

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 25th, 2021

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Port of Hueneme Hosts Wheelchair Distribution for Local Disabled Veterans

40 wheelchairs distributed to veterans in need

PORT OF HUENEME, JUNE 25, 2021 -- The Port of Hueneme, in collaboration with 12 other organizations, sponsored and hosted a wheelchair distribution for veterans in need on Friday, June 25, at the Port's administrative offices. These wheelchairs are part of a larger effort coordinated by Gold Coast Veterans Foundation, Disabled American Veterans - Ventura Chapter 24, Knights of Columbus, and other organizations in the county.



Paul Calloway, PCP, Knights of Columbus, Los Padres Chapter; Robert Arenas, member of Disabled American Veterans – Ventura Chapter 24; Jim McHugh, CAPT, USN (Ret.), Veteran Services Officer, County of Ventura; Mayor Steven Gama, City of Port Hueneme; Mayor John Zaragoza, City of Oxnard; Manuel Gonzalez, Disabled American Veterans – Ventura Chapter 24; Robert Cruz, Adjuant, Disabled American Veterans – Ventura Chapter 24; Roger Santos, retired United States Navy Chief and wheelchair recipient; Charlie Foote, Commander, CSO, Disabled American Veterans – Ventura Chapter 24

News Release



Oxnard Harbor District Board President Jason T. Hodge stated, “We extend our sincere gratitude to military personnel for their bravery and dedication to our country. Today it is our privilege to honor veterans here in Ventura County, and we thank them for their courage and service, and participate in the distribution of much needed wheelchair equipment.”



Harbor Commissioner Jess J. Ramirez, a Vietnam veteran, also added “Partnering with our local veterans is important for the Port as we honor the brave sacrifice of local service members who are in need. This is one example of our Port supporting veteran initiatives, including the downtown Oxnard Veteran’s Memorial beautification project.”



Charlie Foote, Commander, CSO of Disabled American Veterans – Ventura Chapter 24, presents a certificate to Oxnard Harbor District Commissioner Jess J. Ramirez.

In total, over a dozen groups raised nearly \$33,000 to purchase this new shipment of wheelchairs. Organizations that assisted with the procurement of the wheelchairs include Port of Hueneme/Oxnard Harbor District, Gold Coast Veterans Foundation, DAV Ventura Chapter 24, The Knights of Columbus Los Padres Chapter, Camarillo Somis Pleasant Valley Lions, Las Posas Country Club, Yolanda’s Mexican Café, Oxnard Monday Club and Topper’s Pizza.

“Our veterans are important to the fabric of our community and their sacrifice to our great country will forever be appreciated,” said Kristin Decas, CEO & Port Director. “During this COVID-19 pandemic, it is especially important to provide resources that ensure the health, safety, and mobility of our local veterans.”

In addition to 40 wheelchairs located at the Port of Hueneme, a total of 110 wheelchairs will also be stored at locations across Ventura County including Holy Cross Catholic Church in Moorpark and the Gold Coast Veterans Foundation in Camarillo.

For more information about this project, or to request a wheelchair, contact Gold Coast Veterans Foundation (805) 482-6550.



Disabled veteran Roger Santos sits in his new wheelchair as Bob Harris, Executive Director of the Gold Coast Veterans Foundation and Miguel Rodriguez, Community Outreach Manager of the Port of Hueneme look on.

Megan Bland, District Director from the Office of Congresswoman Julia Brownley (26th District), remarked about how many lives will be changed because of the generosity of those who contributed to making the donation of the wheelchairs possible. “These wheelchairs are not just a mobility assistance device, they represent independence, freedom, and safety—ideals that the veterans who will receive these wheelchairs risked their lives to defend for us,” said Bland.



Veterans salute members of the Vietnam Veterans of Ventura County and Disabled American Veterans – Ventura Chapter 24 as they present the Colors during the ceremony.

“Helping to provide wheelchairs like this is really such a simple yet critical need and life-changing event for these veterans,” said Jim McHugh, Veterans Services Officer from the County of Ventura’s Veteran Services Office. “Our veterans bravely did what they were called to do so that we can safely do what we are free to do. I am so proud to be a part of this community.”

The Port of Hueneme is one of the most productive and efficient commercial trade gateways for niche cargo on the West Coast. The Port is governed by five locally elected Port Commissioners. The Port moves \$10.85 billion in goods each year and consistently ranks among the top ten U.S. ports for automobiles and fresh produce. Port operations support the community by bringing \$1.7 billion in economic activity and creating 15,834 trade-related jobs. Trade through the Port of Hueneme generates more than \$119 million in direct and related state and local taxes, which fund vital community services. In 2017, the Port of Hueneme became the first port in California to become Green Marine certified. www.portofh.org

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