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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 8, 2011

**NEW MEXICO PARTICIPATES IN FIRST NATIONWIDE TEST OF THE EMERGENCY ALERT
SYSTEM**

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SANTA FE, NM - Wednesday afternoon, November 9, at 12:00 PM MST, the federal government will conduct the first ever nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS). The test will last about 30 seconds. During this period, regularly scheduled television, radio, cable, and satellite shows will be interrupted as the system is being tested. This event is NOT a real emergency alert, it is only a test.

The nationwide EAS test will trigger a drill in New Mexico to test communications and response capabilities of emergency responders in a select number of counties.

"While state and local tests of the EAS are done more frequently, the national EAS test is a great opportunity for the country and the state to assess our abilities to communicate emergencies and respond," Secretary Mike Duvall said. "The test and accompanying state drill will provide an opportunity to ensure a more coordinated effort to keep New Mexicans safe."

The test is being conducted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), as part of their ongoing efforts to keep the nation safe during emergencies and strengthen our resilience against all hazards.

"This test is very important because it will help us to identify areas where the EAS needs to be improved, in order to get accurate and reliable information to everyone during a real emergency," said FEMA Region VI regional administrator Tony Russell.

Throughout the year, the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management conducts drills testing the components of the state and local response capabilities. The November 9 EAS drill will test the communications capabilities between local and state emergency responders.

Upon receipt of the EAS, local emergency managers will simulate the loss of phone and internet communications by contacting their local members of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES). Local ARES members will relay the message to the State Emergency Operations Center at the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

ARES consists of licensed amateurs who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment, with their local ARES leadership, for communications duty in the public service when disaster strikes. In the event of widespread cell phone outages or internet disruptions, ARES plays a vital role in maintaining communications during a disaster scenario.

The national Emergency Alert System is an alert and warning system that can be activated by the president, if needed, to provide information to the American public during emergencies. NOAA's National Weather Service, governors, and state and local emergency authorities also use parts of the system to issue more localized emergency alerts. The test is an important exercise in ensuring that the system is effective in communicating critical information to the public in the event of a real national emergency.

Similar to emergency alert system tests that are already conducted frequently on the local level, the nationwide test will involve television and radio stations across the United States, including Alaska, Hawaii, and the territories of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and American Samoa. Under the FCC's rules, radio and television broadcasters, cable operators, satellite digital audio radio service providers, direct broadcast satellite service providers and wireline video service providers are required to receive and transmit presidential EAS messages to the public.

FEMA encourages the public to use this event as a reminder that everyone should establish an emergency preparedness kit and emergency plan for themselves, their families, communities, and businesses. Visit www.Ready.gov for more information about how to prepare for and stay informed about what to do in the event of an actual emergency.

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The Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management leads the State's response to emergencies and disasters while providing for the safety and welfare of its citizens. Emergencies and disasters can be defined as something caused by natural or human-made events or any other circumstances determined by the Governor. When necessary, the State assists local jurisdictions whose capabilities are overwhelmed serving as the conduit for assistance from the Federal government. Visit <http://www.nmdhsem.org/> for more information. Follow NMDHSEM on Twitter for information at www.twitter/nmdhsem