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## **Port recognizes 'essential volunteers' at 40th food distribution**

October 26, 2020

The Port of Hueneme's "Committed to Community" Drive hosted its 40th food distribution with a "Feeding the Frontline" volunteer appreciation touch. Commemorative plaques were distributed to volunteers who have supported this food and resource drive since the pandemic began in April of this year.

"It is important that we recognize our true community heroes; from the dockworkers, farmworkers and truck drivers who keep our shelves stocked; our staff, and most definitely our volunteers. They are answering a weekly call to bring much needed relief to our community and the Port is grateful that the volunteers have been there as partners from the very beginning," said Jess Ramirez, president of the Oxnard Harbor District Commission.



Members of Mariachi

Inlakech ready to serenade the attendees of the food distribution.

The efforts that began as a curbside distribution of a pallet of Del Monte Bananas in the back of a pick-up truck have led to the distribution of 760,000 lbs. of fresh produce and other essentials. This has been possible through Port of Hueneme customers Del Monte Fresh Produce and other premier community partners such as Clinicas del Camino Real, The Local Love Project, Food Share, US Census workers, the United Farmworkers Foundation, Inlakech Cultural Arts Center, All Inclusive Residents for Equity, the Camarillo Chamber of Commerce and Ruby's in Camarillo to name a few.

"We have a lot more work to do but this is a milestone event as we have been able to distribute food and other essential items to 25,000 families throughout Ventura County. The pandemic has been a very difficult time for many families and with the holidays fast approaching, Port leadership has begun identifying other ways to help support them," said Kristin Decas, chief executive officer for the Port of Hueneme.

Post cards with data from the Port's EPA grade Air Quality Monitor installed at Haycox Elementary last November were also distributed to the event-goers and South Oxnard community members.

"These (postcards) are the first step in sharing air quality information with the community, and we are excited to show that the air quality in South Oxnard is actually very good. Our data also shows that the worst air quality occurs during the cold winter months or wildfires. The 101 Freeway is also a major source of air pollution," said Giles Pettifor, environmental manager for the Port.

"Overall, the Port's emissions have decreased greatly in the last decade, for example diesel emissions have dropped by 77 percent which is a great step in the right direction for environmental equity. We will continue having this type of impact as our community deserves nothing less from their Port. As a top economic engine in the region, the Port will uphold its mission and commitment for shared prosperity with a focus on trade, job creation, and environmental equity," said Jess Ramirez.

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