

## Salaries

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ing in \$172,429 in salary and \$46,736 in benefits.

Assistant City Manager Reva Feldman followed close behind with \$172,395 in salary and \$46,736 in benefits.

Compared to towns of a similar size or population, Malibu's salaries fell in a middle range. Malibu's top 5 wage-earners averaged \$224,664 in salary and benefits, slightly above Agoura Hills' top 5 earners—\$216,563—and below the similarly sized coastal town of Port Hueneme, where the 5 highest paid employees earned an average of \$247,730.

Not included in the figures released by the state was the compensation for Malibu City Attorney Christi Hogin. Due to her status as a contracted employee with the city, rather than full-time, Hogin's salary was not submitted to the state, which surveys only public employees.

According to numbers provided by Feldman's office, the city paid \$555,340 in total legal fees

### Highest City Salaries (source: CA State Controller)

Title	Total Wages	Retirement & Health Costs
City Manager Jim Thorsen	\$209,229	\$64,377
Public Works Director Bob Brager	\$172,429	\$51,128
Assistant City Manager Reva Feldman	\$172,395	\$46,736
Environmental Sustainability Director Vic Peterson	\$167,541	\$39,865
Parks and Recreation Director Bob Stallings	\$155,225	\$44,395

to Hogin's firm in 2012. Of that total, roughly half—\$265,404—went toward "general legal counsel." Another \$289,936 was spent in ongoing litigation fees.

Hogin's firm was paid \$21,640 per month from January through June 2012 and \$22,094 per month from July through December 2012 for its legal counsel, Feldman said.

Feldman said paying a pre-established price each month works out better for the city.

"The city has an advantageous flat-fee arrangement with Jenkins

& Hogin, LLP for these services," she wrote in an email.

Monthly legal counsel fees are spread among four to five attorneys who handle Malibu's cases at Hogin's firm. Assistant City Attorney Gregg Kovacevich is also paid for providing legal counsel at Planning Commission meetings. The firm's legal duties include review of city contracts, resolutions and ordinances; Brown Act advice; personnel issues; first amendment issues; and public works bidding.

Hogin has served on and off as city attorney since Malibu incorporated in 1991. She also serves as city attorney for the cities of Lomita and Ranchos Palos Verdes and assistant city attorney in West Hollywood. Her husband and firm co-founder Mike Jenkins serves as city attorney for Hermosa Beach, Rolling Hills Estates and West Hollywood.

**15 school district employees average nearly \$140K**  
Superintendent Sandra Lyon

is the highest paid Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD) employee, taking home \$230,000 in base salary, which is less than the superintendents at most of the districts surveyed for this report.

The average of the top 15 highest paid district employees is \$139,732. Pasadena Unified School District's top 15 earners average \$138,160. At Beverly Hills Unified School District, the mean was \$128,458 and at Burbank Unified School District it was \$116,957.

No SMMUSD teachers made the list of the top 23 highest paid district employees in 2013-14, but 10 principals did. Santa Monica High School's Eva Mayoral was the highest-paid principal, bringing in \$133,188 this year. Malibu High School's Jerry Block made \$123,684.

*A portion of this story previously appeared in the Santa Monica Daily Press.*

## Drought

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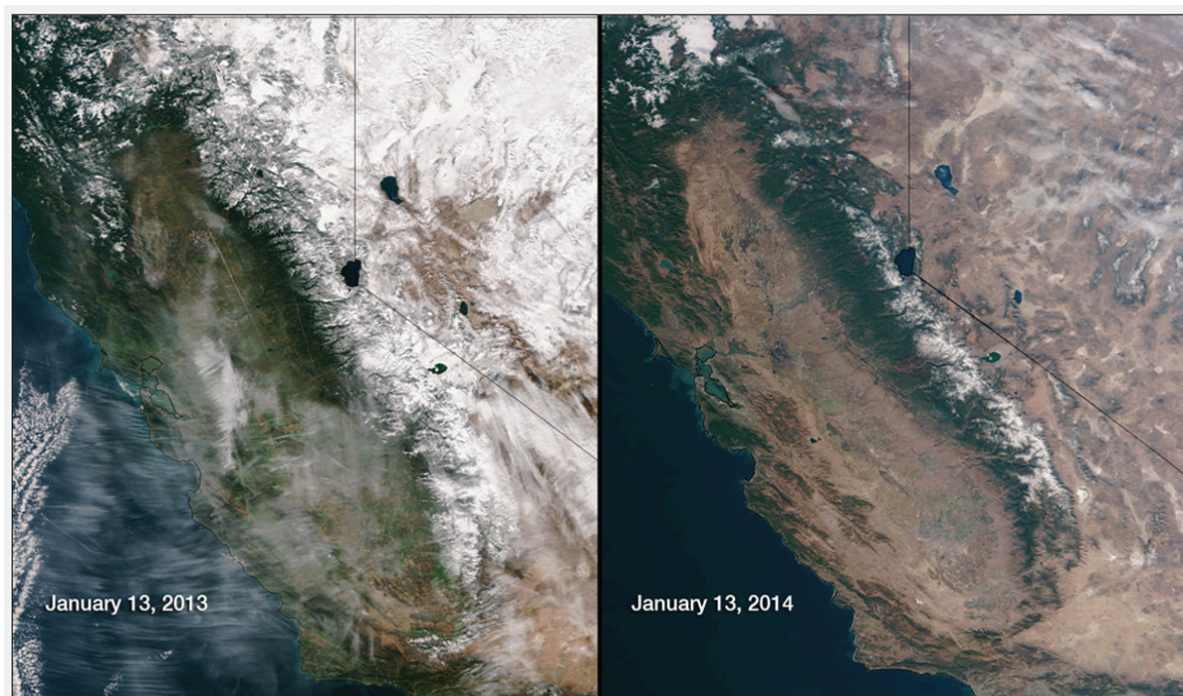
rainfall in Los Angeles.

