



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## CONTACT

Heather Atherton

SAFELY OUT™ Media Coordinator

916/316-4568

heather@athertonpr.com

## **MILD FLOOD SEASON LEADS TO EARLY AND FIERCE OPENING OF FIRE SEASON - SAFELY OUT™ PROJECT REMINDS RESIDENTS TO PREPARE FOR FIRE EVACUATION**

*Protect Your Family in an Urban or Wildland Fire Evacuation with a SAFELY OUT Kit*

(May 14, 2007 – Sacramento, CA) – After a quiet flood season due to record low rainfall, California is facing an earlier and potentially more dangerous wildfire season than it has seen in decades. Fast-moving wildfires throughout Southern California neighborhoods last week illustrate the urgent need for residents to get prepared in the event of a sudden fire evacuation. The SAFELY OUT™ Project wants to remind all Californians to get prepared for both urban and wildland fire evacuation, with special attention given to the vulnerable. Today's early start to California's 2007 Fire Season demonstrates a critical need for urban and rural residents to get prepared immediately. One of the easiest places to start is by getting a SAFELY OUT disaster evacuation kit at [CitizenVoice.org](http://CitizenVoice.org).

Fire is a threat to all of us living in the Central Valley as well as the foothills. As we have seen on many occasions in places like Oakland and San Diego, and now Griffith Park and Catalina, even suburban neighborhoods that lie dangerously close to open space can burn for long distances when the conditions are right. Therefore, urban fires can be just as devastating as larger wildland fires and all families need to have a solid evacuation process in place to ensure their safety. No matter where you live, a SAFELY OUT Kit is a simple, affordable way to get the critical evacuation pieces put in place easily.

SAFELY OUT™, a Citizen Voice project, is designed to help safely evacuate all residents, especially the vulnerable, during both natural and man-made disasters. SAFELY OUT™ is designed as a neighbor helping neighbor evacuation effort, assisting vulnerable populations and others 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.

Since its launch 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 remaining \$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 groundbreaking "neighbor helping neighbor" effort that has already received attention nationwide.

Businesses in the Sierra Foothills are 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 an initial \$50,000 and the City of Sacramento has committed \$25,000 early in the effort to fund the disbursement of SAFELY OUT kits to citizens in the Sacramento area, particularly the vulnerable. Other businesses, government agencies, nonprofits and faith based organizations are encouraged to consider supporting this unique project in their own communities.

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](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 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, 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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