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Attn: Supervisor Jeff Gorell and Municipal Advisory Committees

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Start of 2026 Wildland Fire Season Declared:

The Ventura County Fire Department (VCFD) has declared the start of the 2026 wildland fire season, affecting both resource staffing and responses to initial reports of vegetation fires. This declaration is based on an assessment of fuel conditions, weather patterns, and the anticipated potential for increased fire behavior.

For the duration of fire season, VCFD will implement seven-day staffing for hand crews, heavy equipment operators, and Patrol 16 assigned to the Lockwood Valley station. Initial responses to reported brush fires will include six engines, four hand crews, and two helicopters, along with additional resources such as bulldozers, water tenders, and other support equipment. This enhanced response model helps ensure an appropriate and effective deployment of resources to wildland fires throughout the county

Whole Blood Program – 1 year review:

VCFD reported first-year results from its Whole Blood Program, demonstrating the impact of this groundbreaking initiative. Firefighter/Paramedics administered 37 blood transfusions throughout the county to patients experiencing both traumatic injuries and serious medical emergencies. More than 70 percent of recipients were male, with a median age of 50 years.

Reflecting the program's effectiveness, 54 percent of transfusion recipients survived their injury or illness and were ultimately discharged from the hospital. VCFD administered California's first paramedic-delivered field blood transfusion in April of last year and was among the first agencies in the state to provide this lifesaving treatment. The department's EMS division continues to pursue innovative approaches to deliver the highest quality patient care to the community.

Fire Hazard Reduction Program Announcements Mailed to County Residents:

VCFD has begun mailing notices to property owners participating in the Fire Hazard Reduction Program, reminding them of the June 1 deadline for required brush clearance. Each year, VCFD engine companies and Fire Prevention staff conduct more than 19,000 inspections of homes and properties located in high-risk wildland-urban interface areas, with nearly 100 percent compliance. These inspections also provide valuable opportunities for personnel to engage directly with community members, offering wildfire safety information, guidance, and regulatory education in a consultative and supportive manner.

Although the Board of Forestry has not yet finalized updated vegetation clearance regulations, VCFD is proactively encouraging residents to prepare for a three-year phase-in of anticipated changes. These updates are expected to significantly limit combustible materials within five feet of residences in the program. The mailer also included home-hardening recommendations, information about local Fire Safe Councils, and additional wildfire preparedness resources.

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