SAN DIEGO REGIONAL FIRE PREVENTION AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TASK FORCE

Submitted To:

Mayor Dick Murphy
Supervisor Greg Cox
October 7, 2004

Sheriff Bill Kolender, San Diego County Sheriff's Department
Fire Chief Jeff Bowman, San Diego Fire-Rescue Department

FOREWORD

In the aftermath of the October 2003 Firestorms, Southern California documented a total of 739,597 acres burned, 3,631 homes destroyed and 24 lives lost, including one firefighter. When San Diego County's fires began on October 25, 2003, we were initially left alone to fight the fires and protect lives and properties in our communities.

The San Diego Regional Emergency Preparedness Task Force was established to identify how our community could better prepare and respond to all risk hazards that our region could be subjected to.

The San Diego Regional Emergency Preparedness Task Force includes the following members:

Co-Chairs
Sheriff Bill Kolender, San Diego County Sheriff's Department
Fire Chief Jeff Bowman, San Diego Fire-Rescue Department

Subcommittee Chairpersons
Jim Cooke, Commander, San Diego County Sheriff's Department
James Dunford, MD, Emergency Medical Services Medical Director, City of San Diego
Rick Emerson, President, San Diego Police Chiefs and Sheriff's Association
August Ghio, Assistant Fire Chief, San Diego Fire-Rescue Department
Gwen Jones, San Diego County Emergency Medical Services
Betty Kelepecz, Chief of Police, San Diego Harbor Police
William Lansdowne, Chief of Police, San Diego Police Department
Willard Lewis, County Office of Emergency Services
Chuck Maner, San Diego Ranger Unit Chief, California Department of Forestry and Fire
  Protection
William Middleton, Battalion Chief, San Diego Fire-Rescue Department
Bob Pfohl, Fire Chief, Santee Fire Department
Ron Saathoff, President, IAFF Local 145
Debby Steffen, Director, San Diego County Office of Emergency Services
Andy Vanderlaan, Local Agency Formation Commission
Erwin Willis, Fire Chief, Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District
Jim Yoke, American Red Cross

Subcommittee Members
Cliff Albert, Clear Channel Communications
Gina Anderson, San Diego County Emergency Preparedness
Shannon Anglea, INFOLINE of San Diego County
J.W. August, KGTV
John Autlino, San Diego Police Department
Wanda Vevia-Bailey, Volunteer San Diego
Donna Batteau, Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Medical Response
Carlos Bejar, City of Chula Vista
Rich Bell, Lt. Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps
Gary Billick, San Diego County Sheriff's Department
Sharon Brock, RN, Grossmont Hospital, Hospital Disaster Council
Carey Brokks, Sergeant, San Diego Police Department

Patrick Buttron, Emergency Medical Services Specialist, Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Medical Response
Mike Calhoun, Division Chief, Escondido Fire Department
Skip Carter, Division Chief, California Highway Patrol
Linda Chase, Community Response Team
Kevin Crawford, Fire Chief, Carlsbad Fire Department
Jessica Cummins, San Diego Harbor Police Department
Ali Fattah, Building Department, City of San Diego
Justin Gipson, Fire Marshal, City of Chula Vista
Joe Gonzales, Deputy, San Diego County Sheriff's Department
Lowell A. Grimaud, Fire Safe Council, San Diego County
Jon Handley, Deputy Chief, San Diego Fire-Rescue Department
Isam Hasenin, Chief Deputy Director, City of San Diego
Hike Haworth, Division Chief, La Mesa Fire Department
Don Heiser, Fire Chief, Encinitas Fire Department
John Hill, San Diego County Medical Society
Chris Hinshaw, San Diego County Sheriff's Department Wireless Unit
Cliff Hunter, Fire Marshal, Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District
Wayne Johnson, San Diego Medical Services Enterprise and San Diego County Ambulance Association
Sandy Lawrensen, San Diego County Aging and Independence Services
D.P. Lee, Director, Office of Homeland Security, City of San Diego
Jani Lewis, San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency
Jerry Livingston, Governmental Affairs/Counsel, Building Industry Association of San Diego County
John Loggins, University of San Diego
Sean Mahoney, Commander, U.S. Coast Guard
Teresa Manley, Community Response Team
Mike Manry, Sempra Utilities
Chuck Marin, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Mike Marx, Emergency Medical Services Specialist, Ambulance Inspector, County of San Diego
Scott McClintock, Commander, San Diego County Sheriff's Department
Andy Menshek, Battalion Chief, San Miguel Fire Department and Local Agency Formation Commission
Caroline Vasquez-Miller, Girl Scouts of America
Scott Molloy, Public Policy Advocate, Building Industry Association of San Diego County
Bill Molumby, Fire Management Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Dennis Moser, Owner, Moser Ventures Inc.
Patti Murrin, RN, MPH, Emergency Medical Services Coordinator, County of San Diego
Sam Oates, Fire Marshal, City of San Diego
Kurk O'Brien, AIA, Representative, Aedifice
Kevin O'Leary, Chief, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
David Ott, Fire Chief, City of Del Mar
Liz Outlaw, Sharp Health Care
Dan Papp, Lieutenant, San Diego County Sheriff's Department
Perry Peake, President, San Diego Medical Services Enterprise
Doug Perry, Fire Chief, Chula Vista Fire Department
Jim Phelps, San Diego County Office of Emergency Services
Stasia Place, American Red Cross
Don Read, Salvation Army

Herman Reddick, San Diego County Office of Emergency Services
Vic Reed, Fire Chief, Escondido Fire Department
Brad Remp, Building Official, City of Chula Vista
Ken Rice, Retired, San Diego Fire-Rescue Department
Sean Roy, Boy Scouts of America
Walt Sandford, INFOLINE of San Diego County
Kirk Sanfilippo, San Diego Harbor Police Department
Chris Saunders, San Diego County Sheriff's Department
Greg Schreiner, Fire Marshal, Lakeside Fire Protection District
Frank Sotelo, Fire Chief, Imperial Beach Fire Department
Ralph E. Steinhoff, Fire Services Coordinator, County of San Diego
Julie Sutton, San Diego County Sheriff's Department
Bill Tippets, Deputy Regional Manager, California Department of Fish and Game
Brian Tisdale, Council of Community Clinics
Tom Tufts, Fire Chief, Encinitas Fire Department
Susie Turnbull, American Red Cross
Chris Tuthill, Community Response Team
David Tyree, Southwest Regional Manager, American Wood Council
Karen Van Winkle, Architectural Manager, Pardee Homes
Nick Vent, Department of Environmental Health
Gary Vilke, MD, Emergency Medical Services Director, County of San Diego
Mitch Villalpando, Assistant Fire Chief, Sycuan Fire Department
Scott Walker, Fire Chief, Bonita-Sunnyside Fire Department
Earl Wentworth, Captain, San Diego County Sheriff's Department
Clay Westling, Senior Building Engineer, County of San Diego
Jack Wethey, County Fire Chiefs, Emergency Medical Services Section
Marilyn Wiedmann, American Red Cross
Steve Wood, Chief, Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Medical Response
Mike Workman, Director, San Diego County Department of Media and Public Relations
Judith Yates, Healthcare Association of San Diego and Imperial Counties
Tom Zoll, Police Chief, Carlsbad Police Department

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

August 10, 2004

Mayor Dick Murphy
City Administration Building
202 "C" Street, 11th Floor
San Diego, CA 92101

County Supervisor Greg Cox
County Administration Building
1600 Pacific Highway, #335
San Diego, CA 92101

Task Force Members
William Kolender
Barry Zuniga
William Lansdowne
Richard Emerson
Jeff Bowman
Robert "Skip" Carter
Bob Pfohl
Chuck Maner
Erwin Willis
August Ghio
Ron Saathoff
Philip Parkhurst
James Dunford
Patrick Buttron
Gwen Jones
Jose Betancourt
John Macintyre
Sean Mahoney
Deborah Steffen
D.P. Lee
Walt Ekard
Harold Tuck
Adam Day
Frank Riolo
Steve Davis
Michael Manry
Andrew Vanderlaan
Andrew Menshek
Betty Kelepecz

Dear Mayor Murphy and Supervisor Cox:

We were honored to serve as co-chairs of the San Diego Regional Fire Prevention Emergency Preparedness Task Force (Task Force), and are pleased to present its final report on findings, recommendations and action steps. The Task Force, which was created in the wake of the October firestorm that damaged much of our county last year, was asked to respond to three basic questions:

1) How can the City and County be better prepared for emergencies?

2) How can the City and County more efficiently use existing resources?

3) What changes are needed to existing codes, regulations and ordinances?

After several months of hard work and deliberation by the Committee members listed on the attachment, and many others who worked on Sub-committees, responses have been compiled that will result in action steps. Further, it is the Task Force's intent to re-convene in one year to review its progress and to identify potential additional action steps.

One of the outcomes we identified for the Task Force members was to develop measurable actions that were accomplishable, rather than a series of recommendations that would have no deliverable outcomes. Considering the fact that no staff was provided to accomplish this task, we believe the Task Force members are to be thanked and congratulated for their past and future efforts to improve San Diego County's ability to respond to the myriad risks to which we could become exposed.

Another outcome that was identified was to encourage a regionalized approach to problem solving. Most disasters know no boundaries, and governmental agencies need to design response criteria that eliminate traditional "silo" approaches to resolving them.

Office of the Fire Chief
Fire and Life Safety Services • 1010 Second Avenue, Suite 400, MS 604 • San Diego, CA 92101-4409
Tel (619) 533-4311   Fax (619) 533-4377
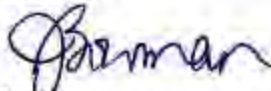
Task Force Members
Nick Vent
Greg Cox
Carlton Joseph
William Middleton
Sean Barrett
Lowell Grimaud
Victor Reed
Kem Oury
John Traylor

We believe much of what has been proposed will fulfill that desire, but more work is still to be done—hence, the proposal to meet one year from now.

