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Emergency Management and Homeland Security Special Coverage- Southern California Wildfires 10-26-07

My thoughts are with my colleagues in CA. Stay safe everyone!

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“It was nuclear winter. It was like Armageddon. It looked like the end of the world”

San Diego Firefighter Mitch Mender describing the 2007 California Wildfires

News Articles

Fire Operations and Progress

Wildfires force students from dorms, shut Pacific Coast Highway (California)

<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/21/wildfire.ca/index.html>

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-ex-winds22oct22,0,5058931.story?coll=la-home-center>

Coordinated, quick response vital to fighting fires

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-responders22oct22,0,2997554.story?coll=la-home-center>

Continuing updates on the Malibu fire from Times reporters on the scene

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-ex-winds22oct22,1,1923524.story?coll=la-headlines-california>

A terrifying scene, but a familiar one

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-scene22oct22,1,1544077.column?coll=la-headlines-california>

Wind-Fueled Malibu Wildfires 'Zero Percent' Contained

<http://abclocal.go.com/kabc/story?section=local&id=5718472>

Wildfires rage in Southern Calif.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20071022/ap_on_re_us/california_wildfires

San Diego at the mercy of flames once again

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-sandiego23oct23,0,6071887.story?coll=la-home-center>

Fire's 'utter devastation' (Video)

<http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/us/2007/10/23/sot.simon.battalion.chief.cnn>

Technology helps firefighters on land, in air

<http://www.cnn.com/2007/TECH/10/23/wildfire.tech/index.html>

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Military helping fight fires while poised to evacuate
<http://www.cnn.com/2007/POLITICS/10/23/fire.military/index.html>

80 Arizona Firefighters Help SoCal
<http://www.kpho.com/news/14399924/detail.html>

'Devil wind' stokes Southern California flames
<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/23/env.winds/index.html>

Your stories of heroism amid flames
<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/23/your.heroes.irpt/index.html>

Calif. firefighters hope winds slacken
http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20071024/ap_on_re_us/california_wildfires

'We Can't Stop It,' Fire Official Says
<http://www.10news.com/weather/14387615/detail.html>

1,155 homes -- and counting
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-fire24oct24,0,5795853.story?coll=la-home-center>

Ringed by flames, family takes refuge in van
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-survival24oct24,0,473773.story?coll=la-home-center>

Additional Resources for Air Attack on Southern California Wildfires
<http://www.govtech.com/em/articles/158361>

Frustrated Chief: Too Few Resources to Control Massive Blaze
<http://www.10news.com/weather/14410621/detail.html>

Calif. wildfire losses top \$1 billion
http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20071024/ap_on_re_us/california_wildfires

Weather begins to offer some hope
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-fires25oct25,0,2708820.story>

San Diego's Inferno: Relief Ahead?
http://news.yahoo.com/s/time/20071024/us_time/sandiegoinfernoreliefahead

Fire focus turns to San Diego and Orange County
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-fires25oct25,1,7573406.story?coll=la-headlines-california>

Fire wipes out mobile home park
<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/25/fire.trailers/index.html>

Calif. wildfires are still not contained
http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20071025/ap_on_re_us/california_wildfires

Fire threat to homes diminishes
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-fire26oct26,0,6713361.story?coll=la-home-center>

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Tribal volunteers tackle blaze

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-lajolla26oct26,1,1184294.story?coll=la-headlines-california>

Battling in the backcountry

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-striketeam26oct26,1,3449446.story?coll=la-headlines-california>

Santiago fire threatens 750 homes

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-ocfires27oct27,0,835878.story?coll=la-home-center>

Santiago, Slide fires still worrisome

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-fires27oct27,0,3626328.story?coll=la-home-center>

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Evacuations, Shelters and Reentry

Hollywood's helping hands

<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/news/celebrity/la-et-hollywoodresponds-24nov24,0,1858350.story?coll=la-home-entertainment>

Thousands of homes ordered evacuated in California fires

<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/22/wildfire.ca/index.html>

First-time homeowner ready to 'go down with his ship'

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-standoff23oct23,0,1933928.story?coll=la-home-center>

Airlines waive change fees due to California fires

<http://travel.latimes.com/daily-deal-blog/?p=900>

265,000 flee as massive wildfires char Southern California

<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/22/wildfire.ca/index.html>

San Diego arena braces for wildfire evacuees

<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/23/evac.villanueva/index.html>

Evacuees wall-to-wall at shelters (Video)

<http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/us/2007/10/23/bpr.ca.fire.red.cross.linke.cnn>

CA Wildfires Force Mass Evacuation

<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1674595,00.html?xid=rss-topstories>

Evacuee horses fill fairgrounds

<http://www.dailypilot.com/articles/2007/10/23/publicsafety/dpt-horses23.txt>

Evacuation stadium filled with almost festive spirit

<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/23/evac.qualcomm.ap/index.html>

Wildfire evacuees make do (Video)

<http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/us/2007/10/23/gutierrez.san.diego.fire.stadium.cnn>

