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COUNTY OF SAN JOAQUIN

* * NEWS RELEASE * * NEWS RELEASE * *

COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS PASSES SAFELY SURRENDERED BABY RESOLUTION

(Stockton, CA) – On Tuesday, August 31, 2004, the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a “Safely Surrendered Baby Resolution.” This resolution enables 49 area fire stations in San Joaquin County to legally receive unwanted newborns 72 hours or younger without the mother or person who drops off the infant being prosecuted for child abandonment. This brings the total number of sites for safely surrendering newborns, including the seven existing hospital sites, to 56. Supervisor Victor Mow said, in passing the resolution, that “abandoning a baby is a desperate act that can put a mother at risk of legal action and a child at risk of harm. Now, when mothers hand their baby over to someone at a fire station they will no longer need to fear being arrested and their newborn will be safe and secure.” San Joaquin County, with the passage of this resolution, becomes only the 7th county in the state to pass such a resolution.

The resolution is effective immediately. However, infants must be safely surrendered to a person at the fire station or the person leaving the child must use the emergency telephone and wait for the arrival of an ambulance driver or other emergency vehicle driver that may arrive to pick up the infant. It is not legal to simply drop an infant off outside a fire station. Fire station staff will not question the person, other than to ask if they wish to provide a medical history for the child.

Over the course of the next month, signage and emergency telephones will be installed in all area fire stations. The Tracy Women’s Club, which was instrumental in initiating and moving forward the idea, will distribute public education materials throughout the county. State law requires that schools provide education to students on the state’s Safely Surrendered Baby Law and education materials are provided via the web at www.babysafe.ca.gov.

Area businesses, individuals and organizations have provided funding for implementation of the program. Donations have been received from Sutter Memorial Hospital Foundation, the San Joaquin County Fire Chiefs Association, the Linden-Peters Fire Department, Sunrise Sanitation District, Linden-Peters Fire Department Chief Vic Solari, and San Joaquin County Supervisor Victor Mow. The Stockton Fire Department is providing the funding for emergency telephones for their district. Donations can be mailed to the Tracy Women’s Club. Donations should be addressed to Jean Shipman, 241 E Ramona Way, Tracy, CA, 95376 and marked, “For Safely Surrendered Baby Program.”

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