

CITY OF VENTURA

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# NEWS RELEASE

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Fire Chief David Endaya

**City of Ventura Releases Thomas Fire After Action Review:  
Outlines Investments to Increase Resiliency**

The City of Ventura has released its after action review of the Thomas Fire that analyzes the City's immediate response and initial recovery operations for the unprecedented disaster. The goal of the 23-page report is to evaluate what was done, examine lessons learned, and identify areas for future implementation, many of which have already been underway over the past year. The review is available online at [www.cityofventura.ca.gov/thomasfire](http://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/thomasfire).

The emergency management company, Terra Firma Enterprises, created the review with participation from the City of Ventura department directors and emergency operations center (EOC) staff. Several after action review sessions were held to analyze the City's actions during the fire and post-fire recovery.

The largest fire recorded in California at the time, the Thomas Fire required an enormous response from the City, the region, and beyond. Fighting the fire necessitated a vast effort, including one of the largest deployment of firefighters in state history—more than 8,500. In Ventura, firefighters and public safety personnel initiated extensive evacuation procedures and an immediate aggressive attack on the fire. Due to the swift and well-coordinated response, the City of Ventura experienced no loss of life as a direct result of the fire.

The after action review highlights a number of the City's strengths in performance related to the fire such as the instant action by first responders to evacuate the hillsides to save lives, early implementation of communication and outreach efforts, and prioritization of critical City services.

Ventura and the entire State of California are learning important lessons from recent wildfires, including the Thomas Fire. The City is using these lessons to increase its disaster resiliency. For example, as part of this effort, the City is moving forward with a request to create a permanent Emergency Manager. The new position will coordinate ongoing efforts, maintain compliance and provide day-to-day tactical emergency management. Although no urban water system is designed to operate under or protect against a massive, unstoppable wildfire, further investments also include obtaining and positioning additional generators to ensure that all water facilities have sufficient backup power during a prolonged, citywide power shutoff, and programs that increase water supply reliability to respond to natural and man-

made hazards. Since the Thomas Fire, Ventura has also added supplemental fire resources, which includes an additional roaming fire engine that provides 40 hours a week more of service to the City.

“We continue to share our heartfelt sympathy for those who were impacted by the fire,” said Fire Chief David Endaya. “We are committed to learning from this disaster and preparing for the future. This includes requests for new positions, like an Emergency Manager, that can further support and help lead our disaster response efforts. Wildfires are an unfortunate, but likely reality in California. The most resilient cities are those that listen, learn, and adapt – Ventura will do just that.”

After action reviews are critical in helping communities examine and learn from disasters like the Thomas Fire. Through this experience Ventura is driving forward with new actions, measures, and programs to better prepare for the years to come.