Hotels accommodating fire evacuees with reduced rates

<http://www.cnn.com/2007/TRAVEL/10/23/evac.travel/index.html>

Quick alert, mass evacuation may have saved lives

<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/23/evac.security/index.html>

More than 500,000 flee as California fires rage for third day

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20071023/ts_afp/usfires_071023194734;_ylt=AvMYdulnvAz.VXLko_2Nxo1H2ocA

Standing on a corner, thinking of home

<http://www.latimes.com/news/columnists/la-me-slopez23oct24,0,806186.story?coll=la-home-center>

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Scale of the fires' disruption on display at San Diego stadium
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-evacuate24oct24,0,627804.story?coll=la-home-center>

New evacuees join nearly 1 million displaced by fires
<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/24/fire.wildfire.ca/index.html>

A relief center to behold
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-qualcomm24oct24,0,6849140.story?coll=la-home-center>

Scale of the fires' disruption on display at San Diego stadium
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-evacuate24oct24,1,5751160.story?coll=la-headlines-california>

Dealing with outback die-hards who don't want to go
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-holdouts24oct24,1,4557745.story?coll=la-headlines-california>

Fire evacuees 'worried sick' at Qualcomm
<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/24/evac.navy/index.html>

New evacuations, power shortages as fires stretch into fourth day
<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/24/fire.wildfire.ca/index.html>

Red Cross: Many evacuees staying with friends, hotels
<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/24/evac.where/index.html>

Wildfire evacuee shelter offers lesson in volunteerism
<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/25/evac.qualcomm.scene/index.html>

No respite in Julian
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-hiker25oct25,0,7169863.story?coll=la-home-center>

1 million fled fires? As the smoke clears, the numbers shrink
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-evacuation25oct25,0,6746893.story?coll=la-home-center>

SoCal Fire Drives Victims Online
<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/10/24/national/main3401604.shtml>

Bright Spot: Better Evacuation Saved Lives
<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/10/25/national/main3406777.shtml>

Fire Evacuees Seek Return to Normal
http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/nationworld/sns-ap-california-wildfires.0,1396336.story?coll=orl_tab01_layout

SoCal Looks to 'Repopulate' Fire Areas
http://www.redorbit.com/news/science/1116567/socal_looks_to_repopulate_fire_areas/index.html

He refused to leave, then got lucky
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-standoff26oct26,0,3310190.story?coll=la-home-center>

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Orange Show evacuees glad for even Spartan conditions

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-orangeshow26oct26,1,4109411.story?coll=la-headlines-california>

More signs of progress seen on fires

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-fires27oct27,0,3626328.story?coll=la-home-center>

VCA Animal Hospitals Offer Free Boarding for Pets Affected by Southern California Fires

<http://www.vcapets.com/pressreleases.htm>

In the Great State of Serenity, Staying Cool amid the Flames

By William Booth and Sonya Geis
Washington Post Staff Writers
Wednesday, October 24, 2007; A01

SAN DIEGO, Oct. 23 -- If you need to flee from a giant fire that threatens to turn your world to ashes, Ronald Garza allowed between bites of an ice cream bar Tuesday, "this is probably the best place to be." By "this" he meant Qualcomm Stadium, now filling with more than 20,000 evacuees and volunteers, where Garza waited for a free massage while his wife was off getting coffee. "Starbucks," he said.

Officials are calling these some of the worst wildfires that San Diego County has seen in modern history. More than 500,000 people have been forced from their homes. But there is also a unique feel to this natural disaster, a distinctly California style, and it is not just the constant presence of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on the TV screens.

Meaning: California is dealing with it. Automated "reverse 911" calls were alerting residents to mandatory evacuations. Shelters opened almost immediately. "This is going to be a major hit on the economy here in San Diego," Schwarzenegger said. "But we've been through this before, and we're going to help San Diego."

Many evacuees of the wildfires mentioned Hurricane Katrina, and while they quickly said that the two disasters were completely different, they seemed to be proud of the coordinated outpouring of help and support.

"Nobody does disasters better than California," said R. David Paulison, administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, after visiting Qualcomm Stadium with the Republican governor.

Every motel room in San Diego is booked, so good souls have taken to posting offers on Craigslist of free room and board for evacuees. At emergency shelters in high schools and recreation centers, the huddled masses have flipped open their laptops to scroll through satellite maps to pinpoint the fires' progress. Some of the most up-to-date information is coming out of the neighborhood blogs, which are filling with images of yellow skies and burning hills, taken with cellphone cameras.

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"This is a neighbor-helping-neighbor situation," San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders said at Qualcomm, drawing a round of applause from his constituents.

In San Diego County, schools and colleges are closed and many businesses have told workers to stay home, so the freeways are eerily open. In Malibu, the famous drug and alcohol rehab centers tucked away in the scrubby canyons were briefly evacuated of the rich and addicted. In one of the largest fires north of Los Angeles, residents of the Stevenson Ranch development watched flames skirt past the Six Flags Magic Mountain amusement park, with televised images showing billowing smoke roiling behind the roller coasters.