It is evident that continued diligence will be required by all agencies to seek to prevent further occurrences like the wildfires of 2003, but we all know they are likely to reoccur. Our challenge, then, is to seek preventative measures that will reduce their severity and operational measures to ensure the safety of the public during and after their mitigation.

In closing, and on a personal note, we both felt extremely privileged to serve with the dedicated and committed group of professionals on the Task Force. You are to be commended for your selection of these individuals who exhibited expertise and passion, and put forth a dedicated effort in preventing future disasters from happening in our community. We only hope our combined and continued efforts will result in actions this community will be proud of and deserves.

Sincerely,

Jeff Bowman
Fire Chief

Bill Kolender
Sheriff

JB/siz

cc: Task Force members

INTRODUCTION

Emergency Services organizations throughout San Diego County have always operated effectively and cooperatively under the mutual aid and incident command systems. Although the mutual aid system is exercised throughout the year in our county, it is especially active during the wildland fire season. The State of California's mutual aid system is founded on the principle that firefighters from across the state respond to the aid of neighboring or distant communities to provide the necessary resources to extinguish California's wildfires.

Unfortunately, during San Diego County's October 2003 firestorms, California was experiencing the most devastating wildland fire disaster in state history. In San Diego County, 16 fatalities plagued our community, including that of a firefighter; a number of injuries were incurred; thousands of acres were burned; and, homes, commercial properties and outbuildings were destroyed. At the height of this period, personnel were assigned throughout the county to fight and support control and evacuation efforts on these fires.

A significant lesson learned during the October 2003 firestorms is that when multiple and significant fires begin north of the San Diego County line, San Diego stands virtually alone to fight its fires. It is essential that we learn from this experience – not just how to improve our preparedness and response to wildland fires, but also to improve our preparedness and response to all risks that our region may face.

Following the fires, San Diego Mayor, Dick Murphy, and Chairman of the County Board of Supervisors, Greg Cox, created the San Diego Regional Fire Prevention and Emergency Preparedness Task Force to provide a forum so that representatives of all public safety disciplines could review, discuss, and develop proposals for all-risk emergency preparedness in the San Diego region.

Mayor Murphy said, "It is clear that the City and County need to ensure that our emergency preparedness is at a maximum, not just for fire, but for all emergencies. This Task Force will get the professionals together outside of the realm of politics to make sure we are prepared."

Supervisor Cox said, "We, as a region, have to make sure that whatever resources we have, they are deployed and used to their maximum effect. In addition, we have to make sure that we are all working together. The Task Force will provide the forum needed to maximize our resources."

Co-chairmen appointed to the Task Force were San Diego County Sheriff, Bill Kolender, and San Diego City Fire Chief, Jeff Bowman. Mayor Murphy and Supervisor Cox directed the Co-chairmen to lead the Task Force in answering three basic questions:

1. How can the City and County be better prepared for emergencies?
2. How can the City and County more efficiently use existing resources?
3. What changes are needed to existing codes, regulations and ordinances?

Our thanks go out to all the emergency service workers and citizens who assisted in the efforts to control the fires and save lives and property during the October 2003 firestorms. Our Task Force has been consistently committed to the effort of improving our ability, as a region, to respond to any disaster that may occur. In San Diego County, we are susceptible to fire, flood, earthquake and terrorism events. The Task Force's recommendations are designed to serve as action items that can be implemented and measured for effectiveness. Several of our recommendations will require the cooperation of federal, state and local agencies, as well as community support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Task Force Staff:

Kim Madigan, Executive Secretary
Barry Zuniga, Agenda and Action Plan Development
August Ghio, Agenda, Action Plan and Final Report Format Development

Acknowledgements

The San Diego Regional Fire Prevention and Emergency Preparedness Task Force wishes to acknowledge the valuable contributions made by the many individuals and organizations assisting the Task Force on this endeavor. The Task Force members greatly appreciate the efforts of those who prepared and/or presented both public and written reports and information at our various meetings. The information these individuals provided was essential in understanding the depth and breadth of the all-risk preparedness and response issues, and solutions to mitigate future disasters.

A special thanks goes to the support staff of the San Diego County Sheriff's Department for hosting our Task Force meetings at their headquarters. Their efforts to provide copies of documents and to record and develop minutes was invaluable to the Task Force members.

Special recognition is appropriate for three individuals who were responsible for the coordination of this effort. San Diego Fire-Rescue Department's Assistant Chief Augie Ghio served as the document coordinator, and authored and/or edited many of the documents contained herein. His tireless efforts to see this project through to completion cannot be understated. Undersheriff Barry Zuniga and Kim Madigan, Executive Secretary, ensured facility and meeting documentation needs were handled, and for that, all were appreciative.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mission

The San Diego Regional Fire Prevention and Emergency Preparedness Task Force was established by City of San Diego Mayor Dick Murphy and Chairman of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors, Greg Cox on November 12, 2003. The Task Force was established to provide a forum for representatives of all public safety disciplines to review, discuss and develop proposals for all risk service enhancements in the San Diego region.

Background

In October of 2003, San Diego County experienced the most devastating wildland/urban interface fire disaster in the history of our region. The level of damage and loss resulting from the October 2003 firestorms was previously unimaginable: 383,269 total acres burned; 2,453 homes, 22 commercial properties, 763 outbuildings destroyed; and 16 lives were lost, including one firefighter.

To assist the region in establishing an action-oriented plan or initiative process to help avert future catastrophes associated with all risk hazards, Mayor Dick Murphy and Supervisor Greg Cox established the San Diego Regional Fire Prevention and Emergency Preparedness Task Force. Fire and law enforcement professionals, community officials and local representatives were members of the Task Force. The Task Force was directed to conduct meetings and report its findings and recommendations 180 days after the first meeting.

Summary of Task Force Meetings

All Task Force meetings were held in the City of San Diego at the Sheriff's Department Headquarters. The initial meeting was conducted on December 16, 2003. The Task Force members were welcomed by Mayor Dick Murphy and County Supervisor Greg Cox and were provided a general overview of Task Force membership, mission and time lines, goals and staff support. Three primary goals were established with 20 subcommittees and chairpersons identified.

The second meeting was conducted on January 29, 2004. Subcommittee reports were presented by the assigned chairpersons. Subcommittee report formats were discussed and agreed upon to ensure a level of standardization in report structure. Other issues were discussed including a recommendation that the existing Countywide Media Work Group be tasked with the responsibility to review and improve the Joint Information Center process. The second supplemental issue discussed was the concept of an emergency survival program for the proactive approach to educating the public.

On March 5, 2004, the third Task Force meeting was held. Undersheriff Jack Drown was replaced as staff support from the Sheriff's office by the new Undersheriff, Barry Zuniga. Subcommittee chairpersons submitted and presented their progress reports. All Task Force members were provided the website information for the 2003 San Diego County Fire Siege Fire Safety Review. Changes to the report format were discussed and approved. The e-mail distribution list was updated and new members were added to the Task Force.

April 2, 2004, the fourth Task Force meeting was called to order. Subcommittee chairpersons presented their reports, and a recommendation was made and approved to add a recommendations section to the final report format. There was discussion and agreement that the final report not be a shelf product, but be action-oriented and measurable.

On June 18, 2004, the fifth Task Force meeting was held. Subcommittee reports were presented. A final change to the subcommittee report format was discussed and approved to add prioritized action items to each recommendation listed on the subcommittee reports.

A sixth and final meeting of the Task Force was held on July 23, 2004, to review the final draft Task Force report, and reach agreement on the recommendations and action items contained in the report. The draft report with modifications was turned over to Task Force staff to develop a final report for printing and distribution. A motion was made to reconvene the Task Force Co-Chairs and Subcommittee Chairpersons annually to track and measure the progress of the recommendations contained in the Task Force Report.

ISSUES

The San Diego region, as is most of California, is prone to fire danger. It is also subject to the potential of floods, earthquakes, terrorism and a number of other potentially catastrophic events. This region's population is growing, and with this growth dwelling units continue to be developed in wildland and urban interface areas.

With these conditions as a focus, the San Diego Regional Fire Prevention and Emergency Preparedness Task Force established three primary goals. These goals included:

1. How can the City and County better prepare for emergencies?
2. How can the region more effectively use existing resources?
3. What changes to, and enforcement of, existing codes, regulations, and ordinances are needed?

The following issues or findings were developed through the subcommittee research and reports.

ISSUE 1A

Review Education of the Public

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

1. There is a wealth of emergency preparedness informational materials for the public to use. These materials consist of emergency preparedness brochures, websites, videos, etc., and address everything from earthquakes and wildland fires to floods and weapons of mass destruction.

2. What is needed is an effective means with which to motivate people to take action, based on the message, i.e., empowering people to take responsibility.

3. Currently there are multiple messages from many different agencies. What is needed is one universal message applicable to all disasters. This universal message is *"Personal Responsibility."* Within this message there are subsets of messages, applicable to each type of hazard. An example is: "In preparing for wildfires, clear a defensible space around your home that is free of dry brush, grass and dead leaves, in accordance with the fire codes currently adopted for your jurisdiction."

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

There is an abundant supply of educational materials on the various types of hazards with which the residents of the San Diego region are confronted. Numerous agencies are responsible for the development and distribution of emergency preparedness information for

the public. These agencies include the American Red Cross, the Burn Institute, Fire Safe Council, Sheriff's Department, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the National Weather Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, as well as local government emergency management offices. This has been an ongoing effort for the past several decades.

