



County of Ventura Supervisor Linda Parks

PRESS RELEASE **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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VOLUNTEERS IN POLICING (VIP) PROGRAM COMES TO OAK PARK ***Service Begins July 1***

VENTURA COUNTY, CA (July 1, 2019) The unincorporated community of Oak Park is delighted to welcome its first Volunteers in Policing (VIP) program, courtesy of the City of Thousand Oaks, the Ventura County Sheriff's Office, and the County of Ventura. The service was requested by the Oak Park Municipal Advisory Council (MAC) over a decade ago, to be paid for by funds set aside from Oak Park property tax.

County Supervisor Linda Parks, whose district includes Oak Park, pursued the program on behalf of the community. She offered her thanks to the City of Thousand Oaks and the Ventura County Sheriff's Office for their collaboration. "The Oak Park community is very grateful for the opportunity to have the VIP service. We appreciate the goodwill and collaboration that brought this long awaited service to reality. The VIP's will not only make the community of Oak Park safer, their work will also free up our deputies so they can concentrate more of their time on fighting crime, which increases the safety of our region."

The long process included negotiations with two different administrations at the City of Thousand Oaks, votes by the City Council, the Board of Supervisors, the Oak Park MAC, and the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). The process culminated Tuesday evening, June 25 when the Oak Park MAC voted in support of the agreement of services that the VIP's will perform. The VIP program will use Ventura County Sheriff's Office-trained volunteers.

The VIP's will perform support functions that include vacation house checks, observing and reporting suspicious/criminal activity, writing routine reports, providing assistance for various traffic related matters, crime scene security, searches, and completing field interviews.

Funding for the VIP program will be from the existing revenue of Community Service Area No. 4 in Oak Park, which is funded by property taxes in Oak Park. The estimated cost of the VIP services is \$25,000 annually. Seema Chandra, Chair of the Oak Park MAC stated that the VIP program will "enhance public safety within the Oak Park community in a cost-efficient manner. Volunteers will increase the visibility of law enforcement and help reduce criminal activity."

Residents of Oak Park will now join the City of Thousand Oaks in receiving VIP service. Residents can sign up for vacation house checks to have VIP's check their homes. Volunteers interested in scheduling vacation checks, or who want to inquire about joining the VIP, are encouraged to go to www.venturasheriff.org, or call (805) 371-8398.

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