



GENERAL MANAGER PERSPECTIVES

SAN DIEGO COUNTRY ESTATES ASSOCIATION

Darren Shaw

To Our SDCEA Homeowners,

After three years, this is my final contribution to *Valley News*. Reflecting on my time here, the most rewarding experience has undoubtedly been working alongside the dedicated employee team. When I arrived, I brought 30 years of experience and many ideas about managing your community. However, I quickly discovered that this remarkable team had just as much—if not more to offer.

After COVID, steering the ship back on course was no easy feat. Introducing changes to established practices wasn't always met with immediate acceptance, requiring a thoughtful and patient approach. It became clear that to move forward effectively, I had to take things slow. Earning the team's respect was always my top priority throughout this process, and it took some time. But once we connected, we were off and running.

The list of projects and community improvements we accomplished is extensive, and without the collective team, it would be far shorter. I'm incredibly proud of the employee team's accomplishments over the last three years.

The start of my workday was never inspired by board members, committees, or the general membership, it was inspired by the employee team – every day. Working alongside them was, without a doubt, the most rewarding part of this position. We worked side by side in the trenches, seeking out new and improved practices to bring value to the Association and its members despite frequent criticism. We explored, questioned, researched, and analyzed, never allowing ourselves to grow complacent. And for that, I commend the team.

Like any team, there are overachievers (OAs), reliable support players, and those who keep pace with the group. I relied on the OAs to help shape a work culture that fostered an environment where the team could maximize its efforts and achieve significant improvements in many areas. Like tuning a piano, regular attention is essential—otherwise, it falls out of tune, much like this team could. Together, we learned what it takes to check all the boxes, and I'm optimistic that the team will stay true to our shared commitment to excellence in everything it does.

Spending three years with the team gave me the opportunity to connect with many of the players, some more closely than others. I got to know nearly everyone to some degree and had the privilege of witnessing several individuals grow over the years in ways that will leave a lasting impression on me. While every team member's efforts and contributions are deeply appreciated, I'd like to specifically acknowledge Thunder Matheny, Lisa Everett, Nim Miranda, Ben Peterson, Josh Jones, and Juli Elliott for their continued growth and development. As a leader, supporting others in advancing their professional skills has always been a priority and a source of pride for me.

Working alongside this incredible team has been an honor and a privilege. The team's dedication, teamwork, and passion inspired greatness every day. As I step away, I leave with immense gratitude for the memories created and the milestones achieved together. Keep striving for excellence.

Thank you for everything!