

## **Thanksgiving tips**

By David Goldstein, VCPWA, IWMD

### **Don't bring dinner to fire stations:**

If you have plenty of food this Thanksgiving, you may want to express gratitude and avoid waste by sharing with first responders fighting the local fires. However, Kailie Leggett, a Public Information Officer with the coalition of agencies fighting the Woolsey Fire notes local fire stations are already filled with donations, and fire camps are self-sufficient, so donations are best directed elsewhere.

### **Feeding homeless may also not be a good option:**

Sharing food with homeless people may also not be a viable option. This is the first Thanksgiving under an expanded "Good Samaritan" law, California Assembly Bill 1219, which extends legal protection for donors of surplus food the donor believes to be safe for consumption. However, the legal protection does not apply to the leftovers from a typical family's Thanksgiving celebration. It applies to "food facilities" and "gleaners" providing food to the needy.

### **Instead, volunteer to help:**

"Gleaner" is the term used to describe volunteers who work for food rescue organizations, such as FOOD Share, based in Oxnard, and Food Forward, based in Ventura. Both organizations are seeking monetary donations and volunteers, but neither is equipped to handle privately prepared food. You can sign up to volunteer at <https://foodforward.org/volunteer/sign-up-to-volunteer/> or [http://site.foodshare.org/site/PageServer?pagename=2017\\_volunteer](http://site.foodshare.org/site/PageServer?pagename=2017_volunteer)

### **Store leftovers for reuse:**

Preserving food for your own reuse may be the best way to avoid waste. Elizabeth Huff, a Community Services manager with the Ventura County Environmental Health Division, recommends measures for serving, then safely storing and reusing leftovers. Listed at [foodsafety.gov](http://foodsafety.gov), these measures include using chafing dishes or warming trays to keep hot foods above 140 degrees during a meal and refrigerating leftovers right away. Store leftovers in shallow containers so they cool quickly, and freeze food you will not consume within four days. Automatically discard only perishable foods which were out for more than two hours. <https://www.foodsafety.gov/blog/2017/12/tips-for-holiday-leftovers.html>

### **Animal shelter guidance for donors:**

The Ventura County Animal Shelter has also recently received enough donations of used blankets, towels, and other materials to meet the immediate needs of the 900 animals they are hosting, including over 288 from the fires. The shelter continues to accept these items on a regular basis, according to Randy Friedman, Marketing Manager for the Ventura

County Animal Services Department, but items more needed in the long term are listed at [www.vcas.us/amazonwishlist](http://www.vcas.us/amazonwishlist). See also [www.vcas.us/donate](http://www.vcas.us/donate)

**Another seasonal waste item:**

Thanksgiving is also a time for football, and single-use, one-pound propane cylinders are a common waste from tailgating parties. The California Product Stewardship Council launched a campaign promoting reusable cylinders and notes two locations in Ventura County where these are available: REI in Oxnard and West Marine in Port Hueneme.