



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
November 7, 2007

**CONTACT:** Alison Crawford  
(909) 890-0644, ext. 2164

## **HOUSING AUTHORITY AIDS FIRE VICTIMS**

*San Bernardino County Agency moves quickly to secure affordable housing for families left homeless by the recent wildfires*

**SAN BERNARDINO, CA** – Nearly 20 families left homeless by the wildfires that ravaged local mountain communities will receive rental assistance this week in the form of Housing Choice Vouchers from The Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino.

Through the vouchers, families will spend only 30% of their monthly income to rent a home or apartment. Any remaining rent will be paid by the Housing Authority, up to \$1,460 monthly for a 3-bedroom home or apartment.

Even as firefighters continued to battle the flames, the Housing Authority had already sprang into action, working with the City of San Bernardino, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and numerous County departments to assist dozens of renters and owners in the mountain communities who had been left homeless by the blazes.

“Renters whose buildings burn down are typically left with very few options: no insurance, little money, no belongings, and a huge fear of the unknown future. Our staff worked 12 hours per day to take applications, answer questions, explain options, and to ultimately house almost 20 families,” said Dan Nackerman, Executive Director of the Housing Authority. “This County had it together!”

Housing Authority staff spent countless hours providing comfort, information and assistance to approximately 75 families, said Nackerman, who was himself evacuated from the fire. His home survived the flames.

The Housing Authority tapped into its experience from assisting Hurricane Katrina evacuees who arrived in San Bernardino County by modifying its local policies to move National Emergency victims to the top of affordable housing waiting lists. Those lists often number over 30,000 households and it can normally take applicants years to be housed.

“This is a Federal emergency and we operate Federally-funded programs,” said George Guerrero, Chairperson of the Authority. “We helped during Katrina and we are helping now.”

What could be more important during a time of such loss and uncertainty than having a roof over your head?"

Over 30 staff members assisted fire victims for 13 straight days under the leadership of Susan Benner, Assistant Executive Director and Anna Rico, Executive Assistant.

The Housing Choice Voucher program is for lower income persons only and helps to lower rents for over 25,000 households in private housing throughout San Bernardino County.

To further assist fire victims, the Housing Authority is posting detailed property listings for units available across Southern California for those left homes by the flames. To access the list, visit our Web Site at <http://www.hacsb.com>

####