



## MONTEREY-SAN BENITO COUNTIES AND CARMEL AREA CHAPTERS MERGE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Laura Kershner, Public Support Director  
Phone: (831) 424-4824  
Email: LauraK@MontereyARC.org

**FRIDAY AUGUST 21<sup>ST</sup>, 2009** – In an effort to provide enhanced service to the residents of the Monterey Bay Area, the Carmel and Monterey-San Benito Area Chapters of the American Red Cross will merge effective September 1, 2009 to create the American Red Cross, Monterey Bay Area Chapter. This newly formed Chapter will also work closely with the Santa Cruz County Chapter with the goal of consolidating functions across the three Counties to facilitate quality service delivery for these communities.

The combined chapter operations will serve approximately 750,000 people on a budget of \$2.1 million dollars. There are 16 paid staff members and over a 1,000 registered volunteers. Over 500 of the volunteers are also members of the highly trained Disaster Services Human Resources (DSHR) team who respond to over 150 local disasters each year, predominately single family fires, as well as deploy to help with major national disasters. The local chapter also annually certifies, over 15,000 people in CPR, First Aid and other health and safety courses. The American Red Cross has been serving the Monterey Bay Area for 112 years.

Sharon Crino has been appointed Chief Executive Officer of the newly formed Monterey Bay Area Chapter. Previously the CEO of the Carmel Area Chapter, Crino will provide leadership and oversight to the Monterey Bay Area Chapter and will also serve as the Chief Operating Officer to the Central Coast Region which includes Chapters in Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. The CEO of the Santa Cruz County Chapter, David Wright, continues in his current Chapter role and will have supervisory responsibilities within the Tri-County Area.

“There are a number of changes occurring within the American Red Cross, both financially and organizationally. In an effort to embrace the National changes while retaining our ability to fulfill our critical mission, it is necessary to adapt our structure, to better face these challenging economic times,” said Crino. “Our new structure projects one American Red Cross organization as the provider of comprehensive and innovative programs and services that meet the needs of all residents and to empower our local communities to prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. We have a large diversified community, with shared visions and goals. The local Red Cross has been supporting our communities for 112 years and we know with our new structure and our dedicated donors we will be able to continue our services for many years to come.”

Sharon Crino began her tenure as the CEO of the American Red Cross, Carmel Area Chapter April 1, 2008 which marked her entry into the non-profit business sector. She comes to the Red Cross from a varied career with Eastman Kodak Company where she was a Corporate Vice President. Previously Sharon held a number of senior management positions with Eastman Kodak including Area Business General Manager and Vice President, Health Imaging, Europe, Pacific, Middle East, Africa and Russia. She has extensive international experience, profit and loss management, and leadership and change management skills.

“Our local merger reflects the national goal of “One Red Cross.” Our community will receive stronger and broader programs and services; the management of which will produce a more efficient use of donor contributions, expanded volunteer opportunities for the public and offer the community greater resources for disaster response and preparedness education,” Crino explained.

The Monterey Bay Area Chapter of the American Red Cross is not a government agency and receives no government, national or United Way funding. All assistance provided to the Chapter is due solely to the generosity of the American people and in particular the citizens of our community for its financial support. Voluntary contributions are key to our ability to respond when help cannot wait.