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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



May 13, 2025

Ventura County Fire Secures \$1 Million Grant to Strengthen Wildfire Resilience in High-Risk Communities

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. — The Ventura County Fire Department, in partnership with District 2 Supervisor Jeff Gorell, has secured a \$1 million grant from the Santa Monica Mountain Conservancy to enhance wildfire prevention and preparedness across the Santa Monica Mountains region of Ventura County.

The grant, unanimously approved by the conservancy board Monday night, will fund comprehensive wildfire resilience efforts, including recruiting and support for new Firewise Communities, strategic fuel reduction across more than 150 acres, enhanced public education efforts and the acquisition of a water tender to improve firefighting capabilities.

“This grant is a critical investment in the safety of our communities. It is a forward-looking, community-centered approach that addresses immediate risks and long-term resilience,” said Ventura County Fire Chief Dustin Gardner. “We are grateful to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Board and to Supervisor Jeff Gorell for his advocacy. His efforts were instrumental in securing this funding, which will allow us to take further action now to prevent future wildfire devastation.”

The project targets some of the region’s most vulnerable areas where wildlands meet built communities, with fuel reduction work planned in the areas surrounding Veeder Fire Road, Carlisle Road, Mipolomol Road, Serrano Road, Deer Creek and Pacific View Road. Treatments could include mulching vegetation, pile burning, goat grazing and road maintenance to improve access and evacuation routes.

“This funding is vital for ongoing efforts to protect our region from the growing threat of wildfire,” said Supervisor Jeff Gorell. “It builds on the strong foundation laid by the Ventura County Fire Department and our community partners, helping to safeguard our neighborhoods, open spaces and natural resources.”

Educational components will focus on helping homeowners reduce risk through home hardening, defensible space and participation in the Firewise USA® program.



VENTURA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

Dustin Gardner

Fire Chief

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Last month, the conservancy awarded the fire department \$200,000 to plan and operate a wildfire prevention program within the Santa Monica Mountains Zone and Rim of the Valley Corridor within Ventura County. The project area includes public parklands and local cities, and will be developed in consultation with Simi Valley, Moorpark, and Casa Conejo.

For more information or to get involved with your local Firewise community, visit VCFD.org.