"The last time we had rain in Southern California was Dec. 19," said Kathy Hossie, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service's (NWS) Los Angeles/Oxnard Weather Forecast Office in Oxnard. "Prior to that, we did have rain the day after Thanksgiving. Those are probably the only two notable storms we had this fall and winter season. We have no rain in our forecast."

Hossie said a ridge of high atmospheric pressure that has expanded across the West Coast is causing the moisture-less weather.

"Having a big ridge like this isn't unusual, what's unusual is that it hasn't moved much," she said. "Normally, we might have three to four weeks of a persistent ridge. It is not typical for it to stay this long and to keep the storm tracks moving to the north of us."

The ridge has been blocking storms and is part of the reason states outside of the West Coast have been experiencing such cool temperatures. Eleven states including Arkansas, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah have been designated primary natural disaster areas by federal inspectors due to the drought.



California is in the midst of an historic drought, and the Los Angeles area received less than a quarter of its typical rainfall in 2013—the driest year in state history. Above, satellite photos show the state in January 2013 (left), and today (right). Experts expect 2014 to be even drier than last year.

As for rain in upcoming weeks, Hossie said it's unlikely and fire danger will persist.

"Our official forecast goes out for seven days, but we have a pretty good look out to 10 days to two weeks and right now there is nothing that looks like it is going to make a difference in the next couple of weeks," she said.

### Dry weather, higher fire danger

Unfortunately for areas like Malibu, drier and hotter weather means huge wildfire risks.

Hossie said that in areas susceptible to wooded fires like Malibu, residents should exercise utmost caution during the dry conditions.

"Something [residents] do

every day, like flicking a cigarette butt out of a car window, could start a fire in this type of weather," she said. "We don't see any end in sight [of the dry weather], so they must be careful."

Hossie highlighted last week's Glendora wildfire, which was allegedly sparked by an illegal campfire and ultimate-

ly destroyed five homes and damaged 17 other structures. Officials believe the blaze began when three men tossed paper into the illegal fire and a gust of wind blew embers out of control.

"From what I heard, those guys seemed to be experienced," Hossie said.

Tony Morris of the Wildlife Research Network, a Topanga-based group that seeks to educate people about the dangers of wildfires, said no matter how dry the temperature, most fires are caused by humans.

Morris, who has written about wildfires for two decades, said people in Malibu can do several things help prevent wooded blazes.

"They can clear space around their home of brush and leaves," he said. "Embers from a fire can spread... Tell your neighbor to do the same thing. If their property isn't clear, that could present a danger."

After finishing a morning walk at Zuma Beach on Saturday, Jeremy Jack of Woodland Hills said the dry weather is a concern to him, but he is enjoying the warm temperatures.

"I've lived here all my life," said the 37-year-old. "You always hear about the fires and how dangerous they are. You just have to hope none occur."

## Cool cars

Banks of Books hosted a book signing and car display Saturday with author Tony Baker for his book "Images of America: Hot Rodding In Ventura County." Also in attendance were hot rodders Richard Martines and Jerry Williams, featured in the book, who were on hand to share stories about their past adventures. Baker, who plans to follow with a book called "Hot Rodding in Santa Barbara County" said, "I think the most fascinating aspect is the fact that these kids of diverse backgrounds got together in a time when that wasn't happening." The book is filled with classic images and fascinating local history about the golden age of hot rodding. On display was Williams' 1932 Ford "deuce" Coupe hot rod, a Model B Ford made famous in the Beach Boys song "Little Deuce Coupe."

Jerry Williams, Richard Martines and author Tony Baker sign "Images of America: Hot Rodding In Ventura County" at Banks of Books on Saturday.



Above: Classic images and the history of hot rodding fill the pages of Tom Baker's book.

Left: Jerry Williams opens the trunk of his 1932 Ford "deuce" Coupe hot rod, during the car display and book signing at Banks of Books.

Photos by Julie Ellerton / TMT

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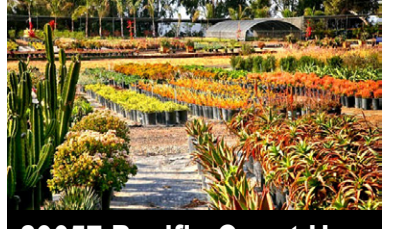


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