



## VENTURA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

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May 22, 2023

Mark Kretschmer  
Vice President for Operations  
Thomas Aquinas College  
10,000 Ojai Road, Ca 93060

Dear Mr. Kretschmer:

This letter is to thank you for the continued partnership in wildland fire prevention with the idea and development of the Thomas Aquinas Helispot. The Ventura County Fire Department is a contract county with Calfire and responsible for firefighting activities in State Responsible land. We also have an agreement to send firefighting resources to all fires in the Los Padres National Forest, which borders Thomas Aquinas College. In July of 2021, The Ventura County Fire Department and Thomas Aquinas College signed an agreement to create a concrete helipad capable of supporting two (2) type 1 helicopters, with a hydrant to support firefighting activities. This addition after the Thomas Fire has improved our agency's ability to fight Wildland Fires from the air by having an aerial water source to fill the agency and responding helicopters with water to lessen the turnaround times to the City of Santa Paula and Upper Ojai areas. In conjunction with the fuel reduction and fire hazard reduction program (FHRP) around the college and surrounding access roads, this allows Thomas Aquinas to be a great staging area and safe location for our aircraft to refill during aerial firefighting activities. This helispot also acts as a medivac location for multiple rescues near Thomas Aquinas College at the Santa Paula Punch Bowls. This helispot allows quick transfer of injured patients to an ambulance for ground transport. Thomas Aquinas College has always been a partner in the past with the use of the soccer field for temporary landing zones, but the addition of this permanent helispot has added consistency and better tactical advantage to refilling aerial firefighting aircraft quicker for wildland fire responses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dustin Gardner".

Dustin Gardner  
Fire Chief