



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

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California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Teams with State Volunteer Group to Hold Disaster Preparedness Training Symposium at Saddleback College

Two-day event included simulated earthquake to better understand logistical needs

MISSION VIEJO, Calif. – The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office's Emergency Preparedness department along with CaliforniaVolunteers hosted more than 120 representatives from nearly 50 colleges, universities, government agencies and non-profit organizations April 16-17 at Saddleback College for the inaugural California Colleges and Universities Community Emergency Response Team Symposium.

The collaborative two-day agenda included a tabletop exercise that simulated a catastrophic earthquake, workshops on starting new programs and enhancing existing programs and a keynote address from California Secretary of Service and Volunteering Karen Baker and the Community Emergency Response Team founder Frank Borden. CaliforniaVolunteers, led by Secretary Baker, is the state office that manages programs and initiatives aimed at increasing the number of Californians engaged in service and volunteering. The University of California Office of the President and the California State University Chancellor's Office also were sponsors of the inaugural event.

"The Community Emergency Response Team is a very important program because it empowers our college communities to mitigate a disaster before first responder help arrives," California Community Colleges Chancellor Jack Scott said. "I appreciate the support and commitment of CaliforniaVolunteers in partnering with us on this important endeavor. In addition to keeping our communities safe, Community Emergency Response Team programs have been a bridge for our students to pursue careers in the fire service, law enforcement, emergency management and medical fields."

More than 80 percent of California's first responders and 70 percent of California's nurses are educated at one of the 112 California community colleges. The Disaster Resistant California Community Colleges Project was launched by the Chancellor's Office in 2007 to support the community colleges in emergency preparedness. Launching new emergency response programs and enhancing existing ones at the colleges has been a top priority.

"I greatly appreciate the work being done by our emergency response volunteers across California and

commend everyone who took part in the symposium at Saddleback College,” said Secretary Baker. “This program plays a vital role in preparing our residents to respond to and recover from disasters.”

The two-day symposium featured presentations from the American Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Agency and culminated with the tabletop catastrophic earthquake simulation called, “A disaster hit, now what?” The simulation was led by Kim Aufhauser, director of Emergency Planning, Preparedness and Response for the West Valley-Mission Community College District; Mike Ripley, Disaster Response Manager for the Studio Operations Group at NBC Universal and Steve Goldfarb, Fire Safety/Emergency Planning Specialist for the University of Southern California.

“It was an honor for Saddleback College to host the inaugural Community Emergency Response Team symposium,” President of Saddleback College Dr. Tod A. Burnett said. “The safety of our students and employees is our top priority and the emergency response training will be an invaluable resource in the event of a catastrophe. I thank Chancellor Scott, California Community Colleges Director of Emergency Planning and Preparedness Peter Wright, and the CaliforniaVolunteers for their excellent work in advancing emergency preparedness and ensuring that we are organized and working together if and when a disaster strikes.”

The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation composed of 72 districts and 112 colleges serving 2.6 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills education and prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions. The Chancellor’s Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. For more information about the community colleges, please visit <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu>.

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