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Gov. Schwarzenegger Highlights Increased Volunteerism in the Golden State *800,000 More Californians Volunteered in 2008*

Sacramento, Calif. - Today, Governor Schwarzenegger issued the statement below after the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) released a new study illustrating that 800,000 more Californians volunteered their time in 2008 than in the previous year.

In 2008, 7.1 million Californians performed 989.2 million hours of service with an estimated economic contribution of more than \$18 billion. Additionally, Californians gave more time than the national average, last year contributing 35.2 hours per resident compared to 34.2 nationally. (city data below)

"Civic engagement belongs at the highest levels of state government, which is why I created the first state cabinet secretary for service," said Governor Schwarzenegger. **"I am thrilled that more and more Californians have responded and joined us in the effort to strengthen our state and its communities through service, which is even more important during these difficult times."**

Last year, Governor Schwarzenegger took the nation-leading action of creating the first state cabinet post dedicated to service and volunteering. This action raised the profile of service in the Golden State to a national level; improved coordination of vital volunteer activities statewide and supported local service efforts; encouraged more Californians to become involved with service and volunteerism; helped California respond to natural disasters and emergencies; and gave California's volunteers a voice at the highest levels of state government.

Following the establishment of the cabinet post, CaliforniaVolunteers, led by Secretary Karen Baker, launched a variety of programs and initiatives to support the nonprofit sector and expand the number of Californians who serve, including Surviving and Thriving during Tough Economic Times, Business Partner Program, Green Jobs Corps (in partnership with the Labor and Workforce Development Agency) and is developing the nation's first statewide Disaster Corps to fully integrate volunteers into the state's emergency management system.

First Lady Maria Shriver serves as the honorary chair of CaliforniaVolunteers and inspired the development of the California Volunteer Matching Network, the largest statewide online matching network in the nation. Additionally, Shriver led the construction of 31 new playgrounds with the help of nearly 20,000 volunteers in communities across the state.

"Every Californian has a role in strengthening our state and communities, because everyone can serve," said First Lady Maria Shriver. **"No matter what issue you care about - such as helping individuals with Alzheimer's, lending a hand to families struggling to put food on the table or supporting our military families. I'm proud that we've been able to promote thousands of service opportunities through the volunteer matching network at CaliforniaVolunteers.org."**

The report is made possible by a partnership between CNCS, the U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics and provides a comprehensive collection of information on volunteering and civic engagement, with detailed data for all states and nearly 200 cities.

Sixteen California cities are included in the report: Bakersfield (20.1 percent of residents volunteer), Fresno (19.5 percent), Los Angeles (21 percent), Modesto (25.3 percent), Oxnard (27.7 percent), Riverside (20.8 percent), Sacramento (28 percent), Salinas (34.6 percent), San Diego (26.4 percent), San Francisco (29.5 percent), San Jose (32.7 percent), Santa Barbara (31.2 percent), Santa Rosa (38.8 percent), Stockton (25.3 percent), Vallejo (30 percent) and Visalia (24.1 percent).

In addition, Secretary of Service and Volunteering Karen Baker released the following statement:

“The nonprofit sector has experienced a one-two punch – the increase in demand for services and the decrease in donations. The renewed interest in volunteers couldn’t come at a more critical time. With unemployment up during these tough economic times, volunteering can provide individuals the opportunity to hone skills, learn new skills, make contacts and stay engaged. By becoming a volunteer, you can help yourself while helping others.”

To view the report in its entirety please visit: www.VolunteeringInAmerica.gov.

For more information regarding CaliforniaVolunteers or to find a volunteer opportunity in your community, please visit <http://www.californiavolunteers.org/>.