



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DROUGHT THREATS HOVER OVER CAL FIRE'S WILDFIRE AWARENESS WEEK - SAFELY OUT™ PROJECT REMINDS RESIDENTS TO PREPARE FOR FIRE EVACUATION

Protect Your Family from an Urban or Wildland Fires with a SAFELY OUT Kit

(May 7, 2007 – Sacramento, CA) – With record low rainfall and the worst snow pack in 19 years, Northern California faces the worst potential fire crisis this summer we've seen in two decades. The SAFELY OUT™ Project wants to remind Northern Californians to get prepared for an urban or wildland fire evacuation. Today's kickoff to CAL FIRE's Wildfire Awareness Week 2007 serves as a good reminder to get prepared.

Fire is a threat to all of us living in the Central Valley, not only in the foothills. As we have seen on many occasions in Oakland and San Diego, even suburban neighborhoods that lie dangerously close to open space can burn for blocks when the conditions are right. Therefore, urban fires can be just as devastating as larger wildland fires and all families need to have an evacuation plan in place to ensure their safety.

Since its inception on the first anniversary of Hurricane Katrina in August 2006, Citizen Voice has secured commitments for 10,000 SAFELY OUT kits to be distributed in the Sacramento pilot region. By the end of 2007, plans call for commitments for 100,000 kits to complete the pilot project. To reach this goal, Citizen Voice is seeking sponsors for the \$875,000 needed to achieve this important milestone before moving the project statewide. This is only the beginning of what is rapidly becoming a major "neighbor helping neighbor" effort.

Businesses in the foothills are already seeing the value of the SAFELY OUT Project, as evidenced by a \$2,000 contribution by Placer Sierra Bank. Major sponsors are continuing to come on board to show their support for the SAFELY OUT Project, including The California Health Care Foundation's \$25,000 contribution. Additionally, the County of Sacramento committed \$50,000 and the City of Sacramento committed \$25,000 to fund the disbursement of SAFELY OUT kits to citizens in the Sacramento area, particularly the vulnerable. Other businesses and government agencies are encouraged to consider the same type of support in their communities.

SAFELY OUT™, a Citizen Voice project, is designed to help safely evacuate the vulnerable during both natural and man-made disasters. SAFELY OUT™ 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. It is believed to be the first strategic approach in the U.S. targeting our most vulnerable during disasters that involves the entire community in the evacuation effort.

The SAFELY OUT™ Kit is the foundation of the project. Elements of the kit include:

- SAFELY OUT™ Door Hanger (that can be used to signal for assistance using the red "NEED HELP" side, and let others know when the vulnerable are "SAFELY OUT™" using the green side)
- SAFELY OUT™ Refrigerator Magnet Booklet (with essential contact and evacuation information tailored to the needs of each individual or family)

- SAFELY OUT™ Helper Information Sheets (giving those volunteering to assist a vulnerable person the information they need to help)
- SAFELY OUT™ Storage Bag (for keeping spare medicines, medical insurance information, etc. safe inside the refrigerator – a place that is air tight, water tight, and fire resistant)
- SAFELY OUT™ Wallet Information Card (carried by the vulnerable in the event of disaster while away from home)
- SAFELY OUT™ Kit How-To Brochure
- A permanent marker and erasable ink pen to complete the Kit contents
- An adhesive strip to hang the “NEED HELP” sign in a window should the front door not be easily visible

Kits are now available online at 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 or by calling (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, 17th 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.

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