



CDM

## *News Release*

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 19, 2004

## **DISASTER CONFERENCE PUTS FOCUS ON SPECIAL NEEDS COMMUNITIES AND VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS**

**SACRAMENTO** – Well-organized, trained teams of disaster volunteers are critical to public safety, especially when reaching people with special needs.

"Disabled or elderly adults, children and other people with special needs are especially vulnerable in times of disaster, as they often must rely on the assistance of others for their safety and security," said Dallas Jones, Director of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services. "With the help of well-trained volunteers and voluntary and nonprofit organizations across the state, that risk can be dramatically reduced."

Volunteer teams are among the more than 60 topics to be presented at the fourth annual Disaster Resistant California Conference being held on May 3-5 at the Sheraton Grand Hotel in Sacramento. The conference is hosted by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services and the Collaborative for Disaster Mitigation.

The "People Serving People" presentation features a discussion on solutions, challenges and opportunities related to serving special needs communities and voluntary organizations in times of disaster. It will be held from 1:30 p.m. – 3 p.m. on Tuesday, May 4 in the Sheraton Hotel's Grand Ballroom.

San Leandro Mayor Shelia Young will moderate this plenary panel. Young serves on the U.S. Conference of Mayors and has been actively involved in disaster preparedness and response activities for special needs communities and the training and mobilization of voluntary organizations in her city. The expert panel includes:

- Adam Sutkus, Director, Volunteer Emergency Management and Homeland Security Programs, Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism. GO SERV's Citizen Corps program is a comprehensive statewide program that promotes service and volunteerism through several key emergency support and response initiatives. <http://www.goserv.ca.gov>.
- Ana-Marie Jones, Executive Director, Collaborating Agencies Responding to Disasters (CARD). CARD has been recognized locally, nationally and internationally for their program of training and mobilizing community agencies to address the disaster related needs of vulnerable clients and to work in partnership with the traditional emergency response system. <http://www.FirstVictims.org>.
- Anne Wilson, Chief Executive Officer, United Way of the Bay Area. Since the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, United Way of the Bay Area has been a recognized leader in supporting and fostering prepared, resilient and safe communities. <http://www.uwba.org>

The conference brings together local, state, national and international experts in disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. The theme – Realistic Strategies – underscores the conference's aim to

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## **DRC Conference – Volunteers**

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highlight best practices that can be easily adopted elsewhere within existing structures. It is expected to attract an estimated 500 attendees from all levels of government, the private sector and nonprofit organizations.

The conference will feature more than 60 presentations, including talks on:

- The latest alert and warning system technology,
- The strength of well-trained disaster volunteers,
- The media experience during crisis,
- Best mitigation practices in California adopted overseas,
- Emergency survival for businesses
- The psychological aspects of surviving disaster
- Lessons learned from Southern California Fires, and
- Many other presentations.

Also featured are more than 30 exhibitors, technology demonstrations, DRC Community awards and 10 training certification courses. There will also be an opportunity for participants to learn about and comment on the draft California State Hazard Mitigation Plan and hear from cities about their progress on local mitigation plans, due in November.

The conference is partially funded by a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and sponsorships. For a complete schedule and list of sponsors, visit [www.drc.ca.gov](http://www.drc.ca.gov). Registration forms are also available online. Media representatives are asked to register by calling the media contacts listed above.

*OES coordinates state-level emergency preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation for a wide range of natural and human-caused emergencies and disasters. As part of its responsibilities, OES coordinates the Mutual Aid System. Through this “neighbor helping neighbor” system, law enforcement and fire-fighting resources in local governments from throughout the state can be called on to support local governments, and work with other state and federal agencies. OES also coordinates with the federal agencies to provide federal grants to local governments, including mitigation grants and homeland security grants.*

*The Collaborative for Disaster Mitigation at San Jose State University, established in June 1999, is a collaborative effort among local governments, the private sector and academia. Its main focus is to limit loss of life, injury and property damage from natural disasters, and to accelerate economic recovery through implementation of mitigation measures.*