CSAC CHALLENGE AWARDS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LOS ANGELES COUNTY WOOLSEY FIRE COMMUNICATION RESPONSE

OVERVIEW: The Woolsey Fire—the largest and most destructive in Los Angeles County history—sparked a swift, collaborative communications response to keep the public informed.

CHALLENGE: On November 8, 2018, a perfect storm of climate-driven conditions and a spark ignited the Woolsey Fire. It burned for two weeks and scorched nearly 100,000 acres across LA and Ventura Counties, destroyed 1,500 structures, damaged another 341, and forced the evacuation of thousands of residents. The public urgently needed somewhere to turn to get comprehensive and accurate information.

SOLUTION: Within hours, the Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office's Countywide Communications created a one-stop emergency website for the public to access updates on the fire, evacuation maps, road closures, shelter locations, and much more. Social media was used to push out custom graphics and critical, life-saving updates, hashtagged with #WoolseyFire. Resource toolkits were also distributed in email blasts in multiple languages. As the fire reached containment, the communications operation shifted to recovery and the website was redesigned into a portal for survivors to connect with services. Key LA County partners including the Office of Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, Fire, Sheriff, Office of Emergency Management, Public Works, Assessor and Regional Planning worked together to create and share vital information such as live maps of evacuation areas and road closures visuals, as well as images of first responders in action and the fire's devastating aftermath.

INNOVATION: This was an innovative and collaborative effort to keep the public informed during the fire. Using existing technology and channels, we built a communications apparatus that

shared timely information with the residents who needed it most. https://www.lacounty.gov/woolseyfire became a one-stop shop for all emergency related resources—from animal shelter locations to public health alerts—and social media was used to push it out in easily digestible messages with graphics, GIFs and powerful imagery.

RESULTS: Results of the communications effort can be seen in our analytics and the attached document:

- During the Woolsey Fire, more than 376,000 unique visitors went to our website to seek information. The fire recovery website had nearly 20,000 unique visits.
- LA County's Twitter feed earned more than 8 million engagements.
- LA County's Tweets were shared by the public, news agencies and municipalities more than 18,000 times.
- There were early 10,000 new signups for Alert LA County emergency notifications.
- We reached more than 36,000 residents through email blasts.
- 50,000 unique visitors landed on our website through links on social media.

REPLICABILITY: This effort should be promoted as a best practice for other counties to use in the event of a regionwide disaster or incident. The information posted to the website, as well as published on social media, significantly boosted public awareness and may even have helped save lives.

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OPTIONAL SUBMISSION: Please see enclosed flash-drive.