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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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County achieves a Top 10 Digital County ranking for the fourth consecutive year

VENTURA, Calif. – For the fourth consecutive year, the County of Ventura has been named as a Top Digital County by the Center for Digital Government and the National Association of Counties.

The Digital Counties Survey identifies the best technology practices among U.S. counties, including initiatives that save tax dollars through efficiency, boost transparency, cybersecurity and engagement; or innovate through unique and exciting projects. The County finished in fourth place on the survey this year.

"It's an honor to receive this recognition of our continued focus on innovative services and a validation of our efforts to keep pace with rapidly evolving technology by seeing how we compare to our peers nationwide," said County Executive Officer Mike Powers. "It reflects our Board's significant investment in technology as well as the vision and skill of our managers and workforce in utilizing these tools to enhance County services."

The importance of the County's commitment to technology was clearly apparent during the recent Thomas Fire. In the face of an unprecedented disaster, the County's Information Technology Services Department was able to establish emergency information websites in both English and Spanish, and launch a fire recovery website in both languages just days after the start of the fire.

In addition, the department launched an update to the County's main website that employs artificial intelligence through Microsoft's cognitive chatbot services to enhance user experience on the site. The site also includes an Amazon Alexa skill that allows the public to engage with the County using varied, accessible technologies. Other Information Technology initiatives included water management projects utilizing networks of sensors to monitor and manage usage, crime analytics and surgery and telemedicine robots.

"We have invested in technical training for our workforce to enable them to deliver more mobile and data analytics solutions to the public," said Mike Pettit, Assistant County Executive Officer and former Chief Information Officer. "You can't attain a distinction like this four years in a row without County leadership that is committed to technology, and people in Information Technology and the other departments who are constantly seeking ways to improve what we do for the public."

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According to the National Association of Counties and the Center for Digital Government, county governments are adapting and innovating as new frontiers of technology are crossed. The Digital Counties Survey spotlights the ways counties are using taxpayer resources to deploy technology to enhance services and benefit residents.

"Technology is a tremendous driver of economic vitality," said Powers. "We view Ventura County as a hub for innovation and our County is working with our many private and public partnerships to help encourage that innovation. One example of this is our focus on enhancing broadband throughout our region in support of our ever-growing hi-tech economy. This achievement recognizes the quality of the technology the County is producing and validates our Board's commitment to it."

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