



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 1, 2022

Dustin Gardner appointed as next County of Ventura Fire Chief

Ventura, CA – After a nationwide recruitment, Dustin Gardner has been appointed as the next County Fire Chief. Appointed by the County Executive Officer, with the concurrence of the Board of Supervisors, he will be the 12th Fire Chief in the County Fire Department’s 94-year history. He will be responsible for the protection of life and property from fire and other emergencies by directing the activities of the Ventura County Fire Protection District.

“Dustin is bright, dedicated and a proven leader. With Dustin, we don’t have to wonder what kind of Chief he will be, especially in the most intense circumstances, we have seen it. During the many disasters our County has faced he has demonstrated calm, thoughtful, strategic leadership and decision-making at critical points that has protected our community. Having served in or overseen just about every aspect of Department operations, he is extremely well qualified. He cares deeply about supporting the brave men and women of the Department and serving our diverse County. He has successfully worked to strengthen relationships with our many local, state and federal partners,” said County Executive Officer Michael Powers. “As the nature and intensity of disasters change, Dustin has played a key role in the Department’s endeavors to continually adapt with new technology, training and tactics. I have every confidence that, under Dustin’s leadership, the Ventura County Fire Department will sustain and enhance the strength of its capacity to protect our community.”

Chief Gardner brings extensive managerial and administrative experience in fire protection over a 23-year career with Ventura County Fire. Most recently serving as the Deputy Fire Chief, he has been responsible for the department’s daily operations supervising all five bureaus. His experience also encompasses large-scale incident command and regional coordination for numerous large-scale incidents, including the Thomas Fire, Easy Fire, Maria Fire, Borderline response, Woolsey Fire and Hill Fire. His budgeting background encompasses the planning and management of fire’s \$200 million dollar budget and the creation of Fire’s 10-year capital plan.

“I am deeply honored to be appointed as the next Ventura County Fire Chief. I believe the dedicated people that serve the Ventura County Fire Department are among the most talented in today’s fire service. We will continue to value strong relationships with our local and regional partners with an unwavering commitment to improving and enhancing our services. We will remain dedicated to creating an environment that cultivates trust, honor, and dedication with the diverse communities of Ventura County that we are proud to serve and where we call home,” said Chief Gardner.



COUNTY of VENTURA

MICHAEL POWERS
County Executive Officer

800 South Victoria Ave., Ventura, CA 93009 • Hall of Administration
www.ventura.org • www.vcnewschannel.com

ASHLEY BAUTISTA
Public Information Officer
TEL: (805) 654-2640

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“The people of Ventura County can be confident in Chief Gardner’s experience, skills and heart to serve us in the best of times and in times of crisis. I offer my congratulations and thanks along with that of my fellow supervisors,” said Chair of the Board Supervisors Carmen Ramirez.

The County Fire Chief has full responsibility for planning and managing the operations of the Fire District including a variety of community service functions, including fire code enforcement, community education, and inspection along with organizing, and directing full-service fire, rescue, and medical emergency response.

“Our communities will be well served by Chief Gardner. He has demonstrated his commitment and compassion to those we serve over the course of his career and will be a good steward of the District’s resources. We are fortunate to be in such extremely capable and competent hands,” said outgoing Fire Chief Mark Lorenzen.

The County of Ventura Fire Department response area includes more than 480,000 community members in the unincorporated areas of Ventura County and seven of its cities: Ojai, Port Hueneme, Moorpark, Camarillo, Santa Paula, Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks. Comprised of approximately 600 dedicated personnel, the Department is an all-hazard, full-service agency. Services are built around the mission of anticipating and responding to the dynamic public safety needs of the diverse community. This includes prevention and education, response and communication. The Department provides protection, medical aid, rescue, hazardous materials response, and a variety of other services to the public. Formed in 1928 as a special district, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors acts as the fire department's board of directors.

Chief Gardner will begin his position on February 5, 2022. More information about the Ventura County Fire Department can be found at: vcfd.org/.