

Welcoming in the New Year

by Supervisor Linda Parks, December 2021

With the New Year just around the corner, I wanted to take this opportunity to glance back at 2021 which, despite the tremendous challenges we faced, was a remarkably productive year for our County. Realizing how much we were able to accomplish despite our "all hands on deck" response to the pandemic, I can't wait to see what we can do in 2022!

I was honored to Chair the Board of Supervisors this year and in January I will be passing the gavel to our wonderful vice chair Carmen Ramirez. It was a year of mass mobilization of vaccines and testing, heroes at our hospitals, housing hundreds of unsheltered, providing over \$70 million to businesses as well as tens of millions in rental assistance. Thousands of County employees were disaster service workers and still continued their "day jobs." We approved a 100% farmworker housing project, and affordable housing for senior citizens, people with mental health challenges, and vulnerable young adults. We were also able to add more crisis beds for people with mental illness. We supported our law enforcement with helicopters and resources for enhanced response and evacuations.

Our Planning Department won an award of excellence for our General Plan update, and we completed our housing elements and our coastal plans, including incorporating a dark sky ordinance in the Malibu/Yerba Buena portion of my district and limiting the use of toxic pesticides in that coastal zone. We're delighted to see Caltrans moving forward with a lighted, pedestrian-activated crosswalk on PCH at Neptune's Net. The crosswalk will be constructed this year, and the area is under study for additional future safety, bicycle, and coastal access improvements. The new crosswalk will be a very welcome addition for all who visit or travel through the area. A new park is being built next to Growing Works nonprofit nursery and the RAIN homeless shelter that will provide a place of comfort for many vulnerable populations that will live next-door. We also just completed a major redistricting effort providing for the first time, greater opportunity for Latino representation. (You can find a street level of the final map here: www.ventura.org/redistricting). The Clean Power Alliance continues to make history with the most 100% green energy customers in the nation. While it's been a year of challenges, I am so appreciative of the many who moved our County forward with an unprecedented amount of exceptional services to meet the extraordinary demands we faced.