

## **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IS A KEY TO GOOD GOVERNMENT**

by Ventura County Supervisor Linda Parks, April 2010

Citizen participation is a key to good government and in the County of Ventura we have a multitude of opportunities to become active in local government. Through workshops, committees, boards, and commissions, citizens are invited to learn and take part in the functioning of our government. The County of Ventura has several boards, committees, and commissions that provide a venue for the public's input on a wide variety of issues, such as the Workforce Investment Board which oversees funding for employment and training programs, the Cultural Heritage Board that advises the Board of Supervisors on matters significant to the heritage and culture of Ventura County, and Community Action of Ventura County that assists low income, disadvantaged and at-risk families.

Serving a multi-generational, multi-faceted population, the County assists senior residents through the Advisory Council for the Area Agency on Aging, as well as Ventura County's youth through the Children and Families First Commission. Each of these boards, committees, and commissions offer a unique opportunity for citizens to get involved and volunteer to enrich our community.

Whether you participate as a member of a committee that meets regularly (such as the Mental Health Board, on which I also sit, that advocates for the mentally ill) or volunteer to assist committee activities, there are opportunities available to meet your schedule and interest. Additionally, every public meeting of every committee, board, and commission and the Board of Supervisors has a public comment period for the public to come and speak. Below is a list of some of the County committees, boards, and commissions that currently exist:

- Alcohol and Drug Advisory Board
- Air Pollution Control District Advisory Board
- Civil Service Commission
- Women's Commission
- HIV/AIDS Advisory Committee
- Parks Advisory Commission
- Aviation Advisory Commission
- Fish and Game Commission
- Planning Commission

Residents in Oak Park, Santa Rosa Valley, and Casa Conejo can help enhance the quality of life in their unincorporated communities by getting involved with their Municipal Advisory Council

(MAC). The MAC's meet monthly, or in the case of Casa Conejo bimonthly, and are lively forums for discussing local issues and for making recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. MAC members serve four year terms, and work on a voluntary basis. The meetings are attended by law enforcement and staff from various County departments and fill an important need by bringing County services out to the communities. The Ventu Park Fire Safe Council has a similar function for members of that unincorporated part of Newbury Park.

I hope you take the time to give us your input to make our County even better!