



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **CITY AND COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO ANNOUNCE A COMBINED COMMITMENT OF \$75,000 FOR THE SAFELY OUT™ PILOT PROJECT**

*Key Local Government Endorsement and Support of Groundbreaking Disaster Evacuation Project*

(Sacramento, CA – November 30, 2006) – Citizen Voice is proud to announce the endorsement of its SAFELY OUT™ Pilot Project – a groundbreaking effort to ensure the vulnerable are safely evacuated during disasters -- by the City and County of Sacramento. In a strong show of community support, the County of Sacramento presented a \$50,000 sponsorship and the City of Sacramento committed \$25,000 to the project.

The announcements were officially made at a community meeting organized by the Regency Park Neighborhood Association (RPNA) at Regency Park Elementary School in Natomas, one area of the Sacramento region identified with serious flood risk. The RPNA developed the event to help them prepare their neighborhood in the event of a devastating disaster. Many community members attended the event to learn more about the potentially devastating risks to their community and ways to help themselves in the event of major disaster.

Sacramento County officials including Cortez Quinn, Chief of Staff for County Supervisor Roger Dickinson, and Keith DeVore, Director of the Department of Water Resources, presented a \$50,000 check to Citizen Voice co-founder and president Gary Dietrich. “Neighbors will be the first line of support for one another in a disaster,” explained Quinn. “SAFELY OUT encourages neighbors to work together to keep the vulnerable safe during disasters.” DeVore added, “By helping our most vulnerable residents during an emergency, such as a flood, SAFELY OUT is accomplishing the critical first step -- rapid evacuation to safety.”

Sacramento City officials highlighted specific benefits of SAFELY OUT for emergency workers, enabling them to be more effective in evacuations by providing a clear signal of who needs help, eliminating duplicative search and rescue attempts. “Sometimes the most complex issues have simple answers. SAFELY OUT is a simple answer to the challenge of insuring we, as first responders, can help all those who need our help,” stated City Fire Chief Julius Cherry. Jerry Colivas, Division Manager of the Joint Office of Emergency Services and Homeland Security added, “I applaud your efforts to insure our citizens can get safely out of harms way. I believe your model can be replicated in many areas of our country.”

“Protecting our communities is a priority,” stated City Councilmember Ray Tretheway. “We see SAFELY OUT as a key partner in keeping residents safe during disasters.”

Gary Dietrich, a broadcast political analyst who initiated the SAFELY OUT project following his work on the Gulf Coast during the hurricanes, presented information on why it is important for neighborhoods to work together to protect the vulnerable and prepare for their own safety. “Neighbors helping neighbors was the theme of the evening and it’s our mantra for SAFELY OUT,” explained Dietrich. “We are very pleased to have officially received endorsement from the City and County of Sacramento to help make sure that the vulnerable are protected during disasters.” Many SAFELY OUT kits were distributed to community members via a suggested \$10 donation at the event.

The RPNA Emergency Preparedness event was sponsored in part by Steamatic of Sacramento and SAFEWAY.

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## **ABOUT SAFELY OUT™**

SAFELY OUT™, a Citizen Voice project in partnership with the American Red Cross Sacramento Sierra Chapter, is designed to help safely evacuate the vulnerable during both natural and man-made disasters. SAFELY OUT™ is 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](http://www.CitizenVoice.org), by mail, and in person at the Red Cross Sacramento Sierra Chapter store, located at 8928 Volunteer Lane, Suite 100 in Sacramento. A \$10 suggested minimum contribution is requested per kit (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 do so at [www.CitizenVoice.org](http://www.CitizenVoice.org) or by calling (916) 503-3194. Kit orders and contributions can be made 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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