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PRESS RELEASE

August 7, 2018

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COUNTY TO TRANSITION OUT OF MONTECITO CENTER BY AUGUST 31 *County Services for Residents Impacted By Disasters To Continue Remotely*

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) – The County of Santa Barbara announced today that it will transition County services out of the Montecito Center (Center) by August 31. The Center was opened in March as a central location for residents impacted by the Thomas Fire and 1/9 Debris Flow to access support and services.

The County committed to keeping the Center open for three to six months; August marks six months of the Center. While the Center may be closing, the services and support continue. The County's preparedness and recovery website, www.ReadySBC.org, maintains an inventory of key contacts and resources.

"The Montecito Center has served as a critical source of support for hundreds of local residents who were impacted by recent disasters," said First District County Supervisor Das Williams. "While the County is transitioning out of the Center, we and our many partners in the government, nonprofit, philanthropic and volunteer sectors will continue to assist people in rebuilding their lives in the wake of these disasters."

The County's Planning and Development Department assigned impacted property owners with skilled case managers to be a single point of contact through the rebuilding process. To find their case manager, impacted residents should call (805) 568-2090, send email to pad@co.santa-barbara.ca.us, or visit the Planning and Development Zoning Counter at 123 E. Anapamu St., Santa Barbara 93101.

Since the Center opened in March, County agencies connected directly with more than 250 property owners who are moving forward in their recovery and rebuilding efforts. More than 700 residents have accessed some form of support through the Center with varying levels of need. Dozens of local, state and federal agencies, nonprofits, donors and community efforts have partnered with the Center over the past six months to create a coordinated and comprehensive model for recovery and rebuilding.

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“These disasters led to massive destruction and profound human tragedy, but in the wake of it all we have seen the best of humanity emerge and take root,” said Ben Romo, Director of the Center and Community Recovery and Engagement Coordinator for the County Office of Emergency Management. “The community bonded to help their neighbors. Thousands of people have volunteered; agencies and nonprofits stepped up to lead; and donors contributed funding.”

While the County’s role at the Center will phase out as of August 31, some community partners are exploring the possibility of maintaining a physical presence beyond August to support constituent needs. Partners physically located at the Center include California Hope 805 Crisis Counseling Program, Habitat for Humanity, Santa Barbara Bucket Brigade, United Way of Santa Barbara County, 805 Conservation, County Supervisor Das Williams’ staff, Women’s Economic Ventures, Institute for Collective Trauma & Growth, and the American Institute of Architects of Santa Barbara.

For more information about the transition of services at the Montecito Center, please contact Ben Romo at bromo@sbcoem.org or the Center directly at (805) 845-7887 or montecitocenter@sbcoem.org.