



SAFELY OUT™ Program

By Heather Atherton

Restoration companies that want to give back to their communities and generate positive public relations are urged to follow the lead of two Sacramento, California-based companies.

Steamatic of Sacramento and Pinnacle Emergency Management donate manpower and money to a project born out of the anguish of Hurricane Katrina.

In New Orleans, rescuers trying to reach thousands of flooded buildings often had no way of telling whether residents had been safely evacuated. Precious time was lost when some flooded houses were checked more than once leaving those who were in need of help to wait.

SAFELY OUT™ is a project of Citizen Voice, a non-profit group, and was developed through a partnership with the Red Cross Sacramento Sierra Chapter. The project's mission is to help ensure that the most vulnerable people are safely evacuated during natural and man-made disasters. It centers on an easy-to-use and highly-recognizable communication kit that sells for \$10.

"SAFELY OUT™ is such a simple idea. Learned at the cost of many innocent lives and hopefully never repeated for a mere donation of \$10; genius, simply genius," enthused Charles Cassani, CR, WLS, president of Steamatic of Sacramento.

According to *Government Technology's Emergency Management* magazine in September 2007, Citizen Voice's SAFELY OUT™ Project "...is believed to be the first strategic approach in the U.S. targeting the most vulnerable during disasters that involves the entire community in the evacuation effort."

These same experts believe that Sacramento is the metropolitan area most at risk for area wide flooding, according to *The Sacramento Bee* newspaper, due to too many levees surrounding thousands of homes needing critical repairs.

"More than 150,000 of Sacramento's most vulnerable residents — the elderly, the poor and disabled — live in areas prone to substantial flooding, and local officials acknowledge they don't know whether they could get them to safe ground," *The Sacramento Bee* reported on Jan. 22, 2006.

That's why SAFELY OUT™ is being endorsed and partially funded by big players such as the California Governor's Office



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Protects Communities



This door hanger can be placed either on the door or in a window indicating to emergency personnel if you are in need or Safely Out.

of Homeland Security, the County of Sacramento, and the City of Sacramento. Small businesses like Steamatic of Sacramento and Pinnacle Emergency Management have also found tremendous value by becoming sponsors.

Cassani said sponsoring SAFELY OUT™ has been a perfect fit for his 36-year-old cleaning and restoration company.

“Although we provide emergency response to individual fire and water damages, our ability to respond in an area-wide disaster is almost nil. The best way to aid fellow citizens is to help them prepare ahead of time,” he said.

“Although we provide

Steamatic’s support has ranged from cash donations to sponsoring advertising opportunities and providing staff volunteers for community events. The partnership has become part of Steamatic’s overall marketing strategy. “It feels good to give back to the community through a worthy organization that fits so well with our business goals,” Cassani said.

“Our focus at Pinnacle Emergency Management is the analysis, planning and response to emergency situations, large or small. As a business leader in this area, supporting the objectives of the SAFELY OUT™ Project was a natural and logical decision,” explained Leo Grover, owner of Pinnacle Emergency Management. “If Pinnacle can help ensure that the most vulnerable citizens of our community are evacuated in an emergency, we will continue our enthusiastic support with this project.”

The idea for the SAFELY OUT™ project came from Gary Dietrich, the nonpartisan political analyst for Clear Channel Radio in Sacramento and KGO-AM in San Francisco. Stricken by the initial television coverage on Hurricane Katrina, Dietrich trained as a Red Cross volunteer and flew to the Gulf Coast to help out and report on the aftermath as a broadcaster.