

County of Santa Clara

Office of the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
County Government Center, East Wing
70 West Hedding Street
San Jose, California 95110-1770
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Maria Marinos
Clerk of the Board

FILED

SEP 12 2011

DAVID H. YAMASAKI
Chief Executive Officer
Superior Court of CA County of Santa Clara
BY D. ALDYCKI

September 1, 2011

The Honorable Richard J. Loftus, Jr.
Presiding Judge
Santa Clara County Superior Court
191 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95113

RE: Grand Jury Report: "Can You Hear Me Now?" Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County

Dear Judge Loftus:

At the August 23, 2011 meeting of the County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors (Item No. 12), the Board adopted the response from the County Administration to the Final Grand Jury Report and recommendations relating to "Can You Hear Me Now?" Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County.

As directed by the Board of Supervisors and on behalf of the Board President, our office is forwarding to you the enclosed certified copy of the response to the Final Grand Jury Report with the cover memorandum from Mr. Graves. This response constitutes the response of the Board of Supervisors, consistent with provisions of California Penal Section 933(c).

If there are any questions concerning this issue, please contact our office at 299-5001 or by email at maria.marinos@cob.sccgov.org.

Very truly yours,

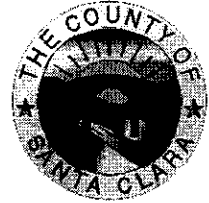
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MARIA MARINOS
Clerk, Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Clara

Enclosures

MM/mm

County of Santa Clara Office of the County Executive



CE01 082311

DATE: August 23, 2011

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM:

Handwritten signature of Gary A. Graves.

Gary A. Graves
Chief Operating Officer

SUBJECT: Response to Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury Report: "Can You Hear Me Now?" Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Consider recommendations relating to Final Grand Jury Report relating to "Can You Hear Me Now?" Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County.

Possible action:

- a. Adopt response from Administration to Final Grand Jury Report relating to "Can You Hear Me Now?" Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County.

AND

- b. Authorize the Board President and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors to forward department responses to Grand Jury report to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court with approval that responses constitute the response of the Board of Supervisors, consistent with provisions of California Penal Code Section 933 (c).

OR

- c. Adopt a separate or amended response to the Final Grand Jury Report relating to "Can You Hear Me Now?" Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County, and authorize the Board President and Clerk of the Board to forward response to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no fiscal implications associated with these Board actions.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

Attached is the County Communication Department and South Santa Clara County Fire District responses to the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations enumerated in the Final Report, "Can You Hear Me Now?" Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County. The responses have been completed pursuant to California Penal Code, Section 933 (c) and 933.05 (a).

Child Impact Statement

The recommended action will have positive impact on children and youth.

BACKGROUND

While the Grand Jury was exploring the fire departments to recommend some changes, they became concerned with Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County. The Grand Jury explored the current procedures, mechanics, city boundaries, political and economic interests that affect the response to all emergency calls. The Grand Jury found that Santa Clara County is working to correct, inefficiencies in the existing emergency dispatch systems to provide better emergency response service to the citizens of Santa Clara County.

The Grand Jury's report makes two specific findings and two recommendations; The County Communications Department agrees with finding 1, and partially agrees with recommendation 1, and, partially agrees with Finding 2 and agrees with recommendation 2. While the District agrees to the recommendations the South Santa Clara County Fire District is not specifically mentioned or listed in the report.

Attached are the responses to the findings and recommendations.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

The County would not be in compliance with the law in responding to the Grand Jury's Final Report.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

Following approval of the responses provided, forward all comments of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors to the Honorable Richard J. Loftus, Jr., Presiding Judge, Santa Clara County Superior Court on or before Friday, September 16, 2011.

