



United Way of
San Luis Obispo County



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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 4, 2010

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United Way to Maintain 2-1-1 in San Luis Obispo County with \$45,000 Contribution from PG&E

San Luis Obispo, CA – PG&E recently provided a total of \$45,000 in support funding to maintain delivery of the local 211 system through June 2011. Recognizing the countywide need for this service, which was activated in 2007, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) came to the rescue this past December with a \$20,000 emergency grant when it heard the service faced impending closure. The grant provided enough resources to sustain the service for an additional 6 months. Continuing its commitment to the local community, PG&E provided another \$25,000 this past June to help maintain 211 SLO County services for another year.

“United Way of San Luis Obispo County is very grateful to PG&E for their leadership support of 211 SLO County,” said Rick London, chief executive officer of United Way. “PG&E’s initial commitment made it possible for United Way to leverage additional resources. We look forward to more organizations and individuals following in PG&E’s footsteps.”

Overseen by United Way of San Luis Obispo County, the system is designed to handle phone calls from the general public for information and assistance that are not immediate, life-threatening emergencies. 211 SLO County directs people to the social services and programs that callers need, or to the local crisis hotline where they can speak directly with a trained volunteer. During the first six months of 2010 a monthly average of 1,000 calls were made by people in San Luis Obispo County needing to connect with community services such as rent and mortgage assistance, food and shelter, healthcare, job training, transportation, childcare, and senior care.

In times of disaster, 211 also plays a critical role, relieving pressure off of the 911 system, and providing information on evacuation routes, available medical assistance, accessible shelter and food, road and school closures, and how to locate missing family members. The value of 211 in times of crisis has been evident this past year as call volume has increased to meet growing demand from Californians impacted by the economic crisis, the H1N1 outbreak, wildfires and other natural disasters.

“211 provides an unmatched, vital service to our community,” said Tom Jones, PG&E government relations director. “Keeping these phone lines open will ensure our friends and

neighbors have trained professionals to listen and provide help during times of hardship or distress. In addition, 911 will be able to continue focusing on those issues that require immediate response.”

Currently, 28 of California’s 58 counties offer, or are planning to offer, 211 services covering 92% of California’s population. Ongoing funding has been challenging as 211 call centers nationwide await the passage of H.R. 211, the Calling for 2-1-1 Act, which is working its way through Congress. United Ways of California announced on July 28 that for the first time, its appropriations request on behalf of the 211 California network has been included in the Labor-HHS bill in Congress, in the amount of \$750,000. The request was supported by both California senators, Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein. United Ways statewide are hopeful that the bill will pass in the next 6-12 months. Until then, funding by local government and corporate partners will be the only means of maintaining the vital service for San Luis Obispo County residents.

In addition to the \$45,000 provided by PG&E, other current 211 funding partners include the City of Paso Robles, City of San Luis Obispo, the County of San Luis Obispo and First 5 San Luis Obispo County.

For more information visit <http://www.unitedwayslo.org/211/211slo.html> or contact Rick London, CEO of United Way of SLO County at (805) 541-1234, ext. 11.

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This news release is available on the United Way of San Luis Obispo County website at <http://www.unitedwayslo.org/News/index.html>