Within the vast array of literature/materials that are distributed to the public, there are typically common themes such as "self-sufficiency for a minimum of 72 hours after a disaster." Rather than a deficiency in the materials, there is an apparent apathy on the part of the public when it comes to preparing for disasters. It is easier to ignore emergency preparedness or to think that it only happens to the "other" person, than to put in the time and effort to prepare for the unexpected.

While emergency management agencies have made great strides over the past couple of decades in getting the word out about preparedness and motivating the populace, there is always room for improvement. Unfortunately, a key motivator appears to be disasters themselves. Once a major earthquake, fire or flood hits, the disaster captures everyone's attention, and the majority of the people in the affected area begin the planning/preparedness process.

TECHNICAL ISSUES/SOLUTIONS

There is typically a short window of opportunity, immediately following a disaster, to generate interest in emergency preparedness. A long-term solution, in some cases, might be to look at changing or improving building codes; however, this tends to meet with resistance on the part of property owners. Another issue is that of insurance incentives, i.e., reduction in insurance rates based on implementation of preparedness measures.

The target populations include groups of differing ages, varying languages, numerous cultural backgrounds, and varying literacy rates. These diversities create unique challenges in the development and distribution of preparedness literature and programs.

RESEARCH OF SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

There are several successful programs in place throughout California. One such strategy is the Emergency Survival Program (ESP). ESP is an awareness campaign designed to increase home, neighborhood, business and school emergency preparedness. ESP was developed by the County of Los Angeles, and the Coordinating Council is comprised of emergency management representatives throughout southern California. The premise behind ESP is that preparing for disasters can be overwhelming, and so the program is designed to motivate people to take one action per month, in hopes of being prepared by the end of the year. ESP initially focused on earthquake preparedness and has evolved to multiple hazards. The program is very successful and has been used as a model preparedness program in Argentina, Australia, Canada, England, India, Israel and Japan.

The American Red Cross has several preparedness programs for varying ages. Additionally, the Orange County Chapter of the American Red Cross co-sponsors an annual event at

California State University, Fullerton, entitled, "The Orange County Disaster Preparedness Academy". The Academy is a one-day event with individual tracks targeted at business, schools, government, safety and security, life safety, and general interest. Were we to emulate this it would need the participation of one of our colleges/universities, the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, government, and others. Also to be considered is whether such an academy here would be one day as it is in Orange County, or longer, such as a week.

The Fire Safe Council was started in San Diego County in 1996, and involves going to homeowner associations and Town Halls, meeting and encouraging community leaders in high risk fire areas in rural San Diego County to form Fire Safe Councils to perform clearing, emergency planning, vegetation management, and fire safe training.

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program has been successfully implemented throughout Los Angeles and Orange Counties over the past several years. FEMA began promoting nationwide use of the CERT concept in 1994, and since then, CERTs have been established in hundreds of communities. The goal is for emergency personnel to train members of neighborhoods, community organizations, or workplaces in basic response skills. CERT members are then integrated into the emergency response structure for their areas. The City of Coronado has had a CERT program in place for several years and several areas throughout San Diego County are now looking into or starting CERT programs for their neighborhoods.

EXISTING RESOURCES/IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The "Burn Run/Fire EXPO" is a very successful annual event in San Diego County that continues to expand each year. The event takes place each July and is sponsored by the San Diego and Imperial County Firefighters Advisory Council to the Burn Institute. The Burn Run begins in the morning with a caravan of fire trucks and other fire apparatus traveling through San Diego and Imperial counties toward Qualcomm Stadium. The caravan makes stops throughout the day at various fire stations for check presentations to the Burn Institute. The fire rigs then converge at the stadium in the afternoon where Fire EXPO is already in progress. Fire EXPO is a free, family-oriented event to heighten public awareness of emergency services. The event features fire engine rides, helicopter fly-overs, auto extrications, emergency service vehicle tours, a Kiddy Karnival, puppet shows and fire and burn prevention education including "Stop, Drop and Roll."

For events such as the "Burn Run/Fire EXPO" and programs such as Fire Safe Councils and CERT, planners and organizers need to explore ways to promote the universal message of *"Personal Responsibility."* Baby boomers and their parents will always remember the Smoky the Bear campaign and its message of "Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires." Emergency management agencies need to continually promote a similar message that addresses all hazards.

NEW RESOURCES NEEDED

There is a continual need for additional staffing, time and funding to support existing programs and the creation of new programs. One approach is for all local agencies to review existing

programs/literature in order to ensure consistency and possible incorporation of the "Personal Responsibility" message.

Currently a Wildland/Urban Interface Preparedness and Educational program is under review by statewide agencies for optional inclusion in the CERT program. The ability to present a common and uniform program to the public should be imperative in the preparedness of communities.

SUSTAINABILITY OPTIONS

There needs to be a focus on annual events, whether it is the continued promotion/expansion of existing annual events or the creation of new annual programs/events. One new strategy is the investigation into the creation of a San Diego County Disaster Preparedness Academy. Funding alternatives such as co-sponsorship with a local college would need to be explored and identified.

ISSUE 1B

Review Alerting, Notification Procedures and Plans

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

During the firestorms of 2003, local government alerting and warning information to county residents was not considered adequate. Because of the nature of the fire, including the speed with which it spread, limited air resources, and smoke close to the ground, good fire behavior intelligence was not available. This task force subcommittee will review the capabilities that exist and identify strategies and products to better provide alert/notification information to the public.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION
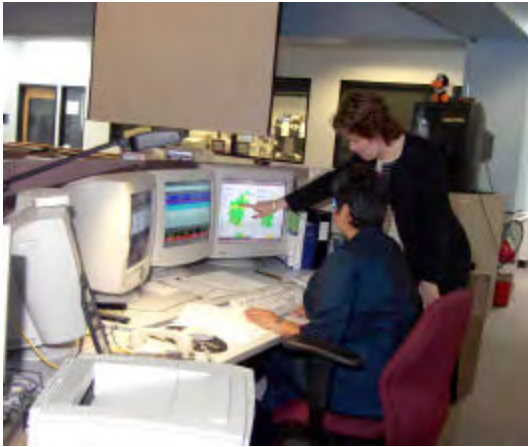
There are two electronic warning systems used by San Diego County Office of Emergency Services (OES), the Sheriff's Department and the National Weather Service in San Diego County. The first is a proprietary system known as L.I.F.E. (Life-Saving Information For Emergencies).

L.I.F.E. is a radio system that can be activated from any telephone to broadcast a voice message through a paging system to 200 receivers throughout the County. These receivers are dedicated solely to the L.I.F.E. system, and are located at radio and television stations, as well as some hospitals, dispatch centers, school district offices and other locations throughout the County. The system was developed over 25 years ago as a way of getting information out to the public through the media without having to use the Emergency Broadcasting System, which was a very cumbersome and difficult system to use.

L.I.F.E. worked well for many years, but the equipment and technology is old. Additionally, the equipment is not user-friendly for radio, TV and dispatch centers because the receivers are so loud when activated that many of the receivers have been put in closets away from areas where they could interfere with live broadcasts. Since there was no capability of recording the message, if it wasn't heard the first time, it was missed.

The second system is the Emergency Alert System (EAS). EAS is the replacement to the old Emergency Broadcast System (EBS) that had been used during the Cold War. It is a system that is a little better than EBS in that it can be activated more quickly, but with our current configuration, it still requires some human intervention at the radio station to get the message sent.

EAS is a voluntary program for the radio, TV and cable companies, and while most, if not all stations in San Diego participate, only the Local Primary 1 station (KOGO) is required to broadcast the message within 15 minutes. When KOGO broadcasts the message, all other stations pick it up and it is either automatically sent out by their required equipment, or broadcast within 15 minutes.

While L.I.F.E. has dedicated receivers that essentially sit and wait for a message, EAS requires that a radio or television be turned on to receive the message. Consequently, if the cable is out or the power is down or people are not watching or listening, the message doesn't get to them.

Neither of these systems is completely effective because they both rely on the media to get the information out to the public. If people don't already know that they should be watching or listening to the media because of a threat, especially during the nighttime hours, they won't be watching TV or listening to the radio.

Both L.I.F.E. and EAS are very limited in the amount of information that can be put out because they are both limited to fewer than two minutes for the actual message. That is not enough time to include evacuation instructions, especially if there is more than one area to be evacuated.

In addition, neither system is addressable to specific geographic areas. If a message is put out for Borrego, there is no way to make it appear only in Borrego. That message goes to everyone in the County, and if the whole message is not heard, it could lead to confusion and panic.

In the case of the firestorms, as with most evacuations, a third and primary means of notification was used by law enforcement. They went through the neighborhoods using public address systems and knocked on doors to warn the citizens to either evacuate or prepare to evacuate.

During the early stages of the Cedar Fire, there was a lack of a unified, coordinated and comprehensive plan to provide timely and accurate information to the news media for distribution to the public. The information that was available focused mainly on the Cedar Fire. As a result, residents in communities being threatened by the Paradise Fire and the Otay Fire were not being provided with consistent or timely news information updates concerning the fire and evacuation advice in their areas.

TECHNICAL ISSUES/SOLUTIONS

There was no single solution available that would have met the need to notify all of the people in each area of the county that they were in danger and needed to take some action. However, there are some potential solutions that would allow us to notify more people in a timely manner.

The EAS system is reliant on the radio stations having trained, on-site staff every moment of the day that could do the things necessary to put out an EAS message. By installing our own equipment at the Office of Emergency Services and the Sheriff's Communications Center, and establishing a telephone link directly into the equipment at the radio station, we could eliminate the need for the staff at the radio station, which would speed up the actual notification time. We have procured the necessary equipment and made it operational in May 2004.