ATTACHMENTS

- Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury Final Report
- County Communications Response
- South Santa Clara County Fire District Response

County of Santa Clara

Office of the County Executive



Communications Department
2700 Carol Drive
San Jose, California 95125-2032
(408) 977-3200 FAX (408) 279-2666

Date: July 28, 2011

TO: Gary A. Graves,
Chief Operating Officer

FROM: Bert Hildebrand, *BH*
County Communications Director

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO THE 2010-2011 SANTA CLARA COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY'S MAY 2011 REPORT – "CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?" EMERGENCY DISPATCH IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY

Background

The County Communications Department was established by the Board of Supervisors on January 19, 1948 and has been providing emergency call answering, and law, medical and fire public safety dispatching and technical support services for over 63 years. The department plays a critical role in coordinating the delivery of important public safety services to the community operating as both a Primary (law) and Secondary (fire/medical) Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) and dispatch center for 9-1-1 and other emergency calls. The department is the local mutual aid dispatch center for law enforcement (Sheriff), fire (County Fire), and medical (Emergency Medical Services Agency), and also serves as the 9-1-1 alternate answering point for all jurisdictions except Los Altos and San Jose. County Communications is also very active in many local and regional efforts aimed at improving voice and data interoperability and coordinated response of public safety service providers during emergencies.

Dispatch Operations provides 9-1-1 and 7-digit emergency telephone answering services to the public and emergency radio dispatching services to approximately 60 law enforcement, fire, medical, and local government agencies, including the Office of the Sheriff, District Attorney, Department of Correction, County Parks, County Fire Department, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Agency and the contract countywide ambulance transport service provider, Rural/Metro Corporation.

As a Primary (law) PSAP, the Department provides direct emergency 9-1-1 and 7-digit call answering services to the areas served by the Office of the Sheriff, including three contract cities (Cupertino, Los Altos Hills and Saratoga) and the unincorporated areas within Santa Clara County. As a Secondary (fire) PSAP, the Department provides emergency call handling (9-1-1 call transfers/7-digit direct calls) for areas served by the County Fire Department, including eight

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municipalities (Campbell, Cupertino, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill and Saratoga) and most unincorporated areas within Santa Clara County. Also, as a Secondary (medical) PSAP, the Department provides emergency call answering services (9-1-1 call transfers/7-digit direct calls) and Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) services, including pre-arrival medical instructions, for eight municipalities (Campbell, Cupertino, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill and Saratoga) who receive County law and fire services; and to the Cities of Gilroy and Milpitas by contract. The department also provides countywide ambulance transport dispatching services to all municipalities except the City of Palo Alto, where it is provided only when requested under Mutual Aid.

In addition to County Communications, there are currently twelve municipal Primary (law) PSAPs and seven municipal Secondary (fire/medical) PSAPs that operate within Santa Clara County. County Communications and seven municipalities (Gilroy, Milpitas, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale) have both Primary (law) and Secondary (fire) PSAP dispatch operations. Five municipalities (Campbell, Los Altos, and Los Gatos jointly with Monte Sereno and Morgan Hill) operate law PSAPs. The South Santa Clara County Fire Protection District also operates as a Secondary (fire) PSAP, with medical and EMD services provided by County Communications.

Discussion

On May 19, 2011, the 2010-2011 Civil Grand Jury issued its final report "Can You Hear Me Now?" Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County.

Although the nation's 9-1-1 call routing process (i.e., calls route first to law dispatch centers, and if required, are transferred to fire/medical dispatch centers) is unlikely to change, the County and local police, Fire, medical service providers and dispatch agencies are currently working with the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Authority (SVRIA) to implement voice and data interoperability projects that address several of the concerns outlined within the Civil Grand Jury's report.

For example, the computer aided dispatch (CAD)-to-CAD/CROP project managed by the County on behalf of the SVRIA will, upon completion, provide two-way data exchange between PSAPs, centralized standardization and storage of data, report generation, as well as provide a dynamic visual display referred to as a Common Regional Operating Picture (CROP). The CROP will visually allow dispatchers and field staff to see all active events and their status, as well as the status and availability of field resources and key facilities. This system will create a virtually consolidated CAD system that improves auto and mutual aid responses and supports "boundary drop" operations that allow the closest emergency resource to be dispatched to an emergency regardless of jurisdictional boundaries. This regional system will also reduce duplication of effort and delays currently experienced when processing cross-discipline and/or multi-jurisdictional calls for service discussed in the report. The County manages three existing fire/medical CAD-to-CAD links. County Communications shares one two-way data link with San Jose Fire Dispatch and another one with the South Santa Clara County Fire District at the

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CALFIRE emergency communications center in Morgan Hill. The remaining CAD link provides a one-way data transmission from the Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety Dispatch center to County Communications for ambulance transport support to fire, which has reduced duplicated effort and call processing time by as much as ninety seconds or more, with medical and fire resources often being dispatched at or near the same time.