In the Orange County city of Aliso Viejo, workers were heading into corporate parks on Tuesday morning as a huge cloud of smoke poured above the hills several miles away. "Just another day at the office," said David Stein, a mortgage analyst. He was joking, of course. "I think we'll probably eventually take the day off," he said.

But the reality on the ground was that while the fires burned in the hills, people went to the malls. While the fires were massive and widespread, and the skies over Southern California smelled of choking smoke, the damage was scattered and not nearly as lethal as was feared. Two people were confirmed dead as of Tuesday evening.

At Qualcomm Stadium, where the San Diego Chargers play, thousands of evacuees were camped in the parking lot in their cars and RVs, and in tents and on cots. Tables were piled high with food. There were pallets of apples and bananas, and semitrailers filled with ice. You could make your own sandwich -- or a volunteer would make one for you. There were stacks of cookies. Coolers brimming with icy-cold sodas. Volunteers offered coloring books and crayons to the kids.

In the land of plenty, there was plenty to offer. And many people are going to need the help. More than 2,000 structures, including 1,250 homes, have been lost in the fires, almost of all them in San Diego County.

One room of the Del Mar Fairgrounds was turned over to residents of a San Diego nursing home. Dozens of dazed elders sat in rows of wheelchairs Tuesday morning, their hair matted from sleeping on cots. Doctors with their names written on tape across their backs hummed around them. "It's been awful," Nita Pearre, 86, said of the evacuation. She is not a nursing home resident but was segregated with the elderly. "Makes me feel old," she said. "I didn't sleep too good. Who could?"

Pearre worried about her home in Rancho Bernardo, which has been shown in flames on television for two days. But "they're wonderful here" at the evacuation center, she said. "I had a good blanket, good and warm. There was mattresses for everyone. It's been marvelous."

At the stadium, there were mountains of clothing and bedding. One man was trying on a pair of leather pants. A local pizza maker told a radio reporter that his pies were turned away because there was too much food. A cellphone provider was offering free calls to anywhere in the United States. An air-conditioned medical tent was erected. Doctors and nurses circulated. A sign advertised crisis counseling for "grief, loss, group or individual."

Staff Sgt. Zell Evans surveyed the scene. He is attached to a California National Guard task force that was moved from its mission along the Mexican border to Qualcomm Stadium. Guard members moved through the crowd without weapons. "This is real different from Katrina," said

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Evans, who spent 45 days in New Orleans after the 2005 hurricane. "Here? There's no fear, no pushing, no fighting. Everybody is calm. It's just a completely different situation."

George Biagi, deputy press secretary to Sanders, said no visions of New Orleans danced in his head. "That was a whole region," he said. "With this, a lot of people can stay with friends. This is just a part of the city. And neighbors are helping each other out."

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Special Needs

Hospital patients forced out (Video)

<http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/us/2007/10/23/vo.ca.hospital.evacuation.xetv>

Fire creates opening, traps for immigrants

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-border26oct26.1,1986789.story?coll=la-headlines-california>

How evacuees can deal with special medical needs

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-handicapped26oct26,1,624496.story?coll=la-headlines-california>

What fire victims need to know about their animals

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-pets26oct26,1,2594936.story?coll=la-headlines-california>

Nursing care patients return home

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-elderly26oct26,1,720959.story?coll=la-headlines-california>

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Local and State Response

Rescues strain fire resources as California wildfires rage
<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/22/wildfire.ca/index.html>

In San Diego, echoes of the 2003 disaster
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-prepare23oct23,0,6144290.story?coll=la-home-center>

Rescuers race flames to save pets, livestock
<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/23/evac.animals/index.html>

Veteran firefighter bemoans erratic blaze
<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/23/fire.firefighter/index.html>

He won't say 'I told you so . . .'
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-lopez24oct24,1,2517947.column?coll=la-headlines-california>

Fire command center is like a war room
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-command24oct24,1,397858.story?coll=la-headlines-california>

Firefighters sent to Southern California (Washington)
<http://www.theolympian.com/northwest/story/252389.html>

State Goes High Tech in SoCal Fire Fight
<http://www.nbc11.com/news/14405017/detail.html?rss=bay&psp=news>

UPDATE: SoCal Wildfire Response Sparks Criticism in Local Papers
http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/news/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003662254&imw=Y

Fortune spent fighting fires (Video)
<http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/us/2007/10/24/johns.kth.fire.money.cnn>

State has been slow to boost firefighting capability
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-state25oct25,0,3228515.story?coll=la-home-center>

Tasting soot and defeat
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-firefighters25oct25,0,5053379.story?coll=la-home-center>

Governor Schwarzenegger Mobilizes CDCR Strike Teams to Southern California Wildfires
<http://www.govtech.com/em/articles/158651>

Calif. Dept. of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to Provide Urgent Assistance to Fire Victims and Livestock, Pets
<http://www.govtech.com/em/articles/158641>

Cue Disaster, Cut to Schwarzenegger
<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1675343,00.html?cnn=yes>

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Nevada Sends Fire Aid to California

http://www.redorbit.com/news/science/1115128/nevada_sends_fire_aid_to_california/index.html

As Calif. Fires Burned, Copters Grounded

http://www.redorbit.com/news/science/1117499/as_calif_fires_burned_copters_ground/index.html