The State of California uses a system called EDIS, the Emergency Digital Information System. This is a web-based system that can be accessed by government agencies to deliver emergency information to subscribers through the use of cell phones, pagers and e-mail. We are exploring the feasibility of developing a local EDIS system that anyone in the county could subscribe to free of charge. If feasible, this would allow local government to put out warnings to

anyone with a cell phone or pager. It could be geographically-specific and also event-specific.

The Sheriff's Department is researching the possibility of developing an inexpensive radio system similar to L.I.F.E. that could be used for warning the public directly. It may be possible to develop a system in which receivers could be purchased by the public at retail outlets for under $50 apiece.

There are also commercial systems available that use the 9-1-1 database to call residents in a specific geographic area and warn them of situations where they may need to take action. These systems can be effective if phone lines are up and the call volume is sufficient to get the message out in a timely manner.

One of the greatest challenges to implementing an alert and warning system is that of integration and funding. There are existing capabilities that, if combined in a well-thought-out system, could be very effective. Many of them are expensive, and some are more complicated than others to use. A balance has to be struck between cost, effectiveness, and ease of use. The simpler the system is to use, the more likely it is that it will be used effectively.

There are people in San Diego County who do not have televisions or cable or cannot get local TV or radio broadcasts. Some residents, especially in remote areas of the county, do not have cell phone or pager coverage. Many people may not want to spend money for a receiver that may never get used or might be overused. Some people don't have telephones. There will always be people who will not get the message.

Members of the San Diego news media and area Public Information Officers have met on several occasions since the firestorms in an effort to create a community-wide alert system. With this effort, KGTV conducted research across the United States on existing systems in the United States, which will be discussed below. The meetings have produced a two-tier plan for alerting the media and thus the public:

Tier One: Media Incident Alert (MIA System)
Media outlets of all types would provide cell phone and pager numbers to a platform that has been provided by the San Diego Police Department. Media and PIOs can then access the site via the internet. Messages are limited to 250 characters, and would provide information on the incident, location, and a pertinent phone number. That message would, in turn, be sent out to media throughout the area, and the media would inform the public.

Tier Two: SignOnSanDiego

As a result of the Tier One efforts, SignOnSanDiego volunteered to provide a larger platform to handle follow up questions about the MIA. Using the SignOnSanDiego platform, PIOs can send unlimited information via the site, and the media can see the information in real time. The site would be secure, with only media and PIOs having access. The media tested Tier One in early April of 2004, and following another meeting, plans to implement Tier Two.

RESEARCH SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

As mentioned on Page 12, KGTV (Channel 10) researched notification programs and strategies in other cities and areas of the United States. Their findings suggest that few, if any, of the cities or counties surveyed are any better off than San Diego, or that there are no real successful strategies being employed or implemented.

EXISTING RESOURCES/IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

OES is working with KOGO, the Sheriff and vendors to streamline the process of getting EAS messages out to the radio stations. Installation of a direct phone line to KOGO from the Sheriff's Dispatch Center and OES, and the purchase of an additional EAS Encoder/Decoder are in progress and was completed and installed the first week of May 2004.

The Board of Supervisors approved an 18-month trial of a Community Notification System (based on "Reverse 9-1-1" technology) that will enable emergency dispatchers to call residents and alert them to emergency actions, which may need to be taken. Once in place, the system can be used by any dispatch agency in the County to alert its citizens. This system, like EAS, relies on having timely, accurate information.
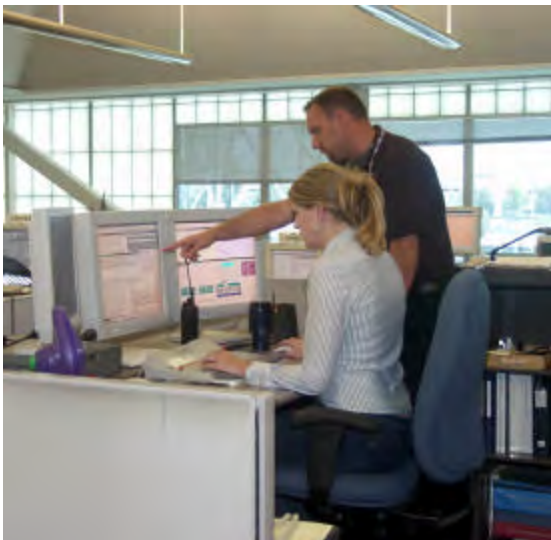
Emergency Services organizations can also use volunteers, such as Citizens Corps, in the alert and notification process. These volunteer organizations include Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol (RSVP) officers, Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), and HAM Radio Operators. Jurisdictions should identify and train volunteers for specific alert and notification tasks.

NEW RESOURCES NEEDED

The successful implementation of the Community Notification system, the Media Alert System-Tier One and Two, and the improvements mentioned in the current EAS system above would place San Diego County among the leading areas in the United Sates in its ability to alert and warn its citizens.

SUSTAINABILITY OPTIONS

The implementation of the above will impact current resources and staff. The above-mentioned Community Notification System will be implemented for eighteen months after which, if continued, will cost approximately $80,000 a year. Improvements in existing programs will also cost. While the pursuit of grant funds also impacts staff resources, this may be the most feasible means of funding and sustaining improvements in alert and notification procedures in San Diego County.

ISSUE 1C

Review Incident Intelligence Communications to Include Evacuation Plans and Procedures

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

1. Presently there are no standardized evacuation plans for the County of San Diego.

2. Presently there is no standardized communication methodology between law enforcement and fire personnel for requesting evacuation of specific areas.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

1. According to the Report for the Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center dated December 8, 2003, pre-incident planning is essential for conducting evacuations. Interagency pre-planning affords for a more efficient transition of evacuees from fire personnel to law enforcement personnel, and ultimately to agencies like the Red Cross. Pre-planning also reduces response times for fire personnel by reducing roadway congestion created by evacuees and their vehicles. San Diego County does not have a standardized plan for conducting evacuations.

2. It is critical to establish an effective method of communication between fire and law enforcement agencies. Traditionally, law enforcement relies upon fire agencies to provide direction regarding evacuations. Presently, the practice exists to co-locate a ranking member of the law enforcement agency of jurisdiction with a representative from the fire agency of jurisdiction to create two-way communications. This is believed to be the best, most effective method; however, the process needs to be formalized.

TECHNICAL ISSUES/SOLUTIONS

1. At the March 22, 2004 meeting of the subcommittee, Chief Ott from the Solana Beach Fire Department and Sheriff's Captain Nares made a presentation on a standardized plan for conducting evacuations throughout the City of Solana Beach and surrounding areas. The plan divides the city into zones that were divided into sectors. It also pre-identifies potential evacuation routes, staging areas, command post locations and evacuee reception centers. Incorporating a Geographical Information Systems (GIS) component can enhance the plan. The subcommittee believes that the same model could be applied countywide as a standardized template.

14

RESEARCH SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

1. The Solana Beach model as described previously.

2. The San Bernardino-CalMAST High-Tech Information Sharing Project

EXISTING RESOURCES/IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

1. The Sheriff's Department has adopted the Solana Beach model as described above. Assignments to station and substation commanders were made on April 12, 2004. Progress will be reported to the Task Force and, once satisfied with the product, it will be recommended for adoption by all law enforcement and fire agencies countywide. The Sheriff's Department's fifteen command areas have completed localized applications of the low-tech Solana Beach model.

2. Presentation of this proposal has been made to the San Diego Fire Chiefs and Sheriffs Association for consideration to be implemented countywide.

3. Recommend to FIRESCOPE[1] that a formalized law enforcement liaison position be created within the Fire Incident Command System (ICS) and tasked with the responsibility of providing the law enforcement liaison with direction and intelligence pertaining to evacuation operations.

NEW RESOURCES NEEDED

A low-tech model of the Solana Beach evacuation plan template has been developed using road maps of the county, and by marking routes, staging areas etc. A high-tech solution involves a GIS component that would make the information available electronically at command posts, department operations centers, and in mobile data computers in patrol cars.

Upon completion of the low-tech model, the Sheriff's Department will begin to install the information from the evacuation binders into the mobile data computers (MDCs) through the use of PC Hard Disk Drive cards. This method will require the acquisition of PC Hard Disk Drive cards, and for MDCs to be loaded individually at the station level.

The high-tech model will use web-based technology allowing for the sharing and updating of information in real time. This model will include the foundation for inter-active GIS compatibility with current Fire GIS technologies. To enable this strategy, additional software and hardware will need to be acquired.

---

[1] Established in 1971, the FIRESCOPE partnership of seven federal, state and local fire agencies has become the model for governmental cooperation throughout the U.S. The Incident Command System (ICS) developed by FIRESCOPE is currently in use around the world.

SUSTAINABILITY OPTIONS

The low-tech option will require a centralized point of responsibility within each law enforcement agency to coordinate the development and maintenance of the field evacuation books pertaining to their respective jurisdictions. For the Sheriff's Department's jurisdiction, this responsibility will be assigned to the Sheriff's Emergency Planning Detail.

ISSUE 1D

Review and Recommend Technology Improvements

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

There is no effective or standardized approach to identifying interoperable technology improvement priorities in the San Diego region. Due to this situation, most agencies within the San Diego region compete for grant funding and develop individual approaches and priorities to technological needs and issues.

The San Diego region needs to develop a consolidated approach to identifying technological improvements that will provide enhanced safety for our responders and improve our information sharing and effectiveness during "All Risk" type disasters and emergencies.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

The San Diego County Office of Emergency Services functions as the lead agency when applying for and administering State Homeland Security Grants (SHSG) funding. These grants fund the purchase of specialized equipment to allow first responders to effectively respond to disasters and emergencies resulting from a terrorist attack using a weapon of mass destruction (WMD). A WMD device is one that uses chemical, biological, nuclear, radiological or explosive agents in a manner designed to inflict the maximum number of casualties. SHSG funds can also be used for planning projects, training, and exercises.

