

Santa Barbara County of

RESOLUTION NO. 26-40

RESOLUTION HONORING FIRE CHIEF DAVID NEELS UPON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE MONTECITO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

WHEREAS, during his tenure, Chief David Neels dedicated 37 years of service to the firefighting profession locally, including 21 years with the Santa Barbara County Fire Department and six-and-a-half years with the Montecito Fire Protection District; and

WHEREAS, he responded to dozens of major local incidents during his 27-year-long firefighting career in Santa Barbara County, including the Tea Fire, Thomas Fire and 1/9 Debris Flow of 2018 and served on federal Incident Management Teams for over 15 years responding to large emergency incidents across the western United States; and

WHEREAS, he was a founding member of the Santa Barbara County Firefighters Benevolent Foundation, an organization that provides financial relief for firefighters and families of firefighters when stricken in the line of duty, funds scholarships for children of deceased firefighters, created and maintains a firefighter's memorial, established a means of receiving donations to support the wellbeing of the members of the Department; and

WHEREAS, he wrote and implemented the first Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWFF) in the County of Santa Barbara for the Mission Canyon community, setting an industry standard of creating localized plans for areas vulnerable to severe wildfire impacts.

WHEREAS, Chief Neels now looks forward to a well-deserved retirement, enjoying more quality time with his family, friends, and colleagues;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY ORDERED AND RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara does hereby honor and commend Chief David Neels for his distinguished service, outstanding leadership, and lasting contributions to public safety and the residents of Santa Barbara County.

PASSED AND ADOPTED, by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara, State of California, this 3rd day of March, 2026 by a unanimous vote of all members present.



Maria Nizasat
ATTEST: Clerk of the Board

[Signature]
Supervisor - 1st District

[Signature]
Supervisor - 2nd District

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Supervisor - 3rd District

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Supervisor - 4th District

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Supervisor - 5th District

