



Office of Emergency Services

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Superior Court of California
County of Tuolumne

By: [Signature] Clerk

September 8, 2014

Honorable Donald Segerstrom
Tuolumne County Superior Court
60 North Washington Street
Sonora, CA 95370

Re: Response to Grand Jury Report – Office of Emergency Services

Dear Judge Segerstrom:

The following is offered in response to the 2013-14 Grand Jury Report as it pertains to the Office of Emergency Services.

Grand Jury Findings

F1. The OES department was well prepared for an emergency prior to the disaster.

Response: Agree

F2. The County Administrator and Deputy County Administrator have detailed roles and responsibilities during an emergency.

Response: Agree

F3. Having the Office of Emergency Services staffed by county personnel during times of emergency, proved an efficient and effective use of their backgrounds and regular job responsibilities.

Response: Agree

F4. Funding secured through grants has helped with training and equipment.

Response: Agree

F5. The committee formed to approve grant monies is an appropriate representation of County hired and elected officials that respond to emergency situations.

Response: Agree

- F6. The flexibility of the overall Emergency Operations Plan and Annex G proved to be beneficial. The annexes can be used independently.

Response: Agree

- F7. OES personnel acted quickly after being notified about the fire.

Response: Agree

- F8. Non-essential people attended some of the briefings.

Response: Disagree

The individuals who attended the briefings were invited due to the nature of services they provided. Many, such as Area 12 Agency on Aging, provide support services to those with Access and Functional Needs (a population we are mandated to provide a higher level of service to). It was essential to include them in the briefings in order to provide the necessary support to first responders and members of the community affected by the fire.

- F9. Evening briefings at EOC were, at times, held at the same time as the public dialog briefings.

Response: Agree

The community forums were a completely different venue than the briefings held at the EOC. The community forums were open to the public whereas the EOC briefings were not.

- F10. Video Teleconference communication was not used at the EOC.

Response: Agree

- F11. Cell phone services were not consistent at the EOC.

Response: Agree

- F12. The City Watch service or Reverse 911 system had flaws.

Response: Agree

- F13. Social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, created a problem.

Response: Agree

- F14. Outpouring of support from the community was impressive and worthy of commendation.

Response: Agree

- F15. A Mobile command vehicle was borrowed from Stanislaus County.

Response: Agree

- F16. The OES staff supported first responders to protect people, property and the environment.

Response: Agree

- F17. Defined roles, cooperation and the collaborative environment established by OES personnel and other agencies assured the success of this application of the Plan.

Response: Agree

Grand Jury Recommendations

- R4. The OES Coordinator shall continue to seek funding through grants.

Response: The recommendation has already been implemented.

This is a continuous process and has been for over 15 years now. The OES Coordinator has oversight of two annual grants related to emergency services, the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) and the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP). In addition to these two grants, the OES Coordinator sought and attained a grant to update the Hazard Mitigation Plan that resulted in 18 other jurisdictions participating and completing a Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan that was approved by FEMA on February 12, 2013. The OES Coordinator also partnered with the Sheriff's Office in administering a Buffer Zone grant through Homeland Security that enhanced communications county-wide in FY 13-14. Additionally, OES submitted a grant request on behalf of the Sheriff's Office in FY 13/14 for a Mobile Command Unit.

- R6. Ensure that flexibility is allowed in future applications of the Plan. The OES Coordinator shall review and revise the Plan as necessary.

Response: This recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future.

The updated Emergency Operations Plan was approved by the Board of Supervisors in July 2012. The Plan has not been through a review since its

approval. However, the OES Coordinator will pull together a team to begin a thorough review in FY 14/15.

- R8. The EOC shall have a closed door policy during times of emergency because the information exchanged should be restricted to only essential personnel.

Response: The recommendation had already been implemented.

The EOC has always had a closed door policy, as it did during the Rim Fire. Briefings are for essential personnel only. Those who attend the briefings are there by invitation only.

- R9. Briefings and public forum meetings shall be scheduled so they do not conflict with each other, whenever possible.

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted.

Due to the fact that the EOC is not open to the public and that the audience receiving the information in a public forum is completely different than those participating in briefings, future public forums may be held at the same time (or close to the same time) as the briefings.

- R10. The County Administrator and OES Coordinator shall implement the use of Video Teleconference to allow a larger area of communication.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable.

Video teleconferencing is not a best practice across the State of California. It is agreed that the EOC must have a better conference call-in ability and staff are investigating various options available and looking at best practices across the state. The California Office of Emergency Services does not have video teleconferencing available nor do they have a conference call-in system for those who cannot make it to their on-site meetings.

- R11. The County Administrator and OES Coordinator shall add a cell booster at the EOC to improve the ability to communicate via cell phone.

Response: The recommendation has not been implemented but will in FY 2014/15.

The cost of adding a cell booster to the EOC has been included in the EMPG FY 2014 grant request.

- R12. The County Administrator and the OES Coordinator shall research other programs and pursue a replacement program that is more effective than the current City Watch system.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented.

Staff began the process of selecting a new Emergency Notification System in January 2014. In April 2014, the County entered into an agreement with Everbridge as the replacement for CityWatch. Everbridge offers a wider variety of services and redundancy as well as integrates with FEMA's IPAWS (Integrated Public Alert & Warning System). The County has a fully executed Memorandum of Agreement with FEMA for the IPAWS system and the OES Coordinator is certified with FEMA to issue alerts utilizing IPAWS and is also certified with Everbridge as a sender of notifications as well as best practices for issuing alerts. Furthermore, the system was successfully utilized to issue an alert and a follow up message in response to the Twain Harte Dam incident.

- R13.** Tuolumne County is addressing social media through its new website. The BOS has approved a Social Media Policy. The Jury encourages people to register on the county website to receive push notifications and tests. The County shall have a person or group dedicated to providing accurate information during times of emergency on social medial sites. The OES Coordinator shall inform the Jury that responsible individuals are designated through their departments to communicate with the County's social media.

Response: The recommendation had already been implemented.

Social media was an issue during the fire as various sites were reporting inaccurate information. Unfortunately, the County's new website was just weeks of going live, which allows for the opportunity for alerts and public information to be pushed to Facebook and Twitter. County staff have discussed ways to address this issue and the Tuolumne County Department of Public Health held a training on use of social media during an emergency on March 6, 2014. In the event of another emergency, staff will be designated with oversight of social media and posting real-time information via Facebook and Twitter through the County website.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above findings and recommendations. Please feel free to contact Tracie Riggs should you have any questions regarding same.

Yours truly,



CRAIG L. PEDRO
County Administrator /
Assistant OES Director



TRACIE RIGGS
Deputy County Administrator/
OES Coordinator