

## Emergency Rescue Dogs Get New Training Center

**Search Dog Foundation's new center will produce a bigger, stronger force of emergency rescue dogs.**

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On May 17, 2008, the National Disaster Search Dog Foundation (SDF) announced that it has secured a 122-acre ranch site to build a national training center, the first of its kind. Located in Santa Paula, Calif. The property, which cost \$4.1 million, will allow the SDF to train canine-firefighter disaster search teams and strengthen the nation's emergency response network.

"I had a vision that one day SDF would have a permanent home – a place where rescued dogs could become rescuers at the hands of highly skilled and loving trainers," says SDF founder Wilma Melville.

According to SDF, the United States needs more than 400 Advanced Certified Canine Search Teams to respond to disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, and landslides. Currently there are only 180 teams. The new center will train new teams to replace retired teams and feature unique advanced search setups for existing teams that simulate deep-victim, collapsed-structure, and other emergency scenarios.

According to SDF executive director Debra Tosch, "There's nothing more basic than having the resources needed when human lives are at stake."

To learn more about the National Disaster Search Dog Foundation, visit [www.searchdogfoundation.org](http://www.searchdogfoundation.org)