BUTTE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
MEDIA RELEASE

JERRY W. SMITH
SHERIFF-CORONER

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RELEASED BY: Sgt. Anthony Borgman

CONTACT: Sgt. Borgman, 530-538-7321

SUBJECT: Butte County Sheriff's Communication Reserve

On Thursday February 9, 2012, the Butte County Sheriff's Communication Reserve participated in the California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA), Region III Communications Exercise.

The Sheriff's Communication Reserve, a non-profit, 501(c)(3) qualified auxiliary of the Butte County Sheriff's Office, is comprised of volunteers who are trained as first responders, that provide the Sheriff's Office and other agencies in Butte County, with solutions to radio communications needs. Communication Reserve members often work with Search & Rescue for example, in Butte County's remote mountain areas providing needed communication support. Another of the Communication Reserve's missions is to provide an interface with the local ham radio community. Amateur radio operators have been able to provide reliable communications in emergencies where the normal paths of public service communications were compromised or overloaded. These were lessens that were gleaned from incidents such as 9-11, Hurricane Katrina and locally from the storms of January 2008. Although not required for membership, all 16 of the current Communication Reserve's volunteers are also licensed ham radio operators.

The CalEMA exercise Thursday allowed the Communication Reserve to test its communication ability using "old school" ham radio. They activated radio stations at the Butte County Sheriff's Office in Oroville, the Butte County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Larry Estes Training Center in Chico, as well as the Communication Reserve's mobile communications center. The Communications Reserve made over 80 contacts with radio operators in Butte County, and throughout Northern California, including the CalEMA stations in Redding and at Mather, near

Sacramento, the Mendocino Office of Emergency Services, the Tehama County Sheriff's Office and hams in Lincoln, Marysville, Cottonwood and Live Oak.

This was a successful exercise testing equipment capabilities and confirming the practical ability to communicate locally and throughout most of Northern California using ham radio as an alternative means of communication, should there ever be a major event that affects the primary Public Safety communications infrastructure.

For more information about the Butte County Sheriff's Communication Reserve, please visit their website at www.buttescr.org.