Although Figure 1: “Overview of 911 Dispatching” on page 3 illustrates the complexity well, it is somewhat misleading as drawn. Some key points include:

- All 9-1-1 calls are first routed to Primary (law) PSAPs for initial call screening and handling. Procedurally, all dispatchers are required to answer calls with wording similar to “9-1-1 Emergency Services. What are you reporting?” If law enforcement in nature, the call is handled directly, but for fire or medical response, the call is transferred to a Secondary (fire/med) PSAP with a 9-1-1 transfer button, which takes no more than a few seconds.
- Landline 9-1-1 calls show the caller’s phone number and the address location associated with that number.
- Law PSAPs may retain initial call information and/or may stay on the line to obtain additional information, depending on their own internal procedures related to law response to medical and/or fire calls.
- Extended delays when transferring information to County Communications (i.e., “20 seconds – 3 min delay”) occur only when the agency first completes tasks related to dispatching its resources before contacting County Communications with the information needed for County response. Typically, actual exchange of information between dispatchers takes less than one minute.
- All municipal dispatch centers have one-button direct connection lines, which immediately ring at the other end when activated, as well as speed dials (dials the number automatically when activated) to contact County Communications, except for the Cities of Gilroy and Morgan Hill, which rely only on the use of speed dial connectivity.
- Some medical calls are not transferred to County Communications for handling. There are five municipal PSAPs that normally provide EMD services and then contact the County to request paramedic ambulance transport services.
- County Communications dispatches Central Fire District/County Fire Department resources, but either transfers the caller directly to the South Santa Clara County Fire Protection District dispatching contractor (CALFIRE) to handle and dispatch resources in its jurisdiction if the call is initially received as a fire call, or handles the call and create a medical event in County’s CAD, which automatically creates a fire event response request via the CAD-to-CAD link, if the call was initially medical in nature. County Communications provides EMD services for all calls received from the South Santa Clara County Fire Protection District service area.
- See revised 9-1-1 Dispatching flow chart (Attached).

Although there are other inaccuracies and omissions within the Civil Grand Jury Report, overall the report’s findings and recommendations merit consideration.

Adopted

The Civil Grand Jury's published report includes two "Findings" and two "Recommendations."

Finding 1

"Dispatch consolidation would result in more cost-effective and efficient emergency response and should be implemented throughout Santa Clara County."

The County Communications Department agrees with Finding 1. As discussed in the Civil Grand Jury's Report, once accomplished, consolidation of services at any level (law, fire, or both law and fire) between two or more field agencies and/or dispatch centers would result in greater cost-efficiencies (e.g., improved economies of scale through reduced duplication of cost and/or effort, such as reduced staffing, equipment, maintenance, training, and other needs) and more efficient monitoring and deployment of field personnel and related resources across multiple agencies and/or jurisdictions, which should reduce response times and improve service delivery to local communities.

Recommendation 1

"Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers – Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale – and all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch – Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Saratoga – should consolidate dispatch with neighboring jurisdictions and, where appropriate, should issue RFPs to do so."

The County Communications Department partially agrees with Recommendation 1.

The dispatch centers listed are Primary (law) PSAPs, which may or may not also be Secondary (fire/medical) PSAPs. Secondary PSAPs may be better aligned for consolidation between service providers and/or centers than Primary PSAPs.

