

LAGUNA BEACH COASTLINE PILOT

Work to begin on memorial to 2 police officers

July 15, 2014 9:38 a.m.

Crews will begin next week preparing the site for a memorial honoring two Laguna Beach police officers who died while on duty, according to the city's website.

The sculpture, titled "Eternal Legacy," will be dedicated to Jon Coutchie and Gordon French, who died 60 years apart. Laguna Beach artists Gerard Stripling and Michele Taylor designed the sculpture, which will be placed outside Police Department headquarters on Loma Terrace.



Left: Officer Gordon French. Right: Officer Jon Coutchie of the Laguna Beach Police Department. (Courtesy Larry Bammer / Coastline Pilot / July 15, 2014)

The street will occasionally close to cars — or be reduced to one lane — to move a gas line and install the 7-foot-tall sculpture, which is being made of bronze, cast glass and resin and will feature an illuminated flame. Nearby residents and businesses will be notified of the closures.

The city anticipates the project will be completed by Sept. 21, the one-year anniversary of Coutchie's death. A ceremony will be held that day.

Coutchie was riding his motorcycle north on South Coast Highway at 11:45 p.m. Sept. 21, 2013, when he struck a pickup truck turning left onto Cleo Street. Authorities said Coutchie was thrown from his motorcycle and died at the scene.

French died in 1953 after being shot by a prisoner attempting to escape from the police station, according to the city's website.

The Laguna Beach Police Employees' Assn., Laguna Beach Community Foundation and the city raised money for the project.

—Bryce Alderton

<http://www.coastlinepilot.com/news/tn-cpt-me-0718-police-memorial-20140715,0,5806244.story>