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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: June 28, 2016
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MEDIA ADVISORY

June 28, 2016 – Repopulation Effort

Cal OES cadaver dog search teams have completed their searches with no further fatalities discovered. As of 1700 South Lake is open for residents to return with proof of residency. Squirrel Valley is now open for residents with proof of residency. There is no power to these areas and Public Health warnings are in effect. Bottled water will be made available for returning citizens. Road closures off of Hwy 178 continue at McCray Rd and Dogwood, at Entrada south of Hwy 178, and Kelso Valley and Kelso Creek Rd.

The areas of Yankee Canyon and Mountain Mesa are open to repopulate with Public Health warning that there is no power to these areas. However, bottled water will be made available.

The areas East of South Lake along Hwy 178 will be available for repopulation including: Larson Tract, Navajo, Hillview Acres, Bella Vista, and Weldon. These areas have electrical power, however, water safety guidelines should be followed for compromised water systems.

A transition center is now open to support the repopulation effort. Normal hours of operation will be from 0900-1800. The location of the center is Wallace Elementary School at 3240 Erskine Creek Rd. in Lake Isabella. The preliminary function of this transition center is to support the needs of the most recently repopulated citizens. Supplies like water, household goods, personal hygiene items, etc. will be available for citizens during this transition period. As new areas open for repopulation, the transition center will evolve to meet the needs of our citizens. The local call center at our EOC will be a primary source for new information regarding the status of structures in the fire affected areas. The call center will be operational from 0800-2000 each day. The number to call is 661-873-2660.

Public Health: In collaboration, Kern County Public Health Services Department and Kern County Building Inspection Division sent teams into Squirrel Valley and South Lake to perform initial assessment of the affected areas. Public Health teams assessed properties affected by the fire for debris management and initial hazards and are in the process of reviewing water systems in the area. Building Inspection teams assessed safety of the structures and placed a colored tag on each structure: Red means do not enter or occupy the structure; Yellow means restricted access, and specific instructions are written on the tag; and Green means lawful occupancy permitted and that no apparent structural hazard has been found. No tag was placed at locations where the structure was completely destroyed; however, the property is considered to be a potential health hazard.

Debris and ash from the fire may be hazardous due to the presence of synthetic and hazardous materials such as gasoline, cleaning products, pesticides, and other household chemicals that have been burned in the fire. These materials can be concentrated in ash and soil following a fire. It is important not to expose yourself, your family or others to any of these materials. Exposures can occur by sifting through ash and debris, causing ash to become airborne and inhaled or ingested.

Health concerns include: Contaminated drinking water, inhalation hazards from toxic building materials like asbestos and lead, and disposal of hazardous materials from fire debris.

At 3:00PM today, the State Water Board canceled the Boil Water Notice issued to California Water Systems in Southlake, Squirrel Valley, Mountain Mesa and Onyx. Therefore, it is no longer necessary to boil your water or consume bottled water. For more information, please call Cal Water's Customer Center at (760) 379-5336, or visit www.calwater.com. You may also contact the State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water Office in Bakersfield at (661) 335-7315 or via email at DWPDIST19@waterboards.ca.gov.

Trash collection sites have been established for food waste and basic household trash only, which has resulted from the prolonged loss of power due to the fire. No bulky waste, tires, construction and demolition materials, hazardous waste, nor ash debris will be allowed at these sites. Each site will be staffed from 0800-2000. These sites will only be opened through Friday, as curbside collection will start again on Thursday.

Utilities: Southern California Edison (SCE) has started restoring service to the areas of Kernville by installing a portable generator at one of its substations in the impacted areas. SCE has restored service to approximately 1,900 homes and businesses in portions of the South Fork Valley area, mostly in South Lake and Weldon. Approximately 1,250 customers remain without power.

SCE has connected generators to three priority locations in the affected area: Mt. Mesa Market, Mesa Clinical Pharmacy, and Rural Health Clinic (which will serve as a temporary

urgent care facility). SCE staff is going door to door in Squirrel Valley and Mountain Mesa passing out water and flashlights.

As of today, 123 of more than 200 distribution poles and 14 of 30 transmission poles damaged by the fire have been replaced. Equipment is still being assessed for damage. In some cases, electric service may not be restored to customers' properties that will require further customer repairs and inspections by local county inspectors.

Amerigas Propane wants to remind all gas utility customers who are returning to their homes following a wildfire-related evacuation to exercise caution. Customers are encouraged to call their energy provider, prior to turning their system back on, if their system was turned off, or if they have had any interruption of service. Amerigas officials state that, "The National Fire Protection Association requires a leak check to be performed whenever propane supply is turned off prior to re-installing service." Amerigas Propane will waive the leak check fee for all Amerigas Propane customers.

Donations: Monetary donations are being encouraged for the local chapter of the Red Cross and for the United Way of Kern County.

Non-monetary donations (non-food) should be directed to Good Will locations throughout the county, mostly in Bakersfield, between 8-5. Also, Houchin Community Blood Bank is accepting these type of donations at both donor locations, contact Peggy Smith 661-616-2505. Do not send donations to the emergency shelters.

Non-perishable food donations should be directed to the Lake Isabella Food Pantry at 4621 Lake Isabella Blvd attention Steve or Phillis. Donations here are accepted 24/7. They need food that can make a meal such as canned chili, canned ravioli, canned soup, hamburger helper, etc.

The Elks Lodge at 7608 Wofford Blvd in Wofford Heights is in need of non-perishable food donations, contact Jadeen. The Elks Lodge is also looking for the following non-food donations. Diapers, non-perishable food, paper towels, plastic cutlery, can openers, blankets, towels, wash cloths, sleeping bags, and NEW underwear. They do NOT need clothes or any other items other than those listed.

In general, due to the generosity of the community, donations of used goods and used clothes are no longer necessary at this time.

Animal related donations should be directed to Lake Isabella County Animal Shelter at 14891 Hwy 178 Monday-Friday from 8-5.

We appreciate your cooperation and patience as new information is acquired and repopulation efforts continue.