A similar grant series, the Urban Area Security Initiative Grant (UASI), provides for the same categories of use. The difference is that the City of San Diego is the grant recipient and administers the allocation of these grant funds to the County and the other jurisdictions within the Operational Area.

The equipment available under either grant is used to equip fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services and other agencies with an emergency response role. Often, though not always, this equipment can also be used in responding to a conventional emergency, such as a wildland fire.

The Unified Disaster Council (UDC) is the governing board of the Unified San Diego County Emergency Services Organization (Unified). The Unified is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) comprised of the County of San Diego and each of the eighteen incorporated cities within the County. The UDC also serves as the Operational Areas Disaster Council as established by State ordinance. As the Operational Area's Disaster Council, the UDC approves all SHSG applications and fund allocations. The UDC also provides oversight to the San Diego County Hazardous Incident Response Team (HIRT). In this capacity, the UDC is fundamental in the standardization of equipment throughout the Operational Area.

Law Enforcement agencies provide representatives to the Regional Emergency Response Technology Committee meetings. This group ties in the information gleaned from ongoing

State OES interoperability discussions. The Sheriff also provides liaison between the Emergency Response Technology Committee and the countywide Police Chiefs' and Sheriff's Association for ongoing input and feedback.

TECHNICAL ISSUES/SOLUTIONS

None identified at this time.

RESEARCH SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

There are three successful strategies that have been identified.

The first strategy is the San Diego County Hazardous Incident Response Team (HIRT). HIRT has been in existence for over 20 years and is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) that provides hazardous materials response throughout the County of San Diego. The San Diego Fire-Rescue and County Environmental Health Department combine resources to make up this regional resource. Together they prioritize their technological needs to ensure that both halves of the team have similar capabilities. This makes them an effective local model in how to provide a better level of service, from a technological perspective, in a cost-effective manner. HIRT is administered through the Unified Disaster Council.

The second successful strategy is the FEMA-funded Urban Search and Rescue Task Force (US&R) program. US&R is a national program comprised of 28 Task Forces, each with up to 210 members. FEMA has established committees to identify and standardize equipment and technology needs throughout the program. This ensures interoperability between Task Forces when deployed to disasters.

The third successful strategy is the Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Project (SVRIP). The SVRIP began as a Fire Chiefs Data Project Initiative in 1998, and included the Police Chiefs Radio Interoperability initiative. A joint agreement between "Network Participants" was established. This agreement included 18 jurisdictions and 30 stakeholder agencies, including law enforcement, fire, EMS, and utility companies.

EXISTING RESOURCES/IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

There are an ever-increasing number of companies and vendors contacting emergency response agencies for product presentations and so called "no cost pilot programs." Everyone is competing for grant funding to support research projects and the purchase and implementation of new equipment and technology to support Homeland Security or improve disaster planning, preparedness, response and recovery efforts. A regional strategy should be developed to evaluate regional needs vs. independent agencies or cities related to technological equipment or services. There should be some consideration by the Unified Disaster Council (UDC) to establish a regional committee to identify needs and screen vendors and products that meet those needs. This would also allow for discussion on potential funding solutions at an appropriate level through the UDC.

NEW RESOURCES NEEDED

A standing committee with appropriate representation from applicable agencies.

SUSTAINABILITY OPTIONS

Not applicable at this time.

ISSUE 1E

Review and Identify Training Needs

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

During the 2003 San Diego Firestorms, it was determined that the City and the County were not as prepared, nor was the response as coordinated as it could have been. Training is a major step in the preparation for any emergency response. The Review and Identify Training Needs Subcommittee was established to identify training issues/challenges related to large-scale fire response and evacuation.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

The October 2003 wildland firestorms that devastated the City and County of San Diego prompted the formation of the San Diego Regional Fire Prevention and Emergency Preparedness Task Force to determine the issues and identify the steps to be taken to prevent a repeat of the disaster.

The Review and Identify Training Needs Subcommittee was tasked to review and identify the training needs required to assist in Goal #1 of the Task Force, which is "How can the City and County better prepare for emergencies?"

The Subcommittee was comprised of members from fire, law enforcement, homeland security, forestry, emergency preparedness and environmental agencies. The Subcommittee reviewed the response to the fires and existing training that is available, worked to identify the issues/challenges of existing training capabilities, and recommended solutions and strategies needed to overcome the issues/challenges.

Specifically, the Subcommittee was tasked with reviewing and identifying the following training:

1) Establish a countywide drill – full scale and funded.
2) Establish law enforcement and fire evacuation and response training.
3) Establish urban fire fighter training in a wildland brush environment.

TECHNICAL ISSUES/SOLUTIONS

The Subcommittee has identified a video on training for fire behavior that is currently prepared and used by the California Department of Forestry (CDF) for training the U.S. Border Patrol in fire response. The two-hour long videotape could be updated for use by other agencies including law enforcement personnel for in-house training. Duplicate videotapes can be made available by the CDF for distribution throughout the region.

RESEARCH SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

See Below for Training Strategies.

EXISTING RESOURCES/IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The Subcommittee has identified the following available training:

1. Establish a countywide drill – full scale and funded. The Subcommittee has identified that the County of San Diego has planned 19 tabletops, 1 field exercise and 1 full-scale exercise over the next three years.

2. Establish law enforcement and fire evacuation and response training. The Review Incident Intelligence Communications to Include Evacuation Plans and Procedures Subcommittee has identified an evacuation-planning model that they recommend to be used by the region; the Solana Beach Model.

3. Establish urban fire fighter training in a wildland brush environment. The Subcommittee has identified several firefighting training courses:

   a. The California Dept. of Forestry conducts urban firefighting training on a yearly basis. Their second session June 2-4, 2004 included law enforcement personnel.
   b. A majority of fire departments run 2-day urban firefighting courses that are open to law enforcement personnel.
   c. The San Diego Fire Department has fire training exercises, including live burns.
   d. The Fire School for the Cleveland National Forest runs a camp at Camp Pendleton where they stage brush fires.
   e. The San Diego Fire Department is training their firefighters in wildland structure protection.
   f. The Urban Area Working Group (UAWG) has identified $2.7 million in FY03 Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) funds for training associated with Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) incidents. However, brush fires, like the October fire, are not included.

NEW RESOURCES NEEDED

The Subcommittee has identified a major problem in that most firefighting training is related to hazardous materials and structural firefighting. There are few wildfire-specific drills. The Subcommittee recommends that funding be identified for wildfire-specific drills, and that the Unified Disaster Council (UDC) should pursue wildland fire urban interface full-scale exercise drills.

The Subcommittee has identified the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) as a possible agency to spearhead the process to encourage government employees to be trained in the various command systems: the Incident Command System (ICS), the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and the National Interagency Management System (NIMS). The County is mandated to have 4 hours of command systems training per emergency services employee. In addition, counties need to be reminded that any jurisdiction receiving grant funds from the Department of Homeland Security is subject to audit, and that one of the conditions for receipt of the funds includes mandated NIMS training. There are two mandates in force, the PETRIS Act and the Grant Assurances (Federal Terrorism Grant) Act.

Basic fire behavior training should be conducted for law enforcement and emergency responders. Currently, the San Diego Sheriff's Department conducts refresher courses on SEMS and fire behavior. The training should be conducted countywide under the auspices of the County Office of Emergency Services (OES).

Fire behavior and response training should be included as part of the Regional Officer Training (ROT) program. This recommendation has the support of the San Diego County Fire Chiefs and Sheriffs Association.

While in the process of reviewing and identifying the issues, the Subcommittee has also identified two issues that are related to training:

a. The Subcommittee recognized the need for government entities to undergo command systems such as Incident Command System (ICS), Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and National Interagency Management System (NIMS) training as they are directing and implementing policies that affect responders, and in many cases, the officials do not understand these systems.

b. The Subcommittee recommends that communication be an issue together with training, as past incidents have proven that communication was a major problem impeding emergency responders.

SUSTAINABILITY OPTIONS

Training that is part of a regular and coordinated program is easier to sustain if it receives the appropriate emphasis and funding. If a dissimilar emergency occurs, training could be redirected to other issues based on that emergency. Consequently, all training prepared needs to be flexible enough and regularly updated to be relevant to the various identified regional needs.

ISSUE 1F

Review and Recommend Communications Improvements

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

Public Safety Agencies throughout the County of San Diego do not have compatible, interoperable radio systems and therefore cannot readily communicate with one another during multi-agency responses. Additionally, the radio systems used by the agencies are not equipped to handle the volume of radio traffic endemic to natural disasters. Simply stated, the networks do not have enough available talk channels to support many simultaneous transmissions.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

San Diego's Police and Fire Departments use a 19-Channel Motorola Smartnet II Trunked Radio System, utilizing analog transmission on frequencies in the 800 MHz band. This system was acquired in October 1990, and placed in service in September 1992. It services over 16,400 radios among 24 user departments and external user groups.

The system operates in simulcast mode from seven repeater sites. These sites are: Black Mountain, the City Administration Building, Cowles Mountain, Encanto, Mt. Soledad, San Ysidro, and Whitman Ranch (North City Site).

All 19 channels are in use at all sites, with the exception of the North City Site, where only 7 channels are in use. This system serves as the primary public safety communications system for the City, serving both Police and Fire.

Fire and Life Safety is also equipped with VHF radio equipment but personnel are not familiar with its features and capabilities, primarily due to infrequent use and inadequate labeling on the radios.

Dead batteries and old radios are an issue for field units for both San Diego Police and Fire personnel. The Fire Department's older radios are too old to be cloned (programmed) and the newer radios that are rechargeable work best for a short duration. The rechargeable radios used by the Fire Department use AA batteries that can be carried and switched quickly in the field. Police radios, however, reportedly failed during regular shift hours because of the inappropriate battery chargers purchased for that purpose.

