



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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## NEWS RELEASE



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### **COUNTY HIGHLIGHTS VETERANS' ISSUES BY JOINING OPERATION GREEN LIGHT, ILLUMINATING COUNTY BUILDING**

Joining counties across the U.S. for Operation Green Light, the County of Santa Cruz is honoring veterans by lighting the County Governmental Building in green ahead of Veterans Day.

Operation Green Light is led by the National Association of Counties and the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers, and shines a green light during the week of Nov. 6-12 to honor, appreciate and support veterans as they reintegrate back into civilian life. Led by Chair Zach Friend, the Board of Supervisors voted Oct. 17 to join Operation Green Light.

"By joining counties across the country in honoring our veterans, Santa Cruz County is recognizing the important contributions and sacrifices of those who served our country, and the continuing struggles many of them face," Friend said. "This is a symbolic gesture that cannot adequately thank veterans for their service, but we hope it serves as a reminder to all to keep veterans in our hearts and minds."

There are more than 8,500 veterans living in Santa Cruz County, and veterans account for 7 percent of the U.S. population. Many struggle to transition back to civilian life, and suicide has claimed more than 30,000 veterans since 2001 -- four times more than the number of U.S. military personnel who died in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Locally, veterans' services are available through the Santa Cruz County Veterans Services Office, 842 Front St., Santa Cruz, as well as through numerous local service organizations. For more on Operation Green Light, visit

<https://www.naco.org/program/operation-green-light-veterans>.