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Enhancing Emergency Management Capabilities in California

Cal EMA Acting Secretary Matthew Bettenhausen joined with emergency responders, volunteers and private industry partners to highlight recent actions to strengthen the state's ability to respond to emergencies and natural disasters. At today's event in Woodland, Bettenhausen joined Chris Homewood, Regional Director of Assets Protection, Target Corporation to sign a Memorandum of Understanding that makes Cal EMA and Target Stores key partners in the state's disaster response system. Additional attendees included Marlin "Skip" Davies, and representatives from Woodland Fire Department.

"California has the world's best firefighters, police and first responders - yet we recognize that public-private partnerships will increase our resources, engrain us more deeply in our local communities, and build on the "neighbor helping neighbor" spirit of emergency response in California" said Bettenhausen.

Governor Schwarzenegger acknowledged the important role that the private sector plays in helping California respond and recover from emergencies with the issuance of his 2006 Executive Order S-04-06, which called on the Cal EMA (formerly the Governor's Office of Emergency Services) to make the private sector part of the state's disaster response system. Additionally, Governor Schwarzenegger signed SB 546 in 2005 which authorized sharing facilities and systems, which would among other things, include private businesses and nonprofit organizations in a voluntary program that would integrate private sector emergency preparedness measures into governmental disaster planning programs.

As part of its implementation, Cal EMA has been actively forming partnerships with private industry. To date, Cal EMA has signed MOUs with the following private sector partners: Business Executives for National Security, the California Grocer's Association, the California Utilities Emergency Association and Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.

These MOUs will allow for more targeted and efficient delivery of goods and services by formalizing 24-hour contacts with the private sector. Just like we have 24-hour access to our governmental partners, the state now has well-established personal relationships with emergency management professionals in the private sector that we can call on 365 days per year. These partners will also be allowed into the State Operations Center during a disaster to staff a "Business Operations Center," which has been established by Cal EMA. Having the private sector side-by-side with state and federal emergency management personnel will expedite response activities and maximize resources.

Examples of how these MOUs will benefit Californians include:

- **Restoring power** - the California Utilities Emergency Association coordinates the repair of power, water and other utilities via its affiliate businesses, which is critical during an emergency to restoring a community back to normal.
- **Providing food and water** - the California Grocer's Association can access their network of members to provide food, water and other provisions to emergency responders and evacuation centers.
- **Access to supplies** - Wal-Mart has access to goods and supplies throughout the country and has a sophisticated logistics system to ensure that necessary supplies get to where they are needed in the shortest time-frame possible.
- **Access to emergency professionals** - the Business Executives for National Security have a host of professional emergency managers that can aid in immediate response activities and long-term recovery efforts.

For more information about California's Public-Private Partnerships, please visit www.calema.ca.gov

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