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DISASTER DRILL SIMULATES SACRAMENTO AREA FLOODING AND HOSPITAL COLLAPSE

Disaster drill highlights the coordinated response of over 400 volunteers to flooding and hospital collapse.

Sacramento – As part of the 2007 National Preparedness Conference, today the Sacramento Region Citizen Corps Council (SRCCC), in partnership with CaliforniaVolunteers, hosted a limited full-scale disaster exercise at the Capitol Christian Center. The purpose of the exercise was to demonstrate the role of trained community members in responding to a disaster in the local region.

“What made this drill unique was the focus on the coordinated response by trained volunteers to an emergency situation,” remarked Joe Valenzuela, captain of the Sacramento Police Department. “This is the first time multiple local volunteer organizations were organized under a single Unified Command.”

The drill scenario included heavy rainfall and flooding in the Sacramento region, which contributed to a structural collapse of an area hospital and left many domestic animals stranded. Due to the flooding, public safety personnel were not able to immediately respond to the hospital collapse.

“It is not a matter of if, but rather, when, the Sacramento region will be faced with a natural or man-made disaster that surpasses the capacity of first responders,” noted Matthew Bettenhausen, director of the Governor’s Office of Homeland Security. “With winter fast approaching, and with flooding a serious risk in Sacramento, this exercise couldn’t be timelier.”

Trained volunteers, including members of the Community Emergency Response Team, Medical Reserve Corps and American Red Cross transported “victims” from the disaster scene, evaluated medical needs, performed triage and treatment and assisted owners in the rescue and transport of stranded animals.

“Volunteers are an integral component to disaster preparedness and response,” said Karen Baker, executive director of CaliforniaVolunteers. “Today’s exercise both demonstrated the crucial role volunteers play following a major emergency and serves as a call to all Californians to learn how they can prepare for the next disaster that strikes our state.”

SRCCC

The SRCCC is a public safety non-profit that serves the greater Sacramento region as a conduit between community volunteers, emergency preparedness training programs, and public services providers. The SRCCC is actively participating in the region’s emergency preparedness plans, coordinating spontaneous volunteer management plans, and working with federal, state and local emergency preparedness teams. To learn more visit www.srccc.org.

CaliforniaVolunteers

CaliforniaVolunteers is the state agency that manages programs and initiatives to increase the number of Californians involved with service and volunteering. CaliforniaVolunteers administers California Citizen Corps, the state AmeriCorps and the Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning programs. Through the innovative Web site, CaliforniaVolunteers.org, individuals and families can search for volunteer opportunities throughout the state that match their interests. For more information visit: www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org.

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