

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Contact:

Zach Baliva

Director of Communications & PIO

zbaliva@portofh.org

(805) 616-6881

### Ready, Set, Robot! Port of Hueneme Powers Up Robotics Season at Hueneme High

**Hueneme, CA, January 14, 2026** — The Port of Hueneme recently helped kick off an exciting new robotics season at Hueneme High School, joining students, educators, and families for the school's FIRST Robotics Competition season launch: a celebration of innovation, teamwork, and hands-on STEM learning.

The Port is proud to sponsor Hueneme High School's robotics team, the Thunder Vikes, as they prepare to compete in this year's FIRST Robotics season. The sponsorship reflects the Port's ongoing commitment to expanding STEM opportunities and building strong career pathways for local students.

During the kickoff event, Port Commissioners Mary Anne Rooney and Celina Zacarias together with CEO Kristin Decas presented the Port's sponsorship check to the team, officially launching the partnership and underscoring the Port's investment in education and workforce development.



*The Port of Hueneme presents a \$10,000 sponsorship check to Hueneme High School's Thunder Vikes Robotics Team*

“Supporting programs like FIRST Robotics is about giving students real-world opportunities to learn, collaborate, and problem-solve. When we invest in hands-on STEM education, we’re investing in the next generation of innovators and leaders right here in our community.” said Commissioner Rooney.

“This partnership reflects our commitment to equity and access in education. Every student should have the chance to explore STEM, build confidence, and see themselves in future careers that drive innovation and opportunity.” said Commissioner Zacarias.



*First Robotics Guide and Supplies*

FIRST Robotics competitions challenge students to design, build, and program robots while working collaboratively under real-world constraints. In doing so, they develop skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and teamwork that align closely with careers in engineering, technology, and the maritime and logistics industries.

“The Port of Hueneme makes it a priority to support programs that connect education, creativity, and community. When we support opportunities like robotics, we’re helping young people discover talents and build the curiosity that will serve them well no matter where their paths lead them.” said Kristin Decas, CEO of the Port of Hueneme.

For students at Hueneme High School, the kickoff marked the beginning of months of creativity, collaboration, and technical learning.



*Thunder Vikes teammates sort through gear for use in the 2026 season*

As the season gets underway, the Port looks forward to cheering on the Thunder Vikes and celebrating the talent, dedication, and ingenuity of Hueneme High School students throughout the competition year.

**About the Port of Hueneme:**

The Port of Hueneme is one of the most productive and efficient commercial trade gateways for niche cargo on the West Coast. Five locally elected Port Commissioners govern the Port. The Port consistently ranks among the top ten U.S. Ports for automobiles and fresh produce. Port operations support the community by bringing \$2.8 billion in economic activity and creating 25,000 trade-related jobs. Trade through the Port of Hueneme generates more than \$236 million in direct and related state and local taxes, which fund vital community services. In 2017, the Port of Hueneme became the first Port in California to become Green Marine certified and was voted the Greenest Port in the U.S. at the Green Shipping Summit.

###