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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 13, 2008

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COUNTY FIRE RECEIVES SAFETY GRANT FOR JAWS OF LIFE

MERCED – The Merced County Fire Department recently was awarded a grant which will allow the County to equip every front line fire engine with basic rescue tools. The \$216,540 grant was awarded in response to an application submitted by the County in January of this year. Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Grant funding will be used to replace five older model extraction systems, also known as the “jaws of life,” and provide three partial extraction systems for other County stations.

“Our firefighters are often called to accidents and other horrific events where people’s lives are in the balance,” commented Mikel Martin, the Merced County Fire Chief. “This grant will allow the department to purchase new, updated extraction equipment and provide a basic level of coverage on all front-line apparatus in the County. These additional tools will aid our firefighters in saving lives and protecting County residents.”

By the end of November, the Merced County Fire Department will begin replacing the extraction systems in Los Banos, Gustine, Atwater, Delhi and LeGrand. Additionally, new partial extraction systems will be purchased and installed with the Cressey, Dos Palos Y and Castle. Funding will also be used to provide specialized training for firefighters on the new equipment, which will begin in early December. Other County fire stations have been equipped with these specialized extraction systems in past years, and with these new systems, the County will be best equipped to save lives and eliminate costly wait times for rescue tools to arrive on scene at a traffic accident requiring their use.

“We know that getting crash victims to the hospital with that first ‘golden hour’ can mean the difference between life and death,” said Office of Traffic Safety Director Christopher J. Murphy. “This new generation equipment will give Merced County Fire more speed and precision in their all-important life saving work.”

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