



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Menifee Announces Edward Varso III as Next Chief of Police

A Menifee resident, Varso will be the second Chief to lead the growing Menifee PD.

MENIFEE, CA – Following a national search, the City of Menifee has announced that City Manager Armando G. Villa has selected Edward Varso III, the City of Escondido’s current Chief of Police, to become the next Menifee Police Chief. This announcement by City Manager Villa follows the previously announced retirement of the Department’s founding Chief, Pat Walsh.

After beginning his law enforcement career with the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department in 1997, Chief Ed Varso was hired as a police officer with the Escondido Police Department in 2001. Varso served as a Police Officer and a Police K-9 Handler until he was promoted to Sergeant in 2011, supervising Patrol and the Department’s Traffic Division. In January 2015, he was promoted to Lieutenant, becoming a Public Information Officer (PIO) and managing the Special Investigations Division including narcotics, gangs, human trafficking, and criminal intelligence. He became commander of the Emergency Negotiations Team and second-in-command of Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT). Chief Varso was also assigned for six months to the City Manager’s Office to lead change management initiatives for the City’s Code Enforcement Division and Park Ranger Division. Following his promotion to Captain in 2018, Varso assumed responsibility for numerous administrative functions of the Department including human resources, training, policy development, strategic planning, and oversight of the Department’s budget, purchasing, vehicles, and property.

In October 2019, Varso was appointed to Assistant Chief and has served as Escondido’s Chief of Police since December 2019, where he has been responsible for a \$45M budget and 225 department employees.

“The Menifee Police Department continues to be a model law enforcement agency thanks in large part to the work of Chief Walsh and the men and women of our newly formed agency,” said City Manager Armando Villa. “Chief Varso’s reputation and proven law enforcement experience will ensure that the Mayor and City Council’s commitment to maintain a safe and premier community remains our top priority.”

Varso is credited with successfully leading his agency through the pandemic and civil unrest, and is recognized for his leadership roles in implementing new and innovative approaches to homelessness, technology, law enforcement recruiting and retention, and community relations. Varso holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice Administration, a Master’s Degree in Public Administration, and is a graduate of the FBI National Academy.

“As a resident of Menifee, I have watched the formation and growth of the Menifee Police Department and am humbled to become a part of the agency’s next chapter,” said Chief Varso. “I look forward to working with the department’s personnel, City leadership, and community members to maintain a safe and collaborative environment for law enforcement success.”

(Cont.)

Chief Varso will be sworn in as Menifee's new Chief at a special ceremony at Menifee City Hall on Thursday, June 30. He will assume his new duties on Tuesday, July 5, 2022.

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ABOUT MENIFEE: *Situated in the heart of southern Riverside County along Interstate 215, Menifee is a vibrant, new city of more than 100,000 residents who enjoy a pleasant year-round climate, abundant recreational offerings, reasonably priced housing, and convenient proximity to some of Southern California's premier attractions and employment centers. Within its 50 square miles, Menifee's business, retail, and entertainment outlets are starting to shape the community's character and this growing economic base is also contributing favorably to the city's strong financial position. Menifee's growing family-oriented population values the city's ongoing commitment to public safety, community events, and smart growth for the future. All of these elements are working together to support the city's strategic vision to make Menifee one of the state's most promising new cities.*