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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County of Santa Barbara, Montecito Community Open Tea Fire Recovery Satellite Office

Santa Barbara County officials today announced the temporary Tea Fire Recovery Satellite Office in Montecito is open effective Friday, December 19. The temporary office is behind Cold Spring Elementary School, 2243 Sycamore Canyon Road (Highway 192), at Stoddard Lane.

This is a working office for County staff that is part of the County's comprehensive strategy to assist the Montecito community with Tea Fire recovery operations with an office located closer to the burn area. The office will be open 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, even during the County's Furlough Program Dec. 22, 2008 to Jan. 4, 2009.

"This is a County office where recovery work will be done, where residents will be able to find answers to their questions and get help resolving any issues under the County's jurisdiction," said Board Chair and First District County Supervisor Salud Carbajal. "Community volunteers were working from the back of their cars as they helped the community and this office will make it safer and more efficient for those volunteer efforts to continue."

Tony Nisich, the County's Tea Fire Recovery Team Ombudsman, will be available in the office for meetings with residents. The County is also designating space for the Mountain Drive-area residents with a community service desk to help coordinate volunteer efforts that benefit Tea Fire survivors and homeowners groups impacted by the fire. The office is not a drop-off site for donations.

Montecito resident and design professional Adele Goggia will staff the volunteer community service desk five days a week. Goggia's service is sponsored by her employer, Harrison Design Associates Architects of Santa Barbara. Eric David Greenspan, founder and CEO of Make It Work, is having his company supply computers for volunteers at the satellite office.

John McInnes, Acting Assistant CEO for the County's Tea Fire Executive Team, coordinated the efforts to get the satellite office operational along with Montecito resident J'Amy Brown and Abe Powell, director of relief services for the Mountain Drive Community Association.

"J'Amy and Abe did a great job helping with this project. We also want to thank Bryan McCabe, Ph.D., Superintendent/Principal, Cold Spring School District and the district's Board of Trustees for their help in making this project happen for the Montecito community," McInnes said.

Trustees voted their approval for the satellite office after learning that about 30 Cold Spring School families were affected by the Tea Fire, either by the full loss or substantial damage to their homes. The trustees are Darren Caesar, President, Mike Hieshima, Ann Tro, Elizabeth Ricard, and Bryan Goligoski.

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