



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**FIRES IN CALIFORNIA, FLOODS IN THE MIDWEST POINT TO  
THE NEED FOR SAFELY OUT™**

***Governor's Office of Homeland Security Commits \$100K, A Major Step for the Project***

(June 26, 2008 – Sacramento, CA) – Fires across California and floods throughout the Midwest remind us of the nationwide need for Citizen Voice's SAFELY OUT™ Project. Right now California is in a critical time when it comes to disaster with hundreds of fires still burning all across the state. It reminds us that we are all vulnerable to some type of natural disaster, no matter where we live, and that our most vulnerable especially need to be protected.

**OHS Makes Major Commitment**

Citizen Voice's SAFELY OUT™ Project is designed to help safely evacuate the vulnerable during both natural and man-made disasters. The goal of the SAFELY OUT™ Project is to help protect the most vulnerable -- such as the elderly, disabled and those caring for young children -- during disaster evacuations. The California Governor's Office of Homeland Security (OHS) commitment of \$100,000 to SAFELY OUT™ will help protect thousands of residents in Natomas and thousands of disabled residents throughout the Sacramento region in a future natural or manmade disaster. The first \$25,000 of the OHS funds will go directly to the new SAFELY OUT--Natomas effort to get Kits into this flood-threatened area. Designation for the other \$75,000 will be announced going forward.

"At OHS, we are always looking for ways to help make Californians more prepared, and for ways to help our first responders do their jobs more effectively, all to help save lives and property," stated Matt Bettenhausen, Director of the California Office of Homeland Security. "Citizen Voice's SAFELY OUT Project does both and we're happy to be involved with the effort."

**Sacramento County Protects 6,000 of the Homebound**

The County of Sacramento announced last August that they had committed to a total of \$250,000 over five years to support Citizen Voice's SAFELY OUT™ Project and provide Kits to vulnerable residents in the County. With today's announcement, Sacramento County has designated \$60,000 of their funds toward distributing SAFELY OUT™ Kits to 6,000 homebound elderly or disabled residents that are part of the County's In-Home Supportive Services program (IHSS), about one-third of all of IHSS' clientele. The County's goal is to get kits into the hands of all 18,000 IHSS clients as a part of their five-year commitment of funds.

According to Sacramento County Supervisor Roger Dickinson, "Your program provides a simple way for citizens to help one another in safely evacuating their homes. It also provides an additional resource for emergency responders by which to identify residents who urgently

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need attention in an evacuation.”

### **SAFELY OUT--Natomas Initiative and PRIDE Industries**

According to an August 13, 2007 article in *BusinessWeek* titled “California’s Flood-Control Challenge”, Natomas is the area of the Sacramento region under the greatest threat for a flood disaster due to levee weaknesses. In response to this, Citizen Voice’s SAFELY OUT™ Project launched an initiative to help gather the resources to put a SAFELY OUT™ Kit into the hands of the most vulnerable in the Natomas region. With additional support, the Project has the potential grow to cover all 45,000 households in Natomas. A committee involving representatives from government, business and non-profits, with a vested interest in the well-being of Natomas, has been meeting monthly to help build the resources to sponsor and distribute the kits.

As a result of SAFELY OUT--Natomas, the SAFELY OUT™ Project has received tremendous feedback and access to new, valuable resources from its supporters. Government leaders such as Congresswoman Doris Matsui, Assemblyman Roger Niello and Supervisor Roger Dickinson have now publicly offered their support through endorsement letters of the SAFELY OUT™ Project and the Natomas effort. Local business leaders like Leo Grover of Pinnacle Emergency Management have stepped up to the plate to provide funding as well. Grover has contributed \$40,000 of his own funds and funds he has generated from his business associates. Pinnacle’s funds will be used to cover 2,500 Kits for Natomas residents and 1,500 Kits for the people with disabilities who work for PRIDE Industries with a goal of reaching all of PRIDE’s 2,500 employees with disabilities soon. PRIDE Industries’ workforce has been assembling SAFELY OUT™ Kits since the Project first launched in August 2006 on the first anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.

“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.”

Other local business leaders like Matt Mahood, President of the Sacramento Metro Chamber, have pledged their support as well. “The Metro Chamber supports your efforts to gather the resources to get a SAFELY OUT Kit into every household and opportunities to build resources and exposure for the initiative,” added Mahood.

### **Update on SAFELY OUT™ Project Progress**

The SAFELY OUT™ Project is designed as a “neighbor helping neighbor” evacuation effort, assisting vulnerable populations in reaching safety and relieving the burden first responders and caregivers often shoulder alone. Citizen Voice’s SAFELY OUT Project is believed to be the first strategic approach in the U.S. targeting our most vulnerable during disasters, enabling neighbors to help as “first responders” to check on their fellow neighbors during an evacuation.

More than 10,000 SAFELY OUT Kits have already been distributed in the greater Sacramento region and 15,000 are now ready for distribution with 10,000 more in production. Ultimately, \$1 million will be needed to complete the initial phase of the Sacramento region pilot project with the successful distribution of 100,000 kits. Citizen Voice’s SAFELY OUT Project wants to make sure that families are prepared in the event of any type of disaster evacuation. This is only the beginning of what is rapidly becoming a major “neighbor helping neighbor” effort that is capturing national attention.

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SAFELY OUT Kits are available online at [www.CitizenVoice.org](http://www.CitizenVoice.org), or by mail. A \$10 suggested minimum contribution per kit is requested (plus \$2.50 shipping/handling per kit for mail orders.) Those individuals, groups and businesses interested in ordering kits, making a contribution to get kits to others in need, or becoming a SAFELY OUT™ Project sponsor can inquire at [www.CitizenVoice.org](http://www.CitizenVoice.org) or call (916) 503-3194. Kit orders and contributions can be made online or by mail (mail only, there is no counter service available at this address) to Citizen Voice, 1215 K Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor, Sacramento, CA, 95814.

**About Citizen Voice™**

Citizen Voice is a 501C3 nonprofit, nonpartisan movement with a mission to inspire, inform and involve citizens in the public arena on behalf of all, especially the vulnerable. Citizen Voice fulfills its mission by fostering active participation in the public arena as well as involving citizens in both practical immediate intervention and work towards long-term changes that protect the vulnerable. For more information on Citizen Voice, visit [www.CitizenVoice.org](http://www.CitizenVoice.org).

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