



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: David Wert, Public Information Officer
County of San Bernardino
(909) 387-5412

COUNTY TELEPHONE EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM SCHEDULED FOR TEST IN SAN BERNARDINO & SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAIN COMMUNITIES

Test is part of effort to ensure agencies and the public are prepared for 2007 fire season and heightened fire risk due to prolonged drought

SAN BERNARDINO — The San Bernardino County Fire Department and the Mountain Area Safety Taskforce (MAST) today announced they will conduct a test of the Telephone Emergency Notification System (TENS) during the week of June 25 in San Bernardino and San Gabriel Mountain communities – from Mt. Baldy to as far east as Forest Falls.

Often referred to as a “reverse 911” system, the TENS can dial all of the known phone numbers in a chosen geographical area and provide those who answer with pre-recorded emergency information. The system can also leave messages on answering machines.

The test, scheduled for the week of June 25, will automatically call nearly 45,000 phone numbers in the mountain communities and requires no follow-up on the part of residents.

TENS was implemented in 2004 after the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors voted to fund the program as part of its efforts to confront the dangers related to wildfires in the San Bernardino and San Gabriel Mountains following the devastating Grand Prix and Old fires in 2003.

“TENS is a very valuable tool for communicating critical, potentially life-saving, information to residents in the event of an emergency,” said San Bernardino County Fire Chief Pat Dennen. “This test is especially important given the heightened fire risk we are experiencing this year.”

The TENS test is part of efforts by local, state and federal agencies to prepare for the 2007 fire season, though the system can also be used in the event of floods and other emergencies.

Since not everyone would be home to receive a call from the TENS system, the County would not scale back existing emergency procedures in the event of a real emergency. Depending on the nature and scope of the emergency, the County would continue to:

- Communicate with residents door-to-door through the Emergency Alert System and through the news media
- Post emergency crews in threatened areas

- Conduct community meetings and produce and disseminate written emergency information
- Take other measures as necessary

The 2007 fire season got an early start this year due to prolonged drought. This means mountain-area residents need to be more vigilant and better prepared than ever.

MAST agencies have removed more than 1 million dead and dying trees that pose fire hazards in the San Bernardino Mountains, and agencies are encouraging residents to remove green vegetation and ladder fuels that can add to the fire risk. For more information on how to reduce fire risk, please visit www.calmast.org

ABOUT THE MOUNTAIN AREA SAFETY TASKFORCE

Formed in 2002, MAST is a coalition of local, state and federal government agencies, private companies and volunteer organizations in San Bernardino County that are concerned with public safety in the mountain areas of their respective jurisdictions. For more information about MAST, visit www.calmast.org.

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