



COUNTY OF YOLO

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Safely Surrendered Baby Campaign Expands in Yolo County

(Woodland, CA) – Today, the Yolo County Board of Supervisors designated the University of California, Davis (UC Davis) Fire Department as a Yolo County Safe Haven for the surrender of newborns. The UC Davis Fire Department joins fire departments in the cities of Davis, West Sacramento and Woodland previously designated as Yolo County Safe Havens.

The Safely Surrendered Baby law, which was implemented on January 1, 2001, allows immunity from criminal prosecution to parents when surrendering an infant at a public or private hospital, a designated fire station, or other “safe surrender” sites. Governor Schwarzenegger extended the law into permanent legal status effective January 1, 2006. The Safely Surrendered Baby law is intended to spare the life of an infant by encouraging parents, or persons with lawful custody, to safely surrender an infant at a “safe surrender” site within 72 hours of the child's birth rather than abandoning the child in an unsafe location. As of June 30, 2008, 251 newborns have been safely surrendered in California.

On September 23, 2003, the Yolo County Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution which initiated Yolo County's “Safely Surrendered Baby Campaign.” The Yolo County Department of Employment & Social Services has since provided training and materials to member agencies in an effort to make the campaign a success. Two babies were safely surrendered in Yolo County in 2008.

“I believe it is important to protect newborn babies in our community, and to offer a safe alternative to their parents for their nurturance,” said Yolo County Board of Supervisors Vice-Chairwoman Helen M. Thomson. “We are grateful to the UC Davis Fire Department for providing this safe haven for newborns at risk.”

“Our campus fire department welcomes the opportunity to provide a safe haven to newborns,” said Chief Joe Perry, UC Davis Fire Chief. “UC Davis is well suited for this statewide program because the campus is open to the public and it provides a safe environment for the campus community.”

“Fire departments are not required by law to be Safe Havens so it is exciting that our local fire departments have opted to provide this service to help save the lives of babies,” said Diana Williams, Chief Deputy Director, Yolo County Department of Employment & Social Services.

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