



NEWS RELEASE

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DATE: *October 6, 2011*
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San Bernardino County CERT Leaders Win Award

WRIGHTWOOD – The state of California honored two Wrightwood residents recently with an award recognizing their dedication to protecting their community and preparing for disasters. The California Emergency Services Association (CESA) bestowed residents Ed and Bonnie Ross with the CESA Southern Chapter's Silver Award which recognizes "exceptional efforts in the field of emergency preparedness, emergency services or emergency response."

Division Manager Denise Benson of the Office of Emergency Services nominated the Rosses for the award, and described them as an integral part of the community-wide disaster preparedness of their home in Wrightwood -- a small community of about 4,000 residents in the San Gabriel Mountains.

"Ed and Bonnie work tirelessly to prepare the residents of Wrightwood to care for themselves and, if needed, its visitors, in the time of disaster," Benson said. "Ed and Bonnie's commitment to the Wrightwood CERT has resulted in the building of one of the most organized and active CERTs in San Bernardino County."

As Volunteer Coordinators of the Wrightwood CERT program, the Rosses work closely with the San Bernardino County Fire Department/Office of Emergency Services and their CERT Fire Liaison Captain Bob Kittleman to prepare the residents of the Wrightwood community. Their day-to-day CERT duties include maintaining their community's membership records, developing practices and guidelines for the group and holding monthly CERT meetings for advanced training. They have organized disaster drills, are Certified CERT Instructors, and have assisted in instructing multiple basic CERT Courses in Wrightwood. "The partnership between Ed and Bonnie, the local CERT Fire Liaison and OES is an example of how the commitment of volunteers can be organized into a valuable resource for local emergency responders in preparation for a major disaster," Benson said.

San Bernardino County is one of the five California Counties to receive a grant to develop the Disaster Corps Program. Disaster Corps will take 200 CERT trained volunteers in San Bernardino County and equip them with additional training and the ability to respond anywhere in the County.

The Rosses were presented with the award at the September 21 annual CESA Southern Chapter Annual Meeting. A photo is available upon request.

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