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**AUDITOR-CONTROLLER AWARDS IRVINE MAYOR AND TWO COUNCIL MEMBERS THE TAXPAYER  
WATCHDOG AWARD FOR SAVING TAXPAYERS CLOSE TO \$50 MILLION**

**June 8, 2017** – Today, Orange County Auditor-Controller Eric H. Woolery awarded the Mayor of Irvine and two Irvine City Council Members with the honor of Taxpayer Watchdog for their role in saving the city of Irvine taxpayers over \$50 million. Earlier this month, Mayor Donald P. Wagner and Councilwomen Christina L. Shea and Melissa Fox voted to express the intent of the City of Irvine to enter a land swap with FivePoint Communities for an Orange County Veterans’ Cemetery. This will be the first Veterans’ Cemetery in Orange County.

The original site proposed for the cemetery would require at least \$30 million of Irvine taxpayer funds for the costs for demolition of numerous buildings and for toxic cleanup, and an additional \$40 million in state and federal grants. The new site previously served as a commercial strawberry field operation, which does not require any remediation to become public use land. The new site is close to the 5/405 freeway interchange, making it much more accessible to families visiting their loved ones.

In addition to the savings from not having to demolish buildings or engage in toxic cleanup, FivePoint Communities has also offered to contribute approximately \$9 million for the cemetery if it is constructed at the strawberry field.

The award was presented by Auditor-Controller Eric H. Woolery at the Auditor-Controller’s Taxpayer Watchdog Seminar on Mello-Roos.

“We have an incredible duty to be responsible stewards of the public’s hard earned taxpayer dollars,” said Mayor Donald P. Wagner. “I’m proud that we’ve undertaken an effort to save taxpayer dollars and do right by our veterans at the same time.”

Hosted by the Orange County Auditor-Controller in partnership with the Orange County Association of Realtors, the event featured a panel moderated by *Orange County Register* writer Jonathan Lansner and consisted of Auditor-Controller Eric H. Woolery, Mayor Donald P. Wagner, and Orange County Assessor Claude Parrish. This event is one of a series of events put on by the Auditor-Controller’s office at no charge to the public. To find out about the next event, visit the Auditor-Controller’s Facebook page [facebook.com/OCAuditor](https://www.facebook.com/OCAuditor).

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*The Auditor-Controller’s office of Orange County typically releases anywhere from 1 to 5 audits per month. Representing 3.3 million residents, the Orange County Auditor-Controller’s office is the largest independently elected Auditor-Controller in the nation. For more information on the Auditor-Controller’s office, visit [www.ac.ocgov.com](http://www.ac.ocgov.com).*