The Regional Communications System (RCS) is the primary radio system used by most of the other agencies in San Diego County. In March of 1995, twenty-seven (27) agencies signed an agreement to share in the use and cost of the RCS, which is also an 800 MHz Trunked Radio Backbone and Microwave System. The agencies include public safety (law enforcement and fire) as well as public service agencies and transportation.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) and the United States Forest Service (USFS) each utilize separate VHF radio systems. These radio systems are a mixture

of repeated channels from various mountaintops on several frequencies and non-repeated tactical frequencies that may be limited in range by topographical features. Additionally, all aerial resources provided by CDF and USFS and all of the privately owned Call-When-Needed (CWN) air resources are limited to VHF radios.

A significant factor in this and other fire sieges is that Mutual Aid resources most often do not have the 800 MHz capabilities needed to assimilate into the RCS and/or City systems as currently designed. There are radio caches brought into the County by both the state and federal agencies; however, these caches do not include 800 MHz resources either.

TECHNICAL ISSUES/SOLUTIONS

The current radio networks used by public safety agencies in the San Diego region are incapable of handling the large number of simultaneous radio transmissions that occur during major events such as the October 2003 firestorms. Both of the primary networks, described earlier, fail to provide adequate capacity beyond customary levels of activity.

San Diego Police Department radios can transmit when in range of the seven repeater sites listed previously in this document. Should a SDPD officer travel beyond that range, the radio will no longer function unless the officer switches to one of the three Mutual Aid (MA) channels or ICALL. Though these channels are an option, relying on them during an emergency is hazardous due to a potential delay in reaching the appropriate agency for help. Most agencies have ICALL and MA channels monitored by their dispatchers and the officer needing assistance will conceivably reach another agency's dispatcher. This dispatcher must determine what agency is needed (if not their own) and then either "patch" the officer to the RCS system or direct other officers to switch to the MA channel used. This procedure can be a time consuming venture and can be unproductive altogether, depending on the level of radio traffic being monitored by the dispatchers. During the Firestorms, this process was not attempted by all accounts provided.

In response to the number of extraordinary transmissions, the San Diego Police Department's radio system went into a "Fail Soft" condition three times. This condition occurs when the network cannot handle the number of transmissions it is attempting to process. In this mode, the system merges several talk groups together in an attempt to better handle the amount of traffic. All detective and tactical channels are merged into one, parking enforcement officers are moved to Central Dispatch, and Northern Dispatch is merged with North City West. The remaining system changes mirror the usual "grouping" now used, such as Eastern and Northeastern on the same talk group. Repeated busy signals is the general indicator the network may go into the "Fail Soft" condition.

Similarly, the San Diego Sheriff Department's RCS system also reached network capacity during the firestorms resulting in many busy signals when their users attempted to transmit. The RCS has recognized the need to further develop the East Loop; however, the improvement has not yet taken place. The East Loop site was the most used portion of the RCS system during the firestorms. In the East Loop area, the average delay, measured from when the user pushed the radio button to when the network granted access to speak, was over four seconds and up to four minutes.

The topography of the City and County of San Diego is some of the most challenging in the world to cover with radio technology. Since the implementation of the radio systems used by our agencies, the appearance of our region has changed due to rapid growth and

development. This, combined with substantial growth in other nearby 800 MHz radio systems, has changed the effectiveness of the systems today. These factors have combined to degrade the overall in-building coverage reliability of the system, a circumstance that can only be addressed in the long term through the addition of repeater sites.

The City has identified areas of reported coverage concerns (dead spots) in the outdoor areas that include the following:

- Monument Road south of Vista Del Estero along the border fence and in the canyons
- Otay Mesa: Spring Canyon, Dillion's Trail west of Siempre Viva Road and Cactus Court
- Calle De Linea
- The foot of Ladera Street south of the end of Point Loma
- The vicinity of Fire Station 33 and along the immediate area east of I-15 in Rancho Bernardo
- Sorrento Valley
- San Pasqual Valley
- East County areas east of El Cajon

In addition to these issues, interference from wireless telephone providers is a growing issue, most notably Nextel transmitter sites.

Another issue shared by San Diego Police and Fire Departments concerned the failure of radio batteries. Either the improper battery was purchased for the portable radios, or the inappropriate battery charger was being used for the purchased batteries.

San Diego Police Department, Operational Support Division, has requested and received approval for the purchase of Advance Tech battery chargers, which will properly charge existing and newly purchased batteries. The purchase of new batteries was also approved, and the equipment will be procured after the bid process is completed. Delivery of both items has occurred.

Additionally, the City of San Diego's Information Technology and Communications (IT&C) recently contacted the San Diego Police Department and advised that the currently issued radios can be reprogrammed for limited RCS capability. As a result, the Operational Support Division is working in conjunction with IT&C to reprogram all San Diego Police Department radios for limited RCS capability. Limited RCS will allow communication with other law enforcement agencies to the north, south and portions of the east county. Two fire channels will also be added to the radios to improve communication with those units. Northeastern Division radios will be reprogrammed first, and all other divisions will eventually be reprogrammed to limited RCS capability. New hand-held radios with full RCS capability should be purchased in the future, eventually phasing out the older version radios.

San Diego County Sheriff's Department currently possesses the County Transportable Radio Trunking system (TRF) with 10 channels. These channels allow communication with their Mobile Command Center, which can be activated during critical incidents. San Diego Police Department radios will also receive the TRF frequencies to allow communication with the Sheriff's Department at the time of reprogramming.

IT&C is also working with San Diego Fire Department to resolve their hand-held radio issues. The San Diego Fire Department issued Bendix/King Radios to some field staff that could not be programmed to communicate with CDF and USFS personnel on the fire lines. Additionally,

not all reserve apparatus activated for the Firestorms had radios and mobile data terminals (MDTs).

A VHF radio cache was deployed to both the Cedar and Paradise fires for use by fire resources. The majority of firefighting equipment from agencies within San Diego County has VHF radios (both mobile and hand-held) as a secondary radio. However, due to the number of agencies operating within southern California, the commonly used Command and Tactical frequencies were already in use at other fires, necessitating the deployment of non-standard frequencies. This move rendered all existing mobile units and some hand-held units useless.

It is recommended that all public safety agencies in the San Diego region upgrade their radio systems to APCO Project 25 Standards. This standard of "open" technology will prevent the agencies from being locked into a single vendor solution, which is where we are today. It is a technology accepted nationwide because of the added essential features of interoperability and added talk channels needed during unusual or critical situations.

It is further recommended that fire agencies continue to equip their resources with VHF capabilities, and train their personnel adequately on the use of these radios.

Future fires of this nature are likely to require the same type and number of resources. Unless and until all regional public safety resources are equipped with Project 25 800 MHz radios, a means of access for all radio users will be required.

It is also recommended that each agency should identify, equip and train their personnel in a designated Departmental Operations Center (DOC). The area should never be lost or reassigned because of some other department administrative need.

EXISTING RESOURCES/IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

It is recommended that representatives from each public safety agencies in the San Diego region meet on a quarterly basis to discuss strategies and develop contingency plans for multi-agency responses. Suggested representatives would be drawn from the operational and communications divisions from each agency.

It is recommended that representatives from each public safety agency in the region's radio systems meet on a monthly basis to develop and implement interoperability strategies.

Training should be presented to all public safety agencies on the capabilities and limitations of the deployable field communications resources currently available (TRF, RACES, OES, FBI, etc,) and the equipment and components on board that enhance interoperability.

It is also recommended that all agencies ensure appropriate personnel are trained and familiar with the proper use of mutual aid channels and how to "patch" radio frequencies when necessary.

NEW RESOURCES NEEDED

Both the City of San Diego and the Regional Communications System have expressed their concerns that their respective systems need further improvement, both in size (frequencies) and coverage areas in order to ensure complete radio coverage and interoperability for all

agencies. A study should be undertaken to examine if there are any advantages to combining two or more of the radio networks currently in place, prior to the expansion of any one system.

Additional resources should be purchased and deployed to enable all participants to interoperate at Area Command, Incident Command and Tactical levels. Investments in technological solutions to our dissimilar systems must be made.

Additional facilities should be added to provide separate locations for dispatch and DOC activities, and these facilities must remain intact between periods of activation.

All agencies should purchase additional rechargeable batteries and charging stations and/or battery packs for all radios.

A common training program for correct utilization of the VHF radios should be distributed to each of the agencies that do not use VHF as their primary system. It should be delivered in a format that supports both legacy training and use as a reference.

Identify the Impacts to the Public Health System During a Large Scale Event

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

During Firestorm 2003, two major issues were identified for discussion. This report outlines each of these issues, and presents initial concepts for system improvements. The Subcommittee felt it was important to note that, while the Firestorm was the impetus for thinking these issues through, in fact the charge of the group would be to use the Firestorm 2003 experience as a vehicle to address from an "all hazards approach" what the EMS/Medical and Public Health systems need. The concepts identified below are still in the early development stage, but are representative of the committee's views.

1. Communications, Command and Control

a) Development of a Medical Operations Center (MOC) concept.

b) Bi-directional information disbursement using the Emergency Medical Alert Network (EMAN), E-Team, a crisis management software program, the Quality Assurance Network Collection System (QCS), the Regional Communications System (RCS), and other systems. This will facilitate improved communication among the hospitals, clinics, field responders and command and control personnel.

c) Changes in policies and procedures.

2. Training and Exercising

a) Development and sustainment of an EMS-Hospital Regional Training Center.

b) Continued exercises with increasing complexity.

3. Ordering of ALS and BLS Ambulance Strike Teams and ALS/BLS Medical Personnel Resources.

a) Identify training needs for personnel.

b) Identify mechanism to deploy.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

Communications, Command and Control

During Firestorm 2003, one of the key identified issues was a need to better communicate bi-directionally between the medical/health operations section of the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and operations occurring in the field, at healthcare facilities, health related agencies/departments, and medical/health operations sections at other City Emergency Operation Centers (EOCs).

