



NEWS RELEASE

County Administrative Office

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County preparing for El Niño storms

Clearing flood control channels, stockpiling sandbags and holding public outreach meetings in flood-prone areas are just a few things County departments are doing to prepare for El Niño storms this fall and winter.

The Board of Supervisors heard a special presentation today from County staff about what is being done throughout the county to prepare for El Niño.

"The County is doing everything possible to be prepared for heavy rains," said Board of Supervisors Chairman James Ramos. "Protecting the public is our highest priority. But we are urging the public to do everything they can to protect themselves, their families and their homes. Surviving El Niño will be a team effort."

The County Office of Emergency Services is working in conjunction with the Department of Public Works, the Sheriff's Department, County Fire, and Special Districts – along with local, regional and state partners – to make sure all safety issues throughout the county are being addressed. Risks of flooding and mudslides are higher in areas that have recently experienced wildfires.

Flood control channels and culvert crossings are being cleared in anticipation of heavy rains and advance teams are advising homeless encampments to relocate. More than 200,000 sandbags are being stockpiled and inmate hand crews have been trained in sandbagging, flood fight techniques and debris removal. Additional weather stations were added throughout the county and the real-time rain gauge alert system is being updated. Sheriff's deputies and County firefighters are practicing procedures for swift water rescue training.

Public outreach meetings have been held in Lake Arrowhead, Yucaipa and Victorville to update residents on the latest El Niño forecast and what County departments are doing to prepare. Residents were also offered flood preparation materials. More public meetings will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Nov. 9 at the Yucca Valley Community Center, 57090 Twentynine Palms Highway in Yucca Valley and at 5:30 p.m. on Nov. 12 at the Victoria Gardens Cultural Center, 12505 Cultural Center Drive in Rancho Cucamonga. A meeting time and date for the San Antonio Heights/Mt. Baldy area will be announced soon.

An El Niño resources web page for residents to obtain information on storm preparation is available at <http://www.sbcounty.gov/main/elnino.asp>.

