Ventura County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services uses Everbridge for Wildfire Response

> " Public safety personnel utilize a wide array of tools to communicate emergency information to residents during an emergency. The Everbridge platform is our primary system to communicate actionable emergency information to our residents during the Thomas Fire . . . The Everbridge platform was extensively tested during the fire and we had a 97% message delivery success rate in delivering our messages to landline phones, cellphones and emails.
>
> Gil Zavlodaver
> **Ventura County Sheriff**

OVERVIEW

Ventura County is one of 58 counties in the State of California. Geographically, the county includes 42 miles of coastline and the Los Padres National Forest, which accounts for 46% of the county's land mass in the northern portion of the county. Fertile valleys in the southern half of the county make Ventura County a leading agricultural producer. Together, farming and the Los Padres National Forest occupy half of the county's 1.2 million acres.

Ventura County has over 850,000 culturally and ethnically diverse people who call Ventura County home. The unincorporated areas, along with the ten incorporated cities of Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Santa Paula, Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, and San Buenaventura (Ventura) ranks Ventura County as the 11th most populous county in the State.

PROBLEM

On December 4, 2017 the massive Thomas Fire ripped through Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties burning approximately 281,893 acres and becoming the largest recorded wildfire in modern California history. The fire, which was not fully contained until January 12, 2018, tested the emergency preparedness, response and recovery efforts of public safety personnel across Ventura County. The Thomas Fire impacted the cities of Santa Paula, Ventura, Ojai and Unincorporated areas of Ventura County. In total, law enforcement agencies from the impacted jurisdictions issued 31 evacuation orders to more than 90,000 residents, which consisted of 25 mandatory evacuations and 6 voluntary evacuation orders.

SOLUTION

The Ventura County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services has a robust public alert & warning program. The county's VC Alert program is powered by Everbridge and was leveraged extensively during the Thomas Fire to reach residents. Between December 4th and December 15, the Ventura County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services issued 64 VC Alert emergency notifications to residents, providing information related to mandatory and voluntary evacuations, repopulation, boil water orders and advisory messages. Ventura County also delivered two Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs) and two Emergency Alert System messages via the Everbridge platform to more broadly disseminate emergency information to residents and other individuals near the vicinity of the fire. The WEA and EAS alert messages linked to the "Ready Ventura County" website to ensure residents had up to the minute details regarding evacuation locations. The easy to use Everbridge interface, and the reliability of message delivery, were several keys to Ventura County's ability to successfully reach their residents during this harrowing event.

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