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## Disaster chief: Flood of energy

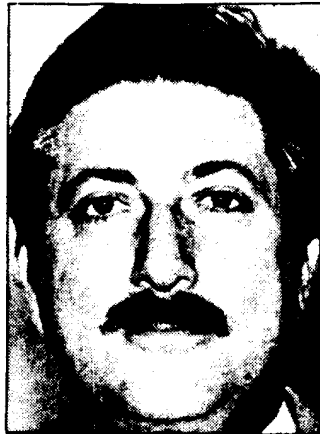
For two weeks, Bill Medigovich's diet has been mostly fast food and coffee.

As director of California's Office of Emergency Services, he has worked 20-hour days to help the 50,000 people displaced by flooding in Northern California. The storms left 13 people dead and caused nearly \$320 million in damages.

Last week, the disaster took him back to his hometown, Marysville, Calif. "It was deja vu," said Medigovich, who helped sandbag levees of the Yuba River in a 1955 storm.

"The hardest part of an emergency is people's lives are at stake and there's little room for error," says Medigovich, 45, of Roseville. "You keep going because you see what happens to people during times of crisis. They come together.

"The B-grade movie scenario with the roving gangs and packs of wild dogs just isn't



By Walt Zeboski, AP

**MEDIGOVICH: Fighting Mother Nature**

true," he adds. "We had over 20,000 volunteers. Seeing that is a reward."

The cleanup has just begun for many. Today, the state will open nine centers to process disaster assistance forms.

Medigovich, who has worked for the CIA, says it's tougher to fight Mother Nature than criminals. "It's less predictable," he says.