



## California Alliance for Response Kick-off Forums

September 2006

Alliance for Response Forums were held in four California venues in September: The Getty Center in Los Angeles, the Prado at Balboa Park in San Diego, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento.

The forums were well attended, averaging 85 participants and attracting an excellent mix of representatives from the cultural and emergency response communities. Sponsors included the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, California Preservation Program, Cultural Property Protection Group, and Heritage Preservation.

All the forums opened with welcoming remarks from the Governor's Office of Emergency Services and the host institutions. Lawrence L. Reger or Jane S. Long, representing Heritage Preservation, gave an overview of the goals and accomplishments of the national Alliance for Response initiative. Each program featured a moderated panel discussion organized around a site-specific fire or earthquake event. As the moderator unfolded the story, panel members from the cultural, fire, law enforcement, and emergency management communities discussed their roles in response and recovery.

Lunch featured a keynote address by Erroll Southers, Associate Director of the Center for Risk and Economic Analysis of Terrorism Events at the University of Southern California. Afternoon sessions presented information on state and regional activities. Creative ideas for cooperative projects were generated in breakout sessions that rounded out the day's program.

Keith Harrison, Assistant Administrator of the Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management, and Philip Van Saun, Manager of Emergency Services at the University of California San Diego, moderated scenario panels. Mr. Van Saun urged participants to keep emergency plans "simple but alive—with everyone involved."

Rick Martinez, Emergency Operations Coordinator for Sacramento Emergency Services, praised the Emergency Response and Salvage Wheel for its concise and practical nature. "We always advise people, 'Don't buy plans by the pound.'"

A representative from the California State Parks system described the Sacramento forum as "The most useful meeting I have attended in years. We have already scheduled an appointment with our local fire district office."

The California series marks the first time Alliance for Response forums have been underwritten by a state emergency management agency. The Governor's Office of Emergency Services is pleased with the results, and as a follow up, the agency would like to sponsor disaster training sessions for cultural heritage institutions that would include first responders and feature practice drills.