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The Bell Rings for One805

The One805 Mental Wellness Endowment Fund Officially Launches



Richard Weston-Smith, Kirsten Cavendish Weston-Smith, and Bruce Heavin (photo by Kim Byrnes)

by *Zach Rosen*

The iconic rolling concrete architecture and inimitable art of **Bruce Heavin's** Hill House set the scene for an "Evening of Appreciation" on December 3rd. One805 staff and supporters, along with Santa Barbara County's first responders, met at the structural masterpiece for the organization's official launching of a \$10 million One805 Mental Wellness Endowment Fund, a first-of-its-kind effort designed to guarantee sustained, culturally competent mental wellness support for firefighters, law enforcement officers, dispatchers, and their families. The endowment has already secured \$2 million in initial commitments, including \$1 million from One805's own reserves and \$1 million from a major donor.

The moment was marked by both generosity and candor as fire chiefs and law-enforcement leaders from across the county spoke openly about the trauma embedded in their profession – trauma that compounds shift after shift, call after call. Their testimony underscored why the endowment is not simply a milestone, but a lifeline.

A Unified Call from First Responder Leaders

As the evening began, fire chief leaders emphasized the shared purpose that binds every agency in the county. "In the fire service, we really don't do anything alone," said retiring County Fire Chief **Mark Hartwig**, who will now join the One805 Mental Wellness Endowment Board, ensuring continuity and experience in shaping the fund's future.

Hartwig described the difficult reality that many first responders have historically avoided mental-health services provided by their own agencies out of fear that seeking help could jeopardize promotions or even job security. "There's a fear of us knowing about them using the program and then that being used against them in their future careers," he explained. An independent program funded through an endowment changes that, offering anonymity, cultural competence, and security for the long term.

His fellow chiefs echoed this urgency. Montecito Fire Chief **David Neels** emphasized how dramatically the landscape has shifted since he entered the field in the late 1980s – a time when mental wellness "was not something that was at the forefront" of leadership thinking. Today, however, the need is impossible to ignore. "All of us in the fire service have reeled from tragedy," he said, adding that One805's efforts "have brought new life into our fire agencies and to our families by having mental wellness programs."

Neels shared powerful metrics: in 2024 alone, firefighters and their families utilized over 927 clinical hours, a number expected to surpass 1,000 hours in 2025. These clinicians, he noted, are uniquely trained to understand the realities of emergency service – an essential safeguard when responders confront trauma daily.

The Human Toll Behind the Statistics

The most poignant moments of the evening came from first responder chiefs

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One805 staff and First Responder leaders came together to celebrate the launch of the One805 Mental Wellness Endowment fund (photo by Kim Byrnes)

who offered deeply personal stories – the kind rarely spoken aloud outside their own departments.

Santa Maria Police Chief **Christopher Williams** recounted witnessing a double murder-suicide early in his career, describing the moment he returned to his patrol car and cried alone because “it was taboo to show your emotions.” Years later, as chief, he oversaw a case in which officers rushed to save a woman being fatally stabbed by her estranged husband. This time, in contrast, peer support and trauma teams were activated immediately, providing early intervention that did not exist decades earlier. “That is largely due to what you do for us,” he told One805 supporters.

Guadalupe Police Chief and Fire Administrator **Michael Cash** described a devastating domestic-violence call early in his career that drove him to turn in his badge – at least temporarily – because he had no tools to process the trauma. “It was the biggest dark hole I’ve ever seen in my life,” he said. Mental wellness programs, he stressed, are not just for the responder, but for every life they touch.

Undersheriff **Craig Miller** reinforced that county-provided mental wellness services, while well-intentioned, are often ill-suited for first responders because they lack cultural competence. Without specialists who understand emergency-service trauma, responders simply will not

seek help. “Without these services, we couldn’t do it,” added Lt. **Jarrett Morris** of the Sheriff’s Office, explaining that support is equally crucial for spouses and children, who absorb the unseen weight of their loved one’s service.

Why an Endowment and Why Now?

The evening was not just one of harrowing stories, and a celebratory moment was shared when Chief Neels presented One805’s **Richard Weston-Smith** and **Kirsten Cavendish Weston-Smith** with an honorary bell from the Fire Chiefs Association of Santa Barbara County.

Chief Neels adding, “The bell signifies in the fire service: the call to duty, the completion of an incident, and also the representation of what we call ‘Striking the Four Fives,’ when a firefighter dies in the line of duty. But for us here as fire chiefs, we want to recognize that you have brought new life into our fire agencies and to our families by having mental illness programs. So we appreciate it. On behalf of all the fire chiefs and all the firefighters that serve throughout the Santa Barbara County operational area, we’d like to present this bell to the One805 group. Thank you so much for all.”

The endowment model represents a major shift for One805, designed to

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Retiring Fire Chief Hartwig will join the One805 Mental Wellness Endowment Board (photo by Kim Byrnes)



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◀ One805 (Continued from 25)

eliminate the year-to-year uncertainty that local departments have long faced. As Hartwig noted, fire chiefs have spent years “putting our hat in our hand” to raise the \$150,000 needed annually to maintain basic mental wellness services.

The new endowment ensures that future generations of firefighters and officers “will just automatically have access to these services,” without relying on crisis-dependent fundraising or the goodwill of any specific donor cycle.