San Diego County officials decry state's bureaucracy

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-tankers26oct26,1,1175117.story?coll=la-headlines-california>

Another way the rich are different: 'concierge-level' fire protection

<http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-richfire26oct26,0,3352683.story?coll=la-home-center>

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Federal Response

Bush declares emergency over wildfires

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-bushfire24oct24,0,1278573.story?coll=la-home-center>

Statement by the White House press secretary

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-bushfirestatement24oct24,0,7054124.story?coll=la-home-center>

Federal Emergency Management Agency Coordinating National Response to California Wildfires

<http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=41428>

What FEMA will and won't pay for

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-fema24oct24,0,6128121.story?coll=la-home-center>

DHS's Chertoff and FEMA's Paulison to Visit Calif. Wildfires

<http://www.govtech.com/em/articles/158363>

Federal Resources Assist Residents and Firefighters Responding To Southern California Wildfires

<http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=41440>

National Emergency Family Registry System and Child Locator Center Activated For California Fires

<http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=41442>

FEMA faces wildfire, Katrina comparisons

<http://www.cnn.com/2007/POLITICS/10/24/fire.fema/index.html>

Bush declares major fire disaster

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-na-usfires25oct25,0,7974716.story?coll=la-home-center>

Disaster aid centers to open this week

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-assist25oct25,0,182787.story?coll=la-home-center>

Bush vows speedy federal help for fire victims

<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/25/fire.wildfire.ca/index.html>

Bush visits California wildfire victims

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20071025/ap_on_go_pr_wh/bush

FEMA bureau sends IT gear south to fire zone

http://www.gcn.com/online/vol1_no1/45300-1.html

Feds mobilize in response to wildfire disaster

<http://federaltimes.com/index.php?S=3134667>

NASA Aircraft to Aid Firefighting Effort

http://news.wired.com/dynamic/stories/C/CALIFORNIA_WILDFIRES_NASA?SITE=WIRE&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2007-10-24-17-14-25

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http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/wildfires_grounded_aircraft

NASA's high-tech wildfire weapons

<http://www.cnn.com/2007/TECH/science/10/26/nasa.wildfire.tech/index.html>

Atlanta-Based FEMA Team Heads To San Diego To Support Federal Response To California Wildfires

<http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=41448>

FEMA Region 10 Deploys Emergency Responders to Southern California

<http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=41454>

FEMA Assistance Continues as Californians Begin Recovery

<http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=41496>

Travel policies temporarily loosened in Southern California

http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?articleid=38378&dcn=todaysnews

FEMA workers pose as reporters (The transcript is available in the Additional information section)

http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2007-10-26-fema-reporters_N.htm?csp=34

http://www.motherjones.com/mojoblog/archives/2007/10/5948_femas_fake_pres.html

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/10/25/AR2007102502488.html>

<http://blogs.usatoday.com/ondeadline/2007/10/fema-stages-fak.html>

http://www.democraticunderground.com/discuss/duboard.php?az=view_all&address=102x3043940

<http://watchingwashington.blogspot.com/2007/10/femas-fake-news-conference.html>

<http://freedemocracy.blogspot.com/2007/10/fema-meets-press-which-happens-to-be.html>

http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/news/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1003663989

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,305484,00.html>

<http://thinkprogress.org/207/10/26/fema-softball-presser/> (Video)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2007/10/26/VI2007102601479.html> (Video)

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Oct. 26, 2007

Reprimands Could Follow Press Conference Fraud, DHS Says

By Daniel Fowler, CQ Staff

Department of Homeland Security officials blasted the Federal Emergency Management Agency for having FEMA employees impersonate reporters during a press conference on the California wildfires Tuesday.

Both DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff and Deputy Secretary Michael P. Jackson found the actions of FEMA public affairs staff "inexcusable and offensive," DHS spokeswoman Laura Keehner said Friday.

"They were just furious," said Keehner, noting that those involved in the debacle could be reprimanded or fired.

"They are talking about the possibility of some sort of employment action on this," Keehner said.

Vice Adm. Harvey E. Johnson, the deputy FEMA administrator, spoke at the event on Tuesday afternoon, but FEMA provided only 15 minutes notice to reporters, hampering attendance. Keehner said camera crews showed up for the press conference, but no reporters attended.

There was also an 800 number for reporters to call in, but they were unable to ask questions.

Instead, FEMA public affairs staff asked the questions about their own agency's response to the fires.

Keehner said DHS doesn't know how many reporters were on the conference call.

"We've taken measures to make sure this will never happen again," Keehner said.

Oct. 26, 2007

Emergency Funds Sought to Respond to California Fires

By David Clarke, CQ Staff

Leaders of the House and Senate Interior-Environment Appropriations panels on Friday called on Congress to approve \$1 billion in emergency funds to respond to the wildfires ravaging southern California.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., and Rep. Norm Dicks, D-Wash., sent a letter to the chairmen of the two Appropriations committees asking that the money be provided in an upcoming appropriations bill.

"This amount would include \$225 million to repay program funds borrowed by the Interior Department and Forest Service to fund emergency firefighting activities and also provide an additional \$775 million to fund suppression, hazardous fuels reduction, restoration, and reconstruction needs," they wrote.

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The wildfires have been burning across Southern California over the past week. President Bush visited the fire zone Thursday, one day after declaring a major disaster in seven counties. That action made federal funds available to residents of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties.

The funds can be used for temporary housing, home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses, and other programs to help individuals and business owners.

Dicks and Feinstein wrote that 480,000 acres have burned and nearly 1,600 homes have been lost.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said Thursday she is committed to working with the president to provide California with whatever help the state needs.

When asked at a news conference specifically about providing funding in response to the fires Pelosi said, "There is a fund from which this money comes, and we want to make sure that that is replenished so that other disasters in the country have sufficient funds in place to help with that."

In their letter Feinstein and Dicks said 8.7 million acres have been burned this year, and they worry fire fighting funds for the Interior Department and Forest Service will run out some time in fiscal 2008. "We assure you that we continue to maintain close oversight of wildfire costs, but during these extreme emergencies, additional federal assistance is appropriate," they wrote.

A possible vehicle for the funding could be a stop-gap spending bill, known as a "continuing resolution," that will be needed to keep the government funded beyond Nov. 16. That is when the current continuing resolution ([PL 110-92](#)) expires.

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Arson Investigation

Home Searched In Calif. Wildfire Arson Investigation
<http://www.10news.com/news/14415303/detail.html>

Fire chief: 22,000-acre blaze was set
<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/25/fire.arson/index.html>

Arson tip reward is increased to \$150,000
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-arson26oct26,1,6520241.story?coll=la-headlines-california>

Fire investigators go through dirt to get into mind of arsonists
<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/25/inside.arson.probe/index.html>

Man charged with arson in small California fire
<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/26/fire.arson/index.html>

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Other

Stars not spared as fires rage in Malibu

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20071021/sc_afp/usweathercaliforniafire_071021213239;_ylt=AjuBkP5DiGiOZ8qFnt8fm4zPOrgF

Fire affects TV shows, celebrities

<http://www.cnn.com/2007/SHOWBIZ/10/23/fire.entertainment/index.html>

Bad day for fires, great day for surf

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-surfers22oct22,0,7970121.story?coll=la-home-center>

Fires in Malibu ignite rage on the Web

<http://www.latimes.com/news/columnists/la-me-lopez23oct23,0,4117434.column?coll=la-home-center>

E-mail from an inferno: How we escaped the fire

<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/23/gallen.fire/index.html>

Smoke a serious health threat as wildfires spread

<http://www.cnn.com/2007/HEALTH/10/23/env.health/index.html>

Newly married reporter returns home to a nightmare

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-oc1stperson24oct24,0,443958.story?coll=la-home-center>

The next battle for wildfire victims: Insurance

http://money.cnn.com/2007/10/23/news/companies/california_fires/index.htm?cnn=yes

Fires won't hurt long term, economists say

<http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-fire-econ24oct24,0,1599298.story?coll=la-home-center>

Fires take toll on cell phone service

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-fi-cell24oct24,1,4902464.story?coll=la-headlines-california>

Talk radio host links fire victims to those who 'hate America'

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-beck24oct24,1,1363512.story?coll=la-headlines-california>

California's age of megafires

http://news.yahoo.com/s/csm/20071024/ts_csm/afires

How Fires Go Wild

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/10/24/earlyshow/main3401763.shtml>

Katrina comparisons are a different class of wrong

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-lopez26oct26,0,6570862.column?coll=la-home-center>

What to Save From a Fire

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1675600,00.html?cnn=yes>

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Feinstein Wants to Stop Building in CA Fire Areas
http://cbs2.com/local/local_story_297134902.html

Studio veteran crafts a fire story with a happy ending
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-fi-noah25oct25,0,4485132.story?coll=la-home-center>

Warmer temperatures tied to wildfires, scientists say
<http://www.cnn.com/2007/TECH/science/10/25/env.environment.fires/index.html>

Fire deaths, damage come into focus as evacuees cope
<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/26/fire.wildfire.ca/index.html>

Commentary: No time to take advantage of tragedy
<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/26/fire.navarrette/index.html>

From far and wide, helpers pour into a fire-stricken San Diego
http://news.yahoo.com/s/csm/20071026/ts_csm/ahelpers

Wildfire Mitigation Tested in Orange County, CA
<http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=41500>

Why some averted disaster
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-saved24oct24,1,6328214.story?coll=la-headlines-california>

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Reports

2003 California Wildfire Governor's Blue Ribbon Committee Report
[http://www.oes.ca.gov/Operational/OESHome.nsf/PDF/BlueRibbonReporttoGov/\\$file/BlueRibbonRept.pdf](http://www.oes.ca.gov/Operational/OESHome.nsf/PDF/BlueRibbonReporttoGov/$file/BlueRibbonRept.pdf)

The City and County of San Diego's 2003 Wildfire After-Action reports are available at:
www.lis.dhs.gov

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Additional Information

Governor Schwarzenegger Issues Statement on Wildfires in Southern California
<http://gov.ca.gov/index.php?/press-release/7786/>

LA Times Photos
<http://yourscene.latimes.com/mycapture/photos/Album.aspx?EventID=357460&CategoryID=20832>

Washington Post Photo Slideshow
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/gallery/2007/10/21/GA2007102101410.html?hpid=moreheadlines>

GovExec Photo Gallery
<http://www.govexec.com/multimedia/player/galleriesPlayer.cfm?mediaid=6>

Map of Malibu Fire
<http://www.latimes.com/media/acrobat/2007-10/33378039.pdf>

Where the Fires are burning (Map)
<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/23/fire.map/index.html>

Map of Northwest LA County fire
<http://www.latimes.com/media/acrobat/2007-10/33378489.pdf>

LA Times Evacuations and closures
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-earlyclosure23oct23,0,2156012.story?coll=la-home-center>

LA County Fire Department Fire Status Information
<http://fire.lacounty.gov/>

Los Angeles County Govt. Fire Alerts
http://www.lacounty.info/Fire%20Alert.asp#P-4_0

Orange County, CA Fire Authority Santiago Incident Status
<http://www.ocfa.org/pages/ocfa.asp?filename=canyonfire.asp>

San Bernardino County, CA Fire, Office of Emergency Services Status Website
http://www.sbcfire.org/oes/site_links.asp

Ventura County Fire Incident Status Report
<http://fire.countyofventura.org/>

Los Angeles County 2-1-1 Disaster Information and News Website
<http://www.211la.org/Content.asp?Content=Disaster&SubContent=Current>

2-1-1 San Diego
<http://www.211sandiego.org/>

San Diego County Emergency Homepage
<http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dmpr/emer/index.html>

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City of San Diego Status Website

<http://www.sandiego.gov/newsflash/firealert.shtml>

City of Los Angeles, UPDATE LA Website

<http://www.updatela.com/>

California Office of Emergency Services, October 2007 Wildfires Situation Status Website

<http://www.oes.ca.gov/Operational/OESHome.nsf/ALL/876C5DEE11FE66808825737C005B8754?OpenDocument>

California OES, Emergency Digital Information Service Website

<http://www.edis.ca.gov/>

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection 2007 Wildfires Status Website

<http://www.calfires.com/>

California Volunteers

<http://www.californiavolunteers.org/>

Federal Emergency Management Agency Situation Reports Website

<http://www.fema.gov/emergency/reports/index.shtm>

Federal Response to the California Wildfires

http://www.fema.gov/hazard/wildfire/ca_2007.shtm

National Weather Service, San Diego

<http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/sqx/>

National Weather Service, Los Angeles/Oxnard

<http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/lox/>

Southern California Geographic Area Coordination Center

<http://gacc.nifc.gov/oscc/index.htm>

InciWeb California Fire Status Reports

<http://www.inciweb.org/state/5/>

Fighting Wildfires: An uphill battle (Interactive Presentation)

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/orange/la-090507-uphillbattle-fl,1,6325097.flash?coll=la-editions-orange>

Aerial View of Fires in Southern California

<http://www.latimes.com/media/photo/2007-10/33388873.jpg>

Southern California Universities / Colleges with wildfire protective actions in progress or information posted on their websites:

San Diego State University: <http://sdsu.edu/>

UC San Diego: <http://www.ucsd.edu/>

Pepperdine University: <http://www.pepperdine.edu/>

Alliant University: <http://www.alliant.edu/wps/wcm/connect/website>

Cal State, San Marcos: <http://www.csusm.edu/>

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Cal State, Fullerton: <http://www.fullerton.edu/>
Cal State, San Bernardino: <http://www.csusb.edu/>

California wildfires: Your e-mails
<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/22/wildfire.emails/>

CNN, Emergency wildfire contact information
<http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/10/23/evac.tips/index.html>

How to help fire victims
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-howtohelp24oct24,1,4069134.story?coll=la-headlines-california>

Governor's Remarks at Calif. Fire Zone
<http://www.govtech.com/em/articles/158362>

A State under Fiery Siege (Interactive Map)
<http://www.newsweek.com/id/61516?qt1=10450>

What you can do to prepare for a fire evacuation
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-packing24oct24,0,6874372.story?coll=la-home-center>

Where to find family and friends
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-fire-person-finder,0,3650745.htmlstory?coll=la-home-center>

LA Times: On-line Search of Evacuees
<http://firesearch.latimes.com/>

Tracking the spread of the Witch Fire (Interactive Map)
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-102307-sandiegofire-fl,0,7627625.flash?coll=la-home-center>

So, your house is OK. How do you move back in?
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-returnhome26oct26,1,5410941.story?coll=la-headlines-california>

NEWSMAKER TRANSCRIPTS

TV Programs
Oct. 24, 2007

FEMA Administrator Paulison Interviewed on NBC's "Today Show"

LAUER:

The question many people are asking, has the Bush administration learned its lessons from Hurricane Katrina? David Paulison is the administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Administrator Paulison, good morning. Nice to have you with us.

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PAULISON:

Good morning, Matt.

LAUER:

It's been 24 hours since the president declared these seven counties in Southern California federal emergency areas. Immediately, what was the impact of that declaration on the way you could respond to this disaster?

PAULISON:

Well, there's two declarations.

One was the emergency declaration that was signed the day before yesterday by the president. That allows us to give direct assistance to people, direct assistance to the city and to the state.

And then the second piece is the major. And last night we added the individual assistance piece to that, which allows us to help individuals get back on their feet, provide rental assistance, if they don't have insurance provide that, help them rebuild their homes if they don't have insurance or they're underinsured.

And so, we're asking people to call that 1-800-621-FEMA number or go to our FEMA.gov Web site and register themselves, so we can help people who actually need to get back up on their feet and who don't have the proper insurance.

LAUER:

Mr. Paulison, do these people go right to the federal level if they're living in areas like Rancho Bernardo or do they start with their state officials and local officials?

PAULISON:

Well, if they're going to -- for federal help they can register directly with us. I know there are some state programs also, but as far as FEMA and Department of Homeland Security is concerned, they can go directly to us with the -- by registering themselves on the Web site or pick up the phone and call. And we'll get them registered and see if they're eligible for assistance.

LAUER:

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And it may sound like a small point, but a lot of these people had to leave their homes. They don't have paperwork, they don't have insurance policies, any of the things you think you need. Is that OK?

PAULISON:

Yes, we can work through that. The same thing happened in Katrina and, of course, they didn't run as smoothly then, obviously. But we're prepared to deal with those types of issues.

And we're going to help people. We're here on the ground. I've been to Qualcomm twice yesterday talking to people. We're going to make sure that this operation runs as smoothly as possible given the size of this disaster.

LAUER:

Are you operating with the baggage of history here? I mean, when you arrive at an area and your people show up, are they greeted with open arms and thanks, or are they greeted with a certain degree of cynicism and skepticism based on what happened in Katrina?

PAULISON:

I think the individuals greet us with open arms. I think the media is a little skeptic. And I'm not asking they believe what we say. I want them to see what we do.

I know you've got people on the ground at Qualcomm. You see a totally different situation than you saw with Katrina.

We have -- working with the Red Cross -- by the way, the volunteers here have been just phenomenal. Hundreds of them on the ground. This community's really coming together. The resiliency is just phenomenal and I'm very proud of them.

LAUER:

Real quickly and I only have about 307 seconds left, I think there is one real success story in this situation from what I -- my personal experience out there yesterday. This reverse 911 calling system seems to really be working.

PAULISON:

Yes, it worked phenomenally well. The city was able to call out over 500,000 people and give them the direction to evacuate. Most everybody listened to that. They got out of harm's way. And that's the most important thing. You know, people may lose their homes. We can rebuild the homes. But get out of harm's way. You cannot replace your life.

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LAUER:

FEMA Administrator David Paulison.

Mr. Paulison, thanks for your time this morning. I know your guys are busy.

PAULISON:

Thanks, Matt.

CQ Transcriptions, Oct. 24, 2007

NEWSMAKER TRANSCRIPTS

Federal Agency

Oct. 23, 2007

FEMA Deputy Administrator Johnson Holds News Briefing on the California Wildfires

JOHNSON:

There are 19 other shelters in the area. And given the duration here, they're expecting the shelters will need to be resupplied with basic commodities of cots and blankets, food and water.

There are enough supplies in San Diego as we stand now, and FEMA has additional cots and blankets, water that's en route from our supply center at Moffett Field, just south of San Francisco, that's being driven and flown down to a forward station area at March Air Force Base just outside the fire area.

So I think we're well ahead of the requirement and we'll be able to make sure that all the shelters that are stood up are, in fact, all sustained and have sufficient materials and quantities of commodities to make sure they meet the demand of the people who might seek shelter.

QUESTION:

Sir, there are a number of reports that people weren't heeding evacuation orders and that was hindering emergency responders. Can you speak a little to that, please?

JOHNSON:

I think sometimes that happens initially. And this was such a dynamic fire. If you could see on TV and listen to it scripted by the chief as a firefighter and watch how fast -- how high those winds were blowing, how fast the flames were spreading.

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I think initially it was just the fire was just moving very, very quickly. It was hard for people to really understand what was going on.

And in that case, you get people who think that maybe the information they have isn't current, and they begin to evacuate and do different things.

What we're seeing now, we're more than 24 hours into this, this probably more intense phase, good messaging from the mayor in San Diego, good messaging from the regional authorities in California, good coordination with the federal message, a note out to the federal workers to make sure that they, in fact, know what they can do.

So I think you're seeing more compliance and more conformance with expected norms of travel.

We are concerned with a potential separation of families, for example, and so FEMA has the National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System -- the National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System that's been activated to make sure that families can stay connected if, in fact, they get separated.

And there's a 1-800 number. It's 1-800-588-9822. 1-800-588- 9822. That's a 24-hour-a-day phone call that people can make if, in fact, they do get separated, both at work and at home or school by the changing nature of these fires.

QUESTION:

Can you address a little bit what it means to have the president issue an emergency declaration, as opposed to a major disaster declaration? What does that (inaudible) for FEMA?

JOHNSON:

The governor last night -- late last night, requested an emergency declaration from the president. And, in fact, at 3:30 this morning we received the declaration here in FEMA and we processed it in normal procedures and provided the White House and the president provided that declaration.

As an emergency declaration, it allows us to provide -- to open up the Stafford Act and to provide the full range of protective measures and all the things that they need now in order to address the fire, to sustain their efforts -- their firefighting efforts of public safety and security, to actually open and sustain shelters and provide logistic support. And all of that comes by way of the emergency declaration.

If the governor had asked for a major declaration, that would have talked about individual assistance and public assistance at greater levels. And at this point, the governor has not asked for that.

And so as this fire continues to evolve, as the implications are made known, the governor may reconsider and ask for additional assistance from the federal government.

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QUESTION:

Sir, we understand the secretary and the administrator of FEMA are on their way out there. What is their objective? And is there anyone else traveling with them?

JOHNSON:

The secretary and Administrator Paulison are flying out to California now to go to San Diego. They'll arrive at San Diego. They'll go out to Qualcomm Stadium and get a good sense for the shelter capacity that's been provided there by the Red Cross and by the mayor and the local jurisdictions in San Diego.

JOHNSON:

They'll go to the regional emergency operations center, get a good brief as to what really is going on at that time, again recognize how dynamic the situation is.

They'll fly up to Pasadena, California, where we have the federal joint field office, and get a sense for the federal organization to support the state and have a chance there, too, to get a good sense of how we're aligned as teammates.

It's a great chance for the secretary to go out and emphasize the role that he plays as the federal incident manager, as well as working with the government for the role that he plays. And he owes safety and security for his own citizens.

So I think what you're seeing, there's a great partnership between federal and state. And it will be demonstrated by the presence of the governor and the secretary.

And, of course, Administrator Paulison is the primary adviser to the president, the secretary and Homeland Security Council on all matters related to emergency management.

And so all the key leaders who are directing this effort and demonstrating a partnership through their effort will be out there at San Diego this afternoon.

So I think it's a good demonstration of support, recognizing that our role is not to usurp the state but to support the state. And they'll demonstrate that by their presence.

QUESTION:

Are you happy with FEMA's response, so far?

JOHNSON:

I'm very happy with FEMA's response so far.

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If you look at where FEMA's come over the last couple years to see this one-hour of VTC with the region in place and aggressively linked in with the state; a regional administrator who's at the state EOC, with the state Office of Emergency Services linked up there for the last couple days to make sure that we understand the situation and could bring the right support to the state.

FEMA's leaning forward, in terms of what we can provide from our organic capability. We're driving down logistics from Moffett Field to San Diego.

And more than (inaudible) VTC, it's all the federal partners that are now hung together, welded together as a team. You have NORTHCOM. You have HHS, DOI, Commerce, Small Business Administration.

JOHNSON:

All those agencies have been around the table working together as a team, even now, less than eight hours after the president provided emergency declaration.

This is a FEMA and a federal government that's leaning forward, not waiting to react. And you have to be pretty pleased to see that.

Listen to the mayor of San Diego and ask him what he thinks about FEMA's performance and he'll tell you that he couldn't be more pleased with the support he's been provided by the federal government coordinated by FEMA.

And ask Governor Schwarzenegger what he thinks about FEMA's performance, he'll tell you the same thing; that he couldn't be more pleased how FEMA recognized the role the federal government has facilitated in their effort to the benefit of the state and the communities and those disaster victims in California.

So, you have to be really proud at the way our FEMA team has pulled together, looking beyond our own bounds of FEMA to bring the federal partners together.

STAFF:

Last question.

QUESTION:

What lessons learned from Katrina have been applied?

JOHNSON:

In lessons learned from Katrina, it's like is there day and is there night?

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And if you take a look at Katrina, where there really was no leaning forward, really, there really was not a fabric of federal partners where there wasn't good, smooth communication between the governor and the administrator of FEMA, the governor and the president.

To see all the federal partners linked together, pre-scripting mission assignments, having contracts in place, following a game plan -- we didn't do any of those kinds of things in Katrina.

But what you're seeing now is a very smoothly, very efficiently performing team. You're seeing some fits and starts as you would expect under disasters; not story-book perfect.

But you're seeing people react, and to see a gap and to fill it right away; not wait to be told to fill it. And you're seeing a gap that exists for moments, not for days or a week.

And so, I think what you're really seeing here is the benefit of experience, the benefit of good leadership and the benefit of good partnership; none of which were present in Katrina.

So, I think, as a nation, people should sit up and take notice that you have the worst wildfire season in history in California and look at how well the state and local governments are performing, look at how well we're working together between state and federal partners.

It's a good thing to see. And it should be reassuring to the American public that if a disaster does strike our country, whether it's California or a hurricane in the Gulf Coast, that we'll do the same thing: We'll pull together to support state and locals' common objectives by teamwork and partnership.

STAFF:

Thanks, folks.

JOHNSON:

Thank you.

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