Currently, the County has several communication systems including the RCS and QCS. Both systems worked, but there was a reluctance to use the RCS due to system overload. The QCS worked as advertised, but it is a better reference tool than direct communications tool. Hospitals effectively portrayed their status on QCS, but questions from the EOC were handled faster via traditional telephone lines. Faster means of communicating with the medical and health community will only assist in helping the county to provide timely and accurate information.

One of the issues was that representatives from the different coordinating agencies (military base hospitals, Medical Society, Council of Community Clinics, Healthcare Association, Red Cross, Ambulance Coordinator, etc.) were not necessarily co-located, but rather working out of various operation centers. This resulted in communication delays and difficulties in coordination. County Public Health Services Emergency Medical Services and Emergency Preparedness Divisions have long discussed the concept of incorporating these entities into the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) Departmental Operations Center (DOC). The subcommittee discussed this at length, and determined the idea was valuable and warranted further discussion. In doing so, the question arose as to whether this group should be located in the HHSA DOC, or be morphed into the EMS DOC and renaming it the Medical Operations Center (MOC), a common name throughout the United States. The decision was the latter, and the question was posed as to whether the MOC would be even more effective if it was located in closer proximity to the county EOC. It would not be part of the EOC, but would be considered a DOC. It may be even more effective if a conference room could be located in the County Communications Center Building.

Additionally, an informal in-depth look at existing and near-future technology available to the County Public Health Services was conducted. The potential tool identified to assist in better communications was the San Diego Emergency Medical Alert Network (EMAN). The EMAN system is undergoing a significant enhancement that will provide succinct web portals for public health emergency management. One of the portals, known as the Medical and Health portal, will provide a valuable link for communicating individually or en masse to all of the hospitals and participating clinics in the county. The other portal, the Emergency Management

portal, is being proposed to link emergency management agencies, public safety answer points (911 centers) and jurisdictions in the county. The portals will allow the county to post vital information, messages, protocols, procedures, etc., that can then be accessed by participating organizations and individuals directly from the internet. Web site links can also be referenced and linked as well. EMAN can become the one-stop shop for information, and can work in concert with future emergency management software such as E-Team.

Another issue discussed was that of directly coordinating medical transportation resources. Currently, the county Ambulance Coordinator controls access to the private ambulances in the system. However, there is no single agency to control the public ambulance resources. This potentially results in a situation whereby the ambulance resources are not necessarily utilized in the most efficient manner. To improve the utilization of ambulance resources, the subcommittee is proposing a single-point-of-contact concept whereby one dispatch agency would coordinate all ambulance utilization in a disaster. This concept suggests designating one dispatch agency on a rotating or permanent designation basis to coordinate medical transportation assets including ambulances, buses and mutual aid resources.

Several other policy changes are proposed as well. These include the dedication of increased standing orders during an event, as well as an automatic countywide waiver in a disaster, allowing Advanced Life Support (ALS) Units to operate with one EMT-P and one EMT-Basic (EMT-B). Additionally, the subcommittee suggests that the local EMS Agency work with ALS provider jurisdictions to agree to a procedure whereby Exclusive Operating Areas within the county are dissolved in a disaster. This will allow for a more coordinated use of ambulance resources.

Training and Exercising

As a result of the discussions related to Firestorm, the subcommittee identified a potential need for better training on a variety of medical and mass casualty topics. The County, the military hospitals, jurisdictions and individual agencies all offer training and exercises in mass casualty management. However, doing this in a coordinated, standardized manner has often been a challenge. The Firestorm of 2003 proved that agencies throughout the county might be called upon to work together to aggressively respond to a disaster. Standardization in training curricula and methodology can assist in this endeavor.

As such, the subcommittee suggested a continued aggressive approach to training and exercising with each increasing in complexity. The subcommittee also suggested the concept of an EMS/Hospital Regional Training Center. The challenges associated with this include locating a regional site large enough to accommodate the training center, establishing the training center, and identifying a consistent funding base for sustainment and enhancement.

Ordering of ALS and BLS Ambulance Strike Teams and ALS/BLS Medical Personnel Resources

Incident commanders can now order individual BLS ambulances through the area BLS Ambulance Coordinator (designated by the San Diego County Ambulance Association – currently AMR). There is no single coordinating body for ALS ambulances. The Incident Commander (IC) must have his dispatch agency poll ALS provider agencies for availability.

During an event, the IC may actually specify a need for ALS personnel to staff triage centers or an ambulance to provide an actual transport. Most needed is a method to request medical

personnel and a method to request transport vehicles. The State of California EMS Authority is developing a process to establish Ambulance Strike Teams. To date, a great deal of work has been accomplished with respect to this concept.   Staff will continue to monitor the development of this at the State level and will bring a draft forward, once available, to the County Fire Chiefs Association and Ambulance Association for review and comment.

TECHNICAL ISSUES / SOLUTIONS

1.   Morph the existing EMS DOC into a Medical Operations Center.   Determine the feasibility of locating space at the County Communications Center as a site to establish MOC operations when the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is activated.   The MOC would not become part of the EOC, but rather a medical mitigation-specific DOC housed in close proximity to the County EOC. The general purpose of the MOC is to assist as a technical reference and communications coordinating body for health and medical emergency management decision makers. The MOC would also address medical and health related issues and problems during the crisis, and communicate with facilities, field operations, and entities within the EMS and Healthcare systems. The proposed MOC staff would include:

- County of San Diego Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- Public Health Nursing (PHN)
- Public Health Responders and Administration
- Council of Community Clinics (CCC)
- San Diego County Medical Society (SDCMS)
- Healthcare Association of San Diego and Imperial Counties (HASDIC)
- Base Hospital Nurse Coordinator (BHNC)
- County Private Ambulance Coordinator (and ALS Coordinator if implemented in the future)
- Red Cross Shelter Management

Additionally, the MOC would take pressure off of the HHSA DOC, leaving that DOC to address business continuity issues for the agency.

2.   The following products and systems will help to better facilitate communications and information bi-directionally from the EOC and MOC to field operations and facilities:

- EMAN Medical and Health Web Portal
- EMAN Emergency Management
- E-Team licenses for Hospital Emergency Incident Command System (HEICS) command posts utilizing CDC Bioterrorism Preparedness funding

3.   Develop a matrix and comprehensive communications plan to share and disseminate information in a coordinated manner. Train and reinforce the use of this matrix and plan, as well as the RCS EMS/hospital talk groups in a disaster.

4. Pre-designate a regional dispatch coordinator (Center) to coordinate medical and health resources in the field. This agency will coordinate the medical and health resource needs in the field from a regional approach regardless of jurisdictional designation.

5. Develop and establish pre-designated dispatch center notification policies and procedures.

6. Establishment of a Regional Training Center.

7. Continue with an aggressive training and exercising schedule.

8. Develop a local method to define and request ALS/BLS ambulance strike teams and ALS/BLS personnel resources through the ICS system. Train and exercise the local response community on this new concept.

9. Keep a catalogue of EMS resources available for use by command and control assets.

RESEARCH SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

Medical Operations Centers (MOC) have been successful in many communities, including Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Southern Alabama; Washington D.C.; and Texas.

The new EMAN web portal site is being developed for San Diego by the same vendor that has deployed this product in many states, including Washington, Iowa and California.

The concept of a Regional Training Center has been tested in many areas. Information about the Israeli National EMS and Hospital Training Center was used to further the proposed San Diego Model. Other models include:

1. Nobel Training Center – Office of Justice Programs (OJP), U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Ft. McClellan, Anniston, AL.

2. Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP) – Office of Justice Programs (OJP), U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Ft. McClellan, Anniston, AL.

3. National Center for Exercise Excellence (NCEE) – U.S. Department of Justice.

4. Nevada Test Site (NTS) – U.S. Department of Energy, National Nuclear Security Administration

5. Energetic Materials Research and Testing Center (EMRTC) – New Mexico Tech.

6. Emergency Management Institute (EMI) – Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

7. National Emergency Response and Rescue Training Center (NERRTC) – Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX), Texas A&M University System

8. California Specialized Training Institute (CSTI) – San Luis Obispo, California.

EXISTING RESOURCES/IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

- Emergency Medical Alert Network (EMAN) Web portal is currently under development.
- E-Team Licenses for local hospitals are under development.
- Hospital and healthcare participation in the statewide exercise is planned for November 2004.
- Temporary site for MOC can be the existing EMS DOC.
- Utilize San Diego County Fire Chiefs Association - EMS Section, and the San Diego County Ambulance Association to define and develop a methodology to request ALS/BLS ambulance strike teams and ALS/BLS personnel resources.
- County EMS staff should work with ALS provider jurisdictions to develop procedures for the regionalization of medical and health field resources.

NEW RESOURCES NEEDED

1. Site at the County Communications Building for the Medical Operations Center (MOC).

2. Computers/phones in Medical Operations Center (MOC).

3. Regional Training Center site and resources. Private and corporate partners could help support the Regional Training Center as well as future governmental funding sources.

4. Policy Changes.

5. Cooperative agreements (Private/Public).

ISSUE 2A

Regionalize Services to Avoid Duplication

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

Examine the current fire system in San Diego County, identify deficiencies, and recommend mitigation measures to help create a more unified voice with better sharing of fire protection and emergency resources.

BACKGROUND

San Diego is the largest urban county in California without a county fire department. The County for many years did provide fire protection to its residents as a discretionary service. The County discontinued fire protection in the mid 1970s, which required locally run fire organizations to be responsible for fire protection and emergency medical services in mutual aid with each other.

