RESPONSE TO THOMAS FIRE... PARTNERSHIP MAKES IT POSSIBLE

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) – Just as there is a Unified Command for firefighting on the front lines of the Thomas Fire, there are partnerships behind the scenes that make all of the information regarding air quality, distribution of masks for residents, announced evacuations, sheltering for people and animals, etc. flowing smoothly.

Partnerships with Direct Relief and the Medical Reserve Corp have made an enormous difference getting masks to county residents to protect them from the harmful effects of unhealthy air. Direct Relief, whose mission is to “improve the health and lives of people affected by poverty and emergencies” has donated thousands of N 95 masks to distribute in the community. The Medical Reserve Corp, local residents who work in the healthcare profession and volunteer during disasters, have volunteered countless hours distributing masks at various sites across the county. More than 25,000 masks were delivered through this partnership yesterday and it is anticipated that at least that many will be distributed again today.

N95 masks will be distributed at the following three locations today until supplies run out:

- Costco in the Camino Real Marketplace (7095 Market Pl Drive, Goleta), 10am
- Franklin Community Center (1136 East Montecito Street, Santa Barbara), 10am
- Albertson’s in Carpinteria (1018 Casitas Pass Road, Carpinteria), 10 am
- Montecito (Lower Village, 1400 block of E. Valley Road), 1pm

The Air Pollution Control District and Public Health Departments are working together to assess air quality, to identify health impacts and to inform the community about safeguarding individual health protection. As a partnership we work to keep our community informed and healthy.

In the animal world, County Animal Services is grateful to Equine Evac who is providing care for large animals at Earl Warren. There were 338 animals, 240 of which were horses, at Earl Warren under the watchful eye of Equine Evac volunteers on Thursday, December 7. At the same time county partners at the Santa Barbara Humane Society are providing safe, quality care for 241 evacuated animals at their site.

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There are also facilities for people who have evacuated their homes and need temporary sheltering. UCSB, the Red Cross, Department of Social Services, and the Public Health Department all play crucial roles in assuring there is a safe place, food and essentials for those who have been forced to leave their homes.

We are fortunate to live in a region so dedicated in coming together as a community supporting each other while our fire departments work to tame the Thomas Fire.

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