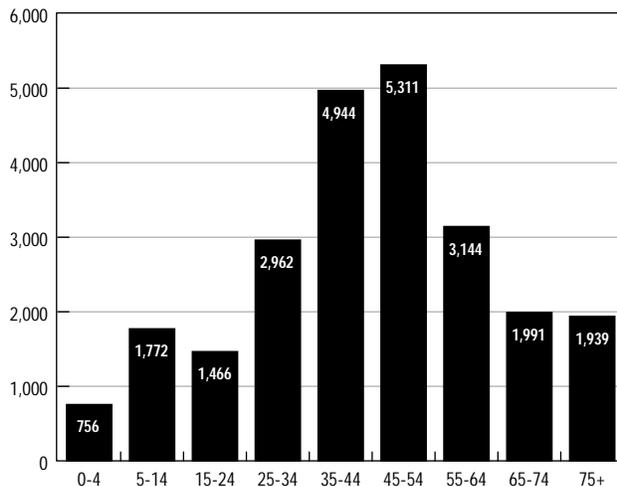


**LAGUNA BEACH RESIDENTS BY AGE (1999)**



Source: Marketview Comparison Report for Laguna Beach and Orange County, Claritas, Inc. 2000.

**Deteriorating Ocean Water Quality**

Overall, deteriorating water quality is a significant issue facing the City and central to preserving the quality of life for Laguna Beach residents. Deteriorating ocean and creek water quality affects residents, businesses and visitors alike. Urban runoff and sewage spills caused by aging infrastructure have altered the quality of the ocean's water and intertidal zones, threatening the health of humans and marine life. The County designated Aliso Creek as one of its most polluted waterways. It now drains 75 square miles of the densely populated Saddleback Valley that includes Laguna Niguel, Laguna Hills, Lake Forest and Aliso Woods. Local sources of water quality degradation include commercial activities, such as the washing down of commercial equipment into storm drains, urban residue such as pesticides, herbicides, oil and trash, deficient water conservation practices, and brake dust from cars. To address some of these issues, the City is repairing sewer lines, diverting summer nuisance flows, working with business owners to decrease urban runoff, improving the Laguna Canyon Channel, and very recently has established the position of Environmental Specialist to promote public awareness and provide enforcement. The

City also needs to address external sources of water quality degradation including pollution by inland cities and developments outside Laguna and work with neighbors to remediate these problems.

**Preserving Culture and the Arts**

While commitment to culture and the arts has been a long-standing and widely recognized characteristic of Laguna Beach, many community members expressed the fear that this critical component of our history and character is now being threatened. Local artists are being displaced by rising housing costs undermining a cornerstone of this tradition. Some believe fragmented cultural programming and a lack of equitable support for different art forms underlies a sense that the quality of local art expression is diminishing. Others feel the proposed relocation of the Festival of the Arts represents a loss of control over local cultural institutions. Increasing financial and institutional support for the arts and focusing on coherent cultural programming to ensure that the arts continue as a central feature of the image and identity of Laguna Beach surfaced as a critical challenge.

**Accommodating an Aging Population**

Like many communities, Laguna Beach is aging. Today, 71% of the population is 35 years or older, with a median age of 45.4 years. Addressing the cur-



rent and future needs of an aging population emerged as a major challenge for the City. Developing senior-focused services and facilities, including healthcare, recreation and social services and ensuring these amenities are accessible and affordable are important to consider. It is also important for Laguna to afford its seniors full opportunities to remain actively engaged in the civic life of the community. The chart on the prior page shows a breakdown of Laguna Beach residents by age.

#### **Encouraging Community Programs and Services for Children and Youth**

Community members are committed to offering community services to children and youth. In order to create a more youth-friendly environment, recreational facilities need to be expanded. Resident-serving parks such as soccer and baseball fields are currently used to capacity. Affordable daycare is an issue. Finally, more community-school partnerships need to be explored as a way to expand services and develop new programs.



#### **Continuing Educational Excellence**

The Laguna Beach schools and educational system offer excellent opportunities for children. Children excel in the Laguna Beach Unified School District and in regional private schools. Adults have access to numerous continuing education opportunities in the surrounding area and some local opportunities. Private foundations and the community-at-large have offered additional support to the school district. Yet, continued excellence demands ongoing care and attention. There is still a need to upgrade aging school facilities, provide educational alternatives for special needs children, improve course offerings in many areas including music, art, science, and technology, increase adult educational opportunities, and maintain outreach to the Hispanic and other minority communities.

#### **Preparing for Natural Disasters**

As Laguna Beach plans for the future, it will be important for the community to consider services and facilities that ensure the safety of its residents and visitors when natural disasters occur. To a certain extent, natural disasters have shaped Laguna Beach, and the community recognizes first hand the ongoing challenge of preparing for and adequately responding to events such as wildfires, floods and earthquakes. While public safety prevention and planning programs do exist such as the weed abatement program that uses goats to reduce fuel loading on public and private properties, there is still a need for more awareness, more innovation, and more effective programs.

#### **Managing Internal Community Conflict**

Laguna Beach is a community filled with spirited, action-oriented individuals and community organizations that occasionally find themselves in conflict with one another. Some suggest that this internal community conflict impedes the community from