villapark.org**. The City Council will hold a budget study session at 7 p.m. June 11 at Council Chambers, 17855 Santiago Blvd. The council could approve the budget June 25.  
**Fermin Leal**  
714-704-3773 fleal@ocregister.com

## OUR TOWNS: CENTRAL

of council members said the project had already been denied by the Planning Commission and Zoning Administrator and the developer hadn't made any changes. The council urged the property owner to submit a new plan and start the approval process over.

**Jaimee Lynn Fletcher**  
714-796-7953 jlfletcher@ocregister.com

**IRVINE**  
**Grocery store shuffle:** The Ralphs grocery store at 5331 University Drive in Irvine will be closing in early July. An Irvine Co. representative confirmed the closure and said Farm Direct, a grocery concept from the owners of Whole Foods, will be moving in. A notice filed by Ralphs with the state of California's Employment Development Department had warned that 51 of its employees in Irvine could be laid off by July 9. Ralphs spokeswoman Kendra Doyel said all 51 workers would be reassigned to other locations.  
**Kimberly Pierceall**  
k Pierceall@ocregister.com

**LOS ALAMITOS**  
**Training camp counselors:** The city's Counselor in Training Program returns June 17, giving 13- to 16-year-olds on-the-job training for running a camp. Kids who enroll will prep and organize events at camp and assist with camp excursions from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fees for the program run from \$210 to \$225 for each of the five sessions, the last of which ends Aug. 23. To register or for more information, call the Los Alamitos Recreation and Community Services Department at 562-430-1073 or visit **cityoflosalamitos.org**.  
**Asher Klein**  
714-796-2390 aklein@ocregister.com

**NEWPORT BEACH**  
**Meet the Mayor:** Mayor Keith Curry will host a Meet the Mayor event from 9 to 10:30 a.m. Saturday at the Civic Center Community room, 100 Civic Center Drive. He will take suggestions and answer questions. At 10:30 he will give a tour of the new Civic Center. The event is free and open to the public.  
**Deepa Bharath**  
714-796-7909 dbharath@ocregister.com

**ORANGE**  
**DUI arrests:** The Orange Police Department Traffic Unit arrested five drivers on suspicion of driving under the influence during last weekend's DUI/Drivers License checkpoint at 1800 W. Chapman Ave. Twenty-two drivers were issued citations for not having valid licenses, and two others were arrested for other criminal charges. The department will be conducting another DUI Checkpoint on June 14.  
**Fermin Leal**  
714-704-3773 fleal@ocregister.com

**SANTA ANA**  
**Environment:** Back to Natives, a nonprofit dedicated to conservation of wildlands, has received a \$30,000 grant from Wells Fargo & Co. to help support its Santiago Park Nature Reserve Volunteer Program. The group was among 64 recipients of Wells Fargo's 2013 Environmental Solutions for Communities grant program across the country in honor of Earth Day. "We are excited to be a recipient of this highly competitive Wells Fargo environmental grant program," said Reginald Durrant, director of Back to Natives. "We truly appreciate being recognized and will

**COSTA MESA**  
**Pension resignation:** A member of the city's newly formed Pension Oversight Committee has resigned, citing a scheduling conflict with other obligations. Shawn Dewane is also on the city Finance Advisory Committee, the Mesa Water District board, and the Orange County Water District Board. The City Council may appoint a replacement, but that has not yet been determined. The committee meets at 4:30 p.m. today in the first-floor conference room 1-A at City Hall, 77 Fair Drive.  
**Mike Reicher**  
714-796-2254 mreicher@ocregister.com

**FOUNTAIN VALLEY**  
**Making the Leap:** On Thursday, the Fountain Valley School District will host two seminars for parents of incoming first-graders. The "Making the Leap" workshops will address the expectations elementary schools have for kindergarteners. The workshops are 10 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Thursday at the Professional Development Center on the second floor of the district's office on 10055 Slater Ave., Fountain Valley. Information: 714-843-3286 or email burnsh@fvsd.us.  
**Lauren Steussy**  
714-796-2227 lsteussy@ocregister.com

**HUNTINGTON BEACH:**  
**Project denied:** An affordable housing project slated for the northwest corner Beach Boulevard and Edinger Avenue was denied by City Council members on Monday after city staff reported the applicant wasn't abiding by development standards for the area. The 24-unit Casa Rincon project did not meet the city's criteria for open space and was not designed for integration of neighboring parcels, which is the goal of the Beach and Edinger Downtown Specific Plan. The majority

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