The multiple municipal, district, military and Indian Reservation fire departments grew to work well together during mutual aid situations in protecting the region during most incidents. However, we believe that the diversities and fragmentation of the various departments did contribute to the region not being able to keep up with the huge Southern California wildland fires of October/November 2003.

For the past two years, the region's Fire Chiefs have discussed ways the San Diego region could better share resources. The region needs to be better prepared to take care of itself during unprecedented disaster incidents as well as the smaller incidents. We need to know what could make this region more effective in disaster response; both with the current structure, and with a restructured organization.

TECHNICAL ISSUES/SOLUTIONS

There needs to be a careful and thorough identification of all fire protection agencies and resources, the responsibilities inherent to each in minor and major incidents, evaluation of capabilities available now, evaluation of deployment plans, triggers for increased resources and thresholds, and whether major restructuring is needed. At issue in all of these are the fundamental costs involved in restructuring and where the money would come from.

RESEARCH SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

Many people believe other urban/rural counties in Southern California (i.e. Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino and Riverside) are better prepared and mobilized for major disasters because they have integrated county fire departments. There are different structures. For example, Orange County utilizes a Joint Powers Agreement while Los Angeles County contracts with local entities. The pooling of resources, nonetheless, allows for centralized countywide coordination of resources. San Diego County needs to fully explore all aspects and details of those models.

EXISTING RESOURCES/IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

San Diego County's current Hazardous Materials Incident Response Team (HIRT) is a good example of successful regionalization of area resources. All local fire departments are members of the program and rely on a central controlling body that manages and dispatches hazmat resources as needed. Combining other emergency preparedness and disaster response resources is the next logical step to take.

NEW RESOURCES NEEDED

This subcommittee recommends better regionalization and sharing of disaster resources. Whether or not full regionalization happens, San Diego County certainly needs to improve the sharing of regional resources. To that end, the subcommittee recommends exploring the expansion of the scope, responsibility and function of the San Diego County Unified Disaster Council (UDC). The UDC could possibly be involved in additional regional public safety disciplines similar to the regional HIRT. Examples include regional communications, training, confined space response, swift water rescue, and a helicopter program.

The UDC should expand the membership to include fire and emergency response agencies. This subcommittee understands the concerns from fire districts, Indian reservations, military fire departments, public works and law enforcement for greater input to the UDC.

When this expansion occurs, the subcommittee further believes that elected officials should once again serve on the UDC, and that fire district members should be added to the UDC. The following groups should be included as staff that reports to the UDC: Fire (Board of County Fire Chiefs), the San Diego County Legal Advisors group, County EMS, and the Terrorism Working Group.

Concurrent to that and of higher priority, this subcommittee supports the San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) and the Task Force on Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services and its continuation of a regional needs assessment, and development of a model fire protection and EMS system. (If that is not politically supported, an independent consultant should be retained for the same purpose).

SUSTAINABILITY OPTIONS

Most of the subcommittee recommendations involving the expanded role for the UDC do not require major new expenditures. Minimal expenditures would have to be allocated for LAFCO (or an independent consultant) to conduct an accurate needs assessment study and provide recommendations. However, there will certainly need to be new funding resources in order to consolidate or regionalize fire and emergency protection services. That is because all departments would expect to be brought up to a high level of equipment, training and compensation necessary for maximum regional disaster protection. Several options are available for that funding support, including increased sales taxes or special taxes. There is a general consensus that a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) remains the most viable solution at this time for regionalization. A JPA allows the County's fire departments to retain their autonomy (and somewhat preserve their local turf), while at the same time greatly increasing the sharing of resources. More research beyond the scope of this subcommittee's ability is warranted for the above recommendations to move forward. Sustainability funding should be included within the needs assessment and regionalization study already suggested.

ISSUE 2B

Review Existing Regional Resources

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

The firestorms of 2003 created a great need for resources from throughout the region and beyond. The path of the various fires in this county created a significant need for resources and resource allocation. The Resource Subcommittee felt that improvements could be made in dealing with the asset inventories accumulated by the various agencies.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

The firestorms of 2003 tasked both police and fire resources to the maximum, requiring them to utilize their assets at an extraordinary rate. While examining the issue, it was determined that a more systematic way of inputting local asset inventories would be a benefit during an emergency. Each agency, whether police, fire, or emergency medical, had an appropriate understanding of the resources they had at their disposal; however, during a catastrophic event such as the Firestorm, utilization of these assets required a tracking system that supported the enhanced usage. Agencies currently had either local printouts or hard copy information regarding the assets under their control; but from a countywide perspective, managers and decision makers did not have the asset inventories at their fingertips. Based on new technology, it was felt that opportunities exist for input storage and retrieval of this information in a much more efficient and effective manner.

TECHNICAL ISSUES/SOLUTIONS

Subcommittee members reached out to representatives from the Escondido Police Department, National City Police Department, Chula Vista Police Department, San Diego Sheriff's Department Emergency Planning Detail, and the San Diego Police Department's Critical Incident Management Unit.

A review of the technology solutions currently available revealed that software exits and was being utilized by several agencies in the County for another purpose. This software, entitled "E-Team," would allow each agency to list its assets cumulatively as well as break down the specifics regarding asset availability. The subcommittee began a testing program by inputting data into the E-Team software with the help of the County Office of Emergency Services (OES). As of this writing, 75% of the agencies have supplied initial data regarding their assets. A review of the software program provided a positive response to the review team.

RESEARCH SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

N/A

EXISTING RESOURCES/IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

OES is currently working with various planners from Chula Vista, Escondido, National City, and San Diego City and County to determine if the software is robust enough to provide the information necessary for both planning and operations. The San Diego County Police Chiefs and Sheriffs Association, in conjunction with the San Diego County Fire Chiefs Association, has tasked their membership with providing the information to the Review Team. As was mentioned, 75% of the agencies have supplied initial data, which will be tested to ensure the system's capabilities. Once the test has been completed, it will be incumbent upon all agencies to submit asset inventory data for an initial rollout.

NEW RESOURCES NEEDED

The basic resource necessary as mentioned above is the "E-Team" software. Many cities in the County already possess the software that appears robust enough for the task at hand. Costs associated for those agencies not currently in possession of the software is minimal, and the Review Team believes that cost will not be a stumbling block.

SUSTAINABILITY OPTIONS

The asset inventory will only be as good as the information input into the system. In order to sustain an asset inventory worthy of usage, each agency will be required to review its assets on a quarterly or bi-annual basis in order to ensure the information is up to date and accurate. This will require a review by each agency, and will require a measure of time associated with this project. Out of pocket costs should be minimal, but the hourly expenditure of existing employees may entail that other work be redirected. The benefit outweighs the redirected work because, during an emergency, asset management can be accomplished more efficiently and effectively which will aid ground troops in their ability to deal with the calamity, and allocate the appropriate resources based on amount, location and asset needs.

Issue 2C

Review Existing Funding Priorities and Sources

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

San Diego County has numerous emergency medical, fire and law enforcement agencies, both paid and volunteer. Each has its own policies, procedures, priorities and budget structure. Priorities for needs and funding sources for the most part, are identified individually, and competition for grant funding is common. There is no comprehensive regional funding for fire prevention and emergency preparedness except through federal grants through the Department of Homeland Security. There are no current funding sources identified for the regionalization of emergency services.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

The San Diego region is the only large county in the State of California that does not have a County Fire Department or a County Emergency Medical Response Department. For the most part, each of the various fire, medical and law enforcement agencies provides independent service delivery to its local area. The California Department of Forestry provides service to State Responsibility Areas and contracts with several cities in the unincorporated area of the County for fire protection. The County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement in the unincorporated area and contracts for law enforcement service to several cities in the region.

There is a cooperative structure through the efforts of the San Diego County Fire Chiefs, San Diego County Police Chiefs' and Sheriff's Association, and the Unified Disaster Council to identify and agree on Operational Area priorities associated with planning, equipping, training and exercising first responders, the private sector and citizens. In partnership, the County and the City of San Diego have agreed to establish an Urban Area Work Group to develop and execute initiatives to address the identified priorities regionally.

The County Board of Supervisors, has been working with the San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), the County Fire Chiefs' Association, and Emergency Medical Services to discuss a model fire and emergency medical system for the San Diego region.

TECHNICAL ISSUES/SOLUTIONS

There are no technical issues or solutions identified or related to this issue. This is more a facilitation issue of competing priorities and agreement upon common goals and solutions regionally.

RESEARCH SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

A good example of a local successful funding strategy and program within the San Diego region is the San Diego County Hazardous Incident Response Team (HIRT). HIRT has been in existence for over 20 years, and is a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) that provides hazardous materials response throughout the County of San Diego. The San Diego Fire-Rescue and the County Environmental Health Department's combine resources to make up this regional response team.

HIRT is administered through the San Diego Unified Disaster Council. Each city and the County of San Diego pay a formula-based fair share for HIRT services. If each city within the County of San Diego were to attempt to provide HIRT response capability on an individual basis, the cost would be prohibitive. By sharing the costs, the San Diego region has developed a state-of-the-art HIRT program in an efficient and effective manner.

Other multi-discipline teams that have been created on a regional basis in San Diego are the Urban Search and Rescue Task Force and the Metropolitan Medical Strike Team. These task forces are formed via federal grants and include participants from the entire region.

A unique and successful funding strategy is San Diego Medical Services Enterprise, LLC. This is a true public/private partnership created between Rural Metro Corporation and the City of San Diego to provide emergency medical services within the City of San Diego. This is a for-profit entity that has exceeded all contract requirements and dramatically reduced costs to the City while sharing profits with the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department.

EXISTING RESOURCES/IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Sources of Funding[2]
PROPERTY TAX
All property is taxable unless otherwise provided for by the California Constitution or Federal Laws.

To facