



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
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## **Calls to 2-1-1 Rise in Wake of Agency's Success During Fires** *2-1-1 Seeking Funding to Meet Increased Demand*

**(SAN DIEGO)** – When wildfires engulfed San Diego County in October 2007, 2-1-1 San Diego, a private nonprofit organization, was there to help with 24 hour up-to-date information about mandatory evacuation orders, shelter locations, road closures, relief and recovery resources, donations, and volunteer opportunities.

Now that the smoke has cleared, 2-1-1 San Diego continues to answer a record number of calls for emergency information as well as community, health and human resources for San Diegans. But with that increased demand, 2-1-1 needs additional support so it can continue to provide those services.

Monday, February 11, 2008 is "2-1-1 Day" in San Diego County, as well as in the State of California and across the Nation. Supporters of 2-1-1 San Diego gathered at the Copter 1 airbase at Montgomery Field to call attention to the need for support for this invaluable community resource. They included Greg Cox, Chairman of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors; Cheryl Cox, Mayor of Chula Vista; Bill Gore, Undersheriff, San Diego County; and Tracy Jarman, Fire Chief for the City of San Diego. Also present were John Ohanian, CEO of 2-1-1 San Diego, and 2-1-1 operators William York and volunteer Joy Fahrenkrog.

"I was in the 2-1-1 call center during the first hours of the fire and saw firsthand how quickly 2-1-1 San Diego was able to ramp up and take on the critical role of keeping citizens informed during the wildfires," said Cox. "We want to make 2-1-1 the centerpiece of our region's communications system so it can continue to provide critical health and social services information, but also be a lifeline during an emergency. 2-1-1 answered the call when San Diegans needed them. Now, 2-1-1 is calling on all San Diegans for help."

"Simply put, we do our job much better because of 2-1-1 San Diego," said Bill Gore, Undersheriff of San Diego County.

"2-1-1 is a bridge between 411 and 911," said Tracy Jarman, Fire Chief for the City of San Diego. "When our firefighters can concentrate on what they do best because we have a partner to help residents get the right information to get out of harm's way, we're able to do our best to protect the community."

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### **2-1-1 San Diego**

Dial 2-1-1 for easy access to community, health and disaster services.

2-1-1 San Diego • PO Box 881307 • San Diego, CA 92168-1307  
[www.211sandiego.org](http://www.211sandiego.org) • 858-300-1300

Before the fires, 2-1-1 received an average of 400 calls per day. During the fires, that number increased to 11,837 per day... 30 times higher than its original capacity. Due to increased awareness, the average has increased to 650 calls per day, a 65% increase over January 2007. The ultimate goal is to serve as the most robust community-based call center in the nation, providing over 300,000 San Diegans with assistance annually by 2010. Call center specialists are fluent in English, Spanish, and Somali. A translation service that offers more than 150 languages is also used to meet the needs of the diverse community. All caller information collected by 2-1-1 staff is kept anonymous.

2-1-1 San Diego now needs to increase capacity to satisfy current demands for services and to expand services to meet the growing public need around the clock. 2-1-1 seeks \$600,000 in funding over the next six months to meet this demand. This vital service costs just \$ 1 per person per year to provide.

For more information about 2-1-1 or for up-to-date disaster information and resources, please visit [www.211SanDiego.org](http://www.211SanDiego.org).

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