



MEDIA RELEASE

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Sheriff-Coroner

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Jim Hart

Sheriff-Coroner

Media Release: August 7, 2024 Sheriff Hart Announces Retirement

After 36 years with the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office, Sheriff Jim Hart has announced his intention to retire on December 6th, 2024. He is currently serving his third term as Sheriff-Coroner for Santa Cruz County. When Sheriff Hart ran for re-election in 2022, the term was expected to be four years. However, the legislature extended the term to six years to align Sheriffs and District Attorneys' elections with the presidential cycle.

Sheriff Hart explained, "I originally planned to complete my four-year term, but the term was extended to six years after the election. I knew I wasn't going to complete a six-year term, so I have decided that December 2024 would be a good time for my family and me to retire." He added, "The Sheriff's Office is in excellent shape, with outstanding staff members dedicated to serving our community. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as the Sheriff here for the past decade."

Sheriff Hart began his career as a deputy sheriff in 1988 and has held every rank in the office, eventually being elected Sheriff in June 2014. Under his leadership, the office has navigated seven federally declared disasters, the line of duty death of Sgt. Damon Gutzwiller, the CZU Lightning Complex Fire, protests following George Floyd's murder, the COVID-19 pandemic, and most recently the fentanyl crisis. Crime rates in the county's unincorporated areas are at a record low, less than half the state average, which Sheriff Hart attributes to effective community policing policies.

Sheriff Hart stated, "I have lived in Santa Cruz County my entire life. This is a wonderful place to live and work, and I wouldn't have traded this career for anything." He also endorsed Undersheriff Chris Clark as the most qualified person to succeed him as Sheriff.

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