



VENTURA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

165 Durley Avenue, Camarillo, CA 93010-8586

Mark Lorenzen
County Fire Chief

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 25, 2016

Cycle for Cancer: Firefighters riding 500 miles to raise awareness of high cancer rates in the fire service

CAMARILLO – During the week of August 21 - 27, 2016, a battalion chief, and a retired fire engineer from the Ventura County Fire Department will join other firefighters on a 500-mile bike ride from San Francisco to Los Angeles to raise awareness of cancer dangers faced by firefighters. On Saturday, August 27, the [FireVelo - Firefighter Cancer Awareness Bike Ride](#) will pass through Ventura County as firefighters near the end of their journey from the San Francisco Bay to the Santa Monica Pier.



Photo: Gary Masatani SFFD (ret.), Cindy Gordon, VCFD (ret.), Steve Winter, VCFD, and Marv Williams, LAFD (ret.)

Ventura County Fire Department (VCFD) personnel participating in the seven day California ride, include Battalion Chief Steve Winter, a 29-year veteran and cancer survivor, along with Cindy Gordon, a fire engineer who recently retired after 30 years with VCFD.

“Firefighters know they face danger every day on the job, but they don’t expect that life-threatening risk to be cancer. I didn’t think it would happen to me when I was diagnosed with cancer five years ago,” said Battalion Chief Winter. “For the third year, I’m dedicating my seven day, 500-mile ride to advocating for protection, early detection and awareness of this rapidly growing disease that’s attacking firefighters.”

An increasing number of studies show that firefighters have higher rates of cancer than the general population. Cancers of the brain, digestive and urinary systems account for most of the reported cases. Prolonged and repeated exposure to chemicals in smoke, soot and other contaminants during the course of a firefighter’s career are the primary causes of elevated risks.

Before completing the final leg of their journey, more than 35 FireVelo cyclists will stop at Oxnard Fire Station 6 on Saturday, August 27, between 7:00 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. to present a gift to the family of Ventura City Fire Captain John Duff, who died of cancer in February 2013 at the age of 54. As a tribute to Duff, his name will be included in a list of fallen firefighters emblazoned on the sleeve of the team’s riding jerseys. Fire Station 6 is located at 2601 Peninsula Road in Oxnard.

(MORE)



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“Cancer is a serious issue that firefighters rarely talk about,” said Winter. “If this ride starts a conversation and initiates actions to help firefighters avoid or beat cancer then we’ve achieved victory.”

For more information about FireVelo, visit www.firevelo.com. To schedule a media interview with Battalion Chief Winter, please contact VCFD’s Public Information Office at (805) 389-9769.

Photo opportunities and interviews will be available between 7:00 and 7:30 a.m. Saturday at Oxnard Station 6.

About FireVelo

The [Firefighter Cancer Awareness Bike Ride](#) is organized by **FireVelo**, a non-profit, national cycling club of firefighters riding for firefighters. This year, the ride has raised nearly \$30,000 for fire department-based cancer victim support groups. Los Angeles County Fire Captain Jim Berklite, serves as the regional FireVelo Club President and is the primary organizer of the ride. Visit www.firevelo.com for more information.

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