It arrives at a time when demands on first responders are intensifying. As the press release details, they now face more frequent wildfires, longer fire seasons, violent criminal activity, flooding and mudslides, rising behavioral-health emergencies, as well as cumulative trauma and burnout.

Since taking over leadership of the mental wellness program in 2022, One805, along with community partners, has already funded over 2,841 hours of counseling, equivalent to 355 full working days of clinical support.

These services now extend not only to first responders, but to their families, who often experience their own trauma from the pressures and absences that accompany emergency service.

A Legacy of Care and Community Responsibility

One805 Co-Founder Kirsten Cavendish Weston-Smith described the endowment as an act of collective resilience. “This endowment is about true resilience: giving those who protect us the strength, stability, and care they deserve.”

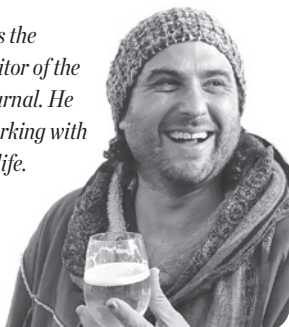
And as Chief Hartwig steps into his new role on the One805 Mental Wellness Endowment Board, he framed the responsibility with clarity and hope: “When the mental wellness needs of our first responders are met, the entire community is safer.”

The evening closed with gratitude – and a renewed call to action. The \$10 million goal is ambitious, but the urgency is undeniable. Every hour of counseling, every clinician trained in first-responder trauma, every life touched underscores a simple truth:

Caring for those who protect us is not just charity.

It is a community obligation – one that lasts long after the sirens fade. 🍷

Zach Rosen is the Managing Editor of the Montecito Journal. He also enjoys working with beer, art, and life.



PUBLIC NOTICE COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA STATE OF CALIFORNIA

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA (“COUNTY”) intends to enter into a Real Property Acquisition Agreement, (“Agreement”) and accept the Permanent Easement (“PE”) to allow for ongoing access and maintenance of an Emergency Storm Damage repair made to the San Miguelito Road Site No. 23STM1-3J41/Federal-Aid Project No. 15J7(094) (“PROJECT”) from the DanBranBriya Trust, owner of the property located at 3350 San Miguelito Road, Lompoc, California, 93436. Also identified as Assessor’s Parcel Number 083-110-003. The total purchase price proposed to be paid for the property interests is \$14,950.

The Agreement and Certificate of Acceptance for the PE will be executed on behalf of the County by Chris Sneddon, Director of the Public Works Department, pursuant to Santa Barbara County Code Section 12A-11.1. The Agreement and Certificate of Acceptance will be executed at the Office of the Director of the Public Works Department, located at 123 E. Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101.

Responses to this Notice will be accepted at the Office of the Manager of the Transportation Division, at the following address:

Public Works Department
Transportation Division
Attn: Transportation Division Manager
123 E. Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

DATE OF POSTING: THURSDAY, December 11, 2025
Montecito Journal

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

Bids open at **2:00 PM** on **Friday, January 2, 2026** for:

NORTH COUNTY HARDSCAPE REPAIRS FY 25/26 IN THE 1ST SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT

COUNTY PROJECT No. **820816N**

General project work description: Hardscape Repair – Curb & Sidewalk

The Plans, Specifications, and Bid Book are available at <https://www.planetbids.com/portal/portal.cfm?CompanyID=43874>.

The Contractor must have either a Class A license or any combination of the following Class C licenses which constitutes a majority of the work: A, C-8

Submit sealed bids to the web address below. Bids will be opened available at the web address below immediately following the submittal deadline.

[PlanetBids
https://www.planetbids.com/portal/portal.cfm?CompanyID=43874](https://www.planetbids.com/portal/portal.cfm?CompanyID=43874)

Complete the project work within **15 Working Days**.

The estimated cost of the project is \$ 171,000

This project is subject to compliance monitoring and enforcement by the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR).

A contractor or subcontractor shall not be qualified to bid on, be listed in a bid proposal, subject to the requirements of PCC Section 4104, or engage in the performance of any contract for public work, as defined in this chapter, unless currently registered and qualified to perform public work pursuant to Labor Code (LAB) Section 1725.5. It is not a violation of this section for an unregistered contractor to submit a bid that is authorized by Business and Professions Code (BPC) Section 7029.1 or by PCC Section 10164 or 20103.5 provided the contractor is registered to perform public work pursuant to LAB Section 1725.5 at the time the contract is awarded.

Prevailing wages are required on this Contract. The Director of the California Department of Industrial Relations determines the general prevailing wage rates. Obtain the wage rates at the DIR website <https://www.dir.ca.gov/>.

Inquiries or questions based on alleged patent ambiguity of the plans, specifications, or estimate must be submitted as a bidder inquiry by 2:00 PM on 12/26/2025. Submittals after this date will not be addressed. Questions pertaining to this Project prior to Award of the Contract must be submitted via PlanetBids Q&A tab.

Bidders (Plan Holders of Record) will be notified by electronic mail if addendums are issued. The addendums, if issued, will only be available on the County PlanetBids website,
<https://www.planetbids.com/portal/portal.cfm?CompanyID=43874>

Christopher Sneddon, PE
Director of Public Works

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