



CARPINTERIA~SUMMERLAND FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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May 17, 2011

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Hon. Arthur A. Garcia
Assistant Providing Judge
Santa Barbara County Superior Court
312 East Cook Street
P.O.Box 5369
Santa Maria, CA 93456-5369

Hon. Joni Gray, Chair
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
County Administrative Building
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

BY: _____

Judge Garcia and Chairperson Gray,

The following is our response to the Santa Barbara County Grand Jury report of March 10, 2011 titled "Improving Our Emergency Alert System in the 21st Century". The Carpinteria-Summerland Fire Protection District disagrees with certain statements in the report such as:

"The Jury Found that none of the emergency agencies interviewed had formulated and executed an effective program and ongoing public education program with the preparation for actual alerts, or how to obtain follow up information about how to respond to an emergency alert."

You will see in our response that the Carpinteria-Summerland Fire Protection District is not only meeting the challenge through agreements and shared resources, but is also taking on a very proactive approach to community education and emergency preparedness through the Aware and Prepare Initiative.

"The Jury interviewed a variety of officials at various levels responsible for emergency responses. Local fire officials were interviewed in order to understand better their role as first responders, how they deal with ongoing challenge of early alert, and providing important timely information to the residents."

We hope that the Grand Jury is aware that none of our Fire Officials were ever interviewed by any representatives of the Jury prior to the preparation of this report.

The following are the responses requested.

Finding 2: During the past crises, emergency agencies have not always communicated with each other which may have slowed information being passed to affected residents.

In 2008, our neighboring jurisdiction, Montecito Fire Protection District, experienced the Tea Fire. Since Montecito and Carpinteria-Summerland have automatic aid agreements, not only did we send firefighting personnel on the first alarm, we also sent our on-duty Chief Officer to the Montecito Department Operations Center. Our communications were face to face and our agency representatives were in the first planning meeting and acted as the Deputy Operations Section Chief during the first 24 hours of the incident. In attendance at that initial face to face meeting, along with the Montecito Fire

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Chief, were the County Fire Department Chief, the County Fire Department Operations Chief and the Fire Chief for the Las Padres National Forest. Because we have these automatic aid agreements, we literally act together as one agency. We have the same auto aid alarm agreements with our other neighboring agency to the east, the County of Ventura.

Although evacuation orders have not been required in our jurisdiction, we had Chief Officers at the Incident Command Post for the Zaca, Gap, Tea and Jesusita fires. Representatives from our agency have also been present and at all operational period planning meetings for these incidents to obtain and to prepare delivery of information to whomever may have required it.

Recommendation 2: The Board of Supervisors and appropriate city jurisdictions require their respective emergency agencies to pass information to adjacent jurisdictions and the Office of Emergency Services.

In addition to the face to face communications that is described in the response to Finding 2, our agency would like the Grand Jury to know that to further increase our ability to communicate effectively with other jurisdictions and agencies, County OES has purchased and trained our essential EOC representatives on WebEOC, a software program designed to provide a communications link to all jurisdictions and agencies during an EOC activation.

As a redundancy to Reverse 9-1-1, NIXLE, a text-based emergency notification system, has been available to residents of our District for two years. NIXLE provides timely information about emergencies. NIXLE is also available through County OES and the Montecito Fire District. As a partner in the Aware and Prepare Initiative, we have been aggressively registering residents for NIXLE at the City of Carpinteria "Don't Panic! Prepare" neighborhood emergency preparedness workshops. At the time this response was written, representatives from the Carpinteria-Summerland Fire Protection District have been members of a public education outreach program that has reached well over 1000 residents in 22 separate presentations within the District.

If the Grand Jury requires further response or information please contact Fire Chief Michael Mingee at our Administrative Offices, 805-684-4591.

Bob Duncan, President
Board of Directors

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