Recently, serious discussions regarding potential consolidation of dispatch centers and/or field services have been increasing in frequency and participation between Police Chiefs, Fire Chiefs, and City Managers, primarily due to the current economic downturn and a need to streamline costs. Local control, facility location and expansion/space limitations, experience/responsibility levels, disparate business rules and service delivery policies and practices, use of disparate systems and/or other technology challenges, as well as one-time start-up costs have all been identified as challenges hindering local consolidation efforts.

As mentioned in the report, many local agencies including the County believe dispatch consolidation is possible and that fire dispatch may lend itself more easily than law enforcement to consolidation due to fire agencies' higher use of standardized response protocols and terminology, and technology compatibilities. The County is very interested in working in partnership with other agencies to achieve improved cost-effectiveness, operational efficiencies,

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and response times through the use of shared technology and consolidation of services, where appropriate.

As the second largest PSAP in Santa Clara County, the County Communications operates as an independent dispatch service provider, which reports directly to the Office of the County Executive and provides communications dispatching, engineering and maintenance services to approximately 60 entities.

County Communications' Dispatch Center was designed and equipped to support future growth in services. The site is located at the highest point on the valley floor, providing excellent 360 degree coverage for voice and data communication systems. The Dispatch Center currently has equipped console positions available that are capable of supporting an additional eight (three 9-1-1 call answering, two law, two fire and one medical) positions that could be used in support of consolidation. Existing space (approx. 2,600 sq. ft.) that was designed and previously used as a fire/medical dispatching control room could support a larger expansion of dispatch operations, if needed, with some relocation of existing staff members. There is also additional space on the grounds that could support added facility expansion.

Finding 2

“Radio equipment has not been standardized and impedes effective countywide communication and emergency dispatch.”

The County Communications Department partially agrees with Finding 2.

Although it is true that radio equipment is not standardized between public safety agencies, the main issue impeding effective communications is the fact that many service disciplines and providers have radios that operate on different frequency bands. Most agencies currently have radios that operate only in VHF or UHF or 800 MHz frequency bands. Even if all agencies used the same brand and model of radio, unless they all operated on the same frequency band, they would not be able to communicate with each other. To resolve this problem, some field units maintain two or more radios so that they can communication with other municipalities, agencies and/or service disciplines.

Recommendation 2

“Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers - Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale; all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch - Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Saratoga; the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office; and Santa Clara County, should continue to work with the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Association to achieve countywide standardization of radio technology.”

The County Communications Department agrees with Recommendation 2.

The County and most municipalities are active participants in local and regional efforts aimed at improving voice and data interoperability and coordinated response of public safety services during emergencies.

The County has two elected officials serving as voting members of the SVRIA Board of Directors and three voting members serving on the SVRIA Working Committee, including a County Deputy County Executive, the County Communications Director, and a County Fire Deputy Chief who serves as one of two at-large members. County staff members also participate on several projects as project managers, technical and/or operational subject matter experts.

Accepted

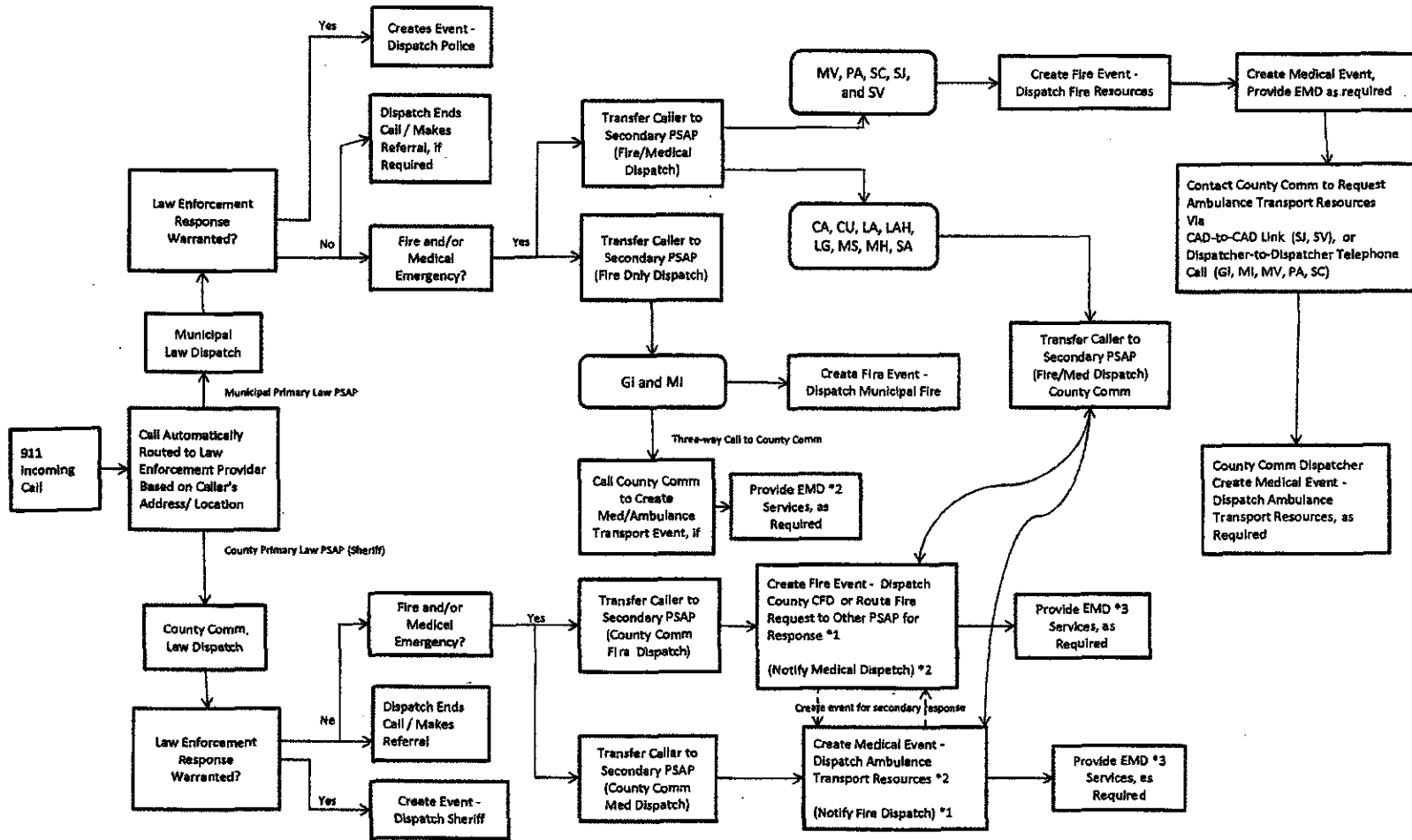
The foregoing instrument is a correct copy of the original.

ATTEST: Maria Marinos
Clerk of the Board

BY: *M. Marinos*
Deputy Clerk

Date: AUG 23 2011

Revised Figure 1 - Overview of 911 Dispatching



* 1 - Most fire response calls received by County Communications result in the dispatch of Central Fire District/County Fire Department resources. Some fire calls may involve other fire agencies under "Auto Aid" (first due response) agreements. Fire response calls that fall within the South Santa Clara County Fire Protection District service area are transferred to the District for its response. (See note *2 for medical calls requiring fire response.)

* 2 - County Communications provides centralized countywide advanced life support (ALS) paramedic ambulance transport dispatching services for all municipalities (except Palo Alto, unless requested under mutual aid) and unincorporated county areas. All medical calls directly received by County Communications require the generation of a corresponding fire service response request. The response depends on the initial source: 9-1-1 caller; Law PSAP transfer from Central Fire District/County Fire Department service areas; Milpitas or Gilroy Fire PSAPs transfer for EMD services and/or request for paramedic ambulance transport service. When County Communications' computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system creates a medical (paramedic ambulance transport request) event it automatically creates a duplicate fire CAD system event for dispatch of County Fire resources or creates a fire event to transfer through a CAD-to-CAD link with the San Jose Fire Department or with South Santa Clara Santa Clara County Fire Protection District (at CALFIRE in Morgan Hill) for each's respective response to the call. All other fire calls are manually transferred, dispatcher-to-dispatcher, via telephone.

* 3 - County Communications provides Emergency Medical Dispatching (EMD) Services to all callers from unincorporated county areas (including the South Santa Clara County Fire Protection District) and 8 municipalities that receive Fire Protection Services from the Central Fire District/County Fire Department and 2 cities (Gilroy and Milpitas) that directly contract with County Communications for EMD services.



South Santa Clara County Fire District

15670 Monterey Street Morgan Hill, CA 95037 • (408) 779-2121 • www.sscbfd.com
Steven F. Woodill, Fire Chief

July 26, 2011

TO: Gary Graves, Chief Operating Officer

FROM: Steven F. Woodill, Fire Chief
South Santa Clara County Fire District

SUBJECT: Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury Report, "Can You Hear Me Now?
Emergency Dispatch in Santa Clara County

This memo responds to the findings and recommendations in the Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury Report, dated June 9, 2011, subject as above.

Overview

CALFIRE, as part of its contract for services, direct dispatches all Fire District personnel and equipment from its Dispatch Center in Morgan Hill. Additionally the CAL FIRE dispatch center in Morgan Hill dispatches State fire engine, helicopter, and bulldozer resources located at 7 State Fire Stations located throughout the unincorporated wild land areas of Santa Clara County. This dispatch center also direct dispatches State Fire resources located in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus Counties. This CALFIRE center is direct CAD to CAD linked with similar CAL FIRE centers in Monterey and Santa Cruz counties. A similar link was established with Santa Clara County Comm. in June 2011 which is undergoing Beta testing.

Referencing the Figure 1 dispatch flow chart on page 3 of the Grand Jury Report, it shows County Comm. dispatching District resources. This is incorrect as CALFIRE provides this service. 911 calls are received at County Comm. and the information is then routed by voice and/or teleprinter to CALFIRE if the emergency is in the District or in the unincorporated areas of the County that fall outside any fire jurisdiction in the County. CALFIRE then dispatches the appropriate fire equipment. CALFIRE also direct dispatches volunteer fire companies located at Uvas, Casa Loma, Ormsby, and Spring Valley as a service to the County. Table 1 located on page 4 is also incomplete as neither the South Santa Clara County Fire District nor CALFIRE are listed.

Response to Findings and Recommendations

Finding 1

Dispatch consolidation would result in more cost-effective and efficient emergency response and should be implemented throughout Santa Clara County.

Response

The District generally agrees with this statement. The term "dispatch consolidations" seems more practical.

Recommendation 1

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers – Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale – and all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch - Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Saratoga – should consolidate dispatch with neighboring jurisdictions and, where appropriate, should issue RFPs to do so.

Response

The District is not specifically mentioned.

Finding 2

Radio equipment has not been standardized and impedes effective countywide communication and emergency dispatch.

Response

The Fire Service in general has been very pro active in this area locally and on a State-wide basis. This is due in large part to a very robust statewide fire mutual aid system where fire resources respond from all over the State during large, major emergencies. Further establishment of CAD to CAD links and progress through SVRIA will see continued improvements.

Recommendation 2

Jurisdictions which maintain their own dispatching centers – Campbell, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, the City of Santa Clara, and Sunnyvale; all jurisdictions which use Santa Clara County Communications for dispatch – Cupertino, Los Altos Hills, and Saratoga; the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office; and Santa Clara County, should continue to work with the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Association to achieve countywide standardization of radio technology.

Response

While not specifically listed in the report the District agrees with the recommendation.

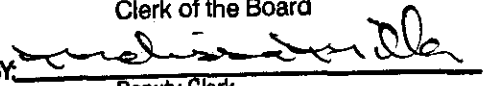
Sincerely,



Steven F. Woodill
Fire Chief
South Santa Clara County Fire District

The foregoing instrument is a correct copy of the original.

ATTEST: Maria Marinos
Clerk of the Board

BY: 
Deputy Clerk

Date: AUG 23 2011

Approved