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NEWS RELEASE

Ventura County Health Care Agency

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Santa Paula Hospital Opens Hospital is ready to see patients

Santa Paula, CA. – After much anticipation, Santa Paula Hospital will be open and begin seeing patients on Thursday, July 13 at 7:00 a.m. “The residents of the Santa Clara Valley, the surrounding communities, and everyone involved in bringing Santa Paula Hospital back to the community, should stand proud of this accomplishment”, said Supervisor Kathy Long, who has championed this effort since day one. Just this morning, after a thorough licensing survey, the Department of Health Services issued the license to operate the hospital, according to Health Care Agency officials.

The County of Ventura, Health Care Agency has done what very few have done in recent years: purchase and re-open a small, rural community hospital. Sitting atop the hills of the City of Santa Paula, a refurbished and revitalized Santa Paula Hospital opened its doors today. The hospital closed in December 2003 due to mounting debt and Chapter 11 bankruptcy. The closure eliminated the only emergency room between Ventura and Santa Clarita, effectively forcing local residents to drive for as long as 30 minutes in either direction to access immediate care.

The community of Santa Paula, local officials and residents throughout the valley would not allow their community hospital of 40 years to disappear, as so many others have throughout the state of California. In the end, they were able to find a strong and committed partner, in the County of Ventura. Ventura County Supervisor Kathy Long worked tirelessly along with the Health Care Agency officials, on behalf of the County Board of Supervisors, to purchase and operate the hospital facility as a campus of the Ventura County Medical Center. In September 2005 the County of Ventura purchased the 10.5 acre hospital complex for \$2.75 million.

The hospital has undergone an amazing transformation, both inside and out. The facility has not only been equipped with state-of-the art equipment and technology, but has been given a major face-lift from the installation of new flooring, wall covering and paint to new landscaping. The County spent \$4.5 million for the much needed repairs and upgrades.

“We took the necessary time and used the best resources to assure that patients, staff and residents will be proud of their hospital”, said Michael Powers, Director of the Health Care Agency. The hospital will serve the greater Santa Clara Valley communities and offer a wide range of services including emergency, maternity, surgery, critical care, radiology and laboratory. “Patients at Santa Paula Hospital will receive top quality care due to our first class facility, high caliber staff and the hospital’s integration with the Agency’s comprehensive system of health care,” said Powers. The hospital expects to add new services based on the needs of the community.

The Health Care Agency encompasses a full continuum of care beginning with preventive health programs and emergency medical services, following through with acute inpatient care and access to a vast network of medical clinics, urgent care centers, and specialty clinics.

“Santa Clara Valley community as a whole will be proud of their hospital”, said Supervisor Long, who serves on the VCMC Oversight Committee. She credits community support and hard work by the Board of Supervisors, the Health Care Agency and the city councils of Santa Paula and Fillmore for making this day a reality.

Powers further stated, “We are grateful to the State Department of Health Services and OSHPD for their support throughout this process.” In the normal course, given the extensive scope of the repairs and renovation, the number of inspections, reviews and approvals, this project could have easily taken two years to complete. “To complete the reopening of the hospital in 11 months is remarkable and we couldn’t have done it without the State’s support.”

Santa Paula Hospital will operate 49 beds and eventually have a workforce of 145 full-time employees, many of whom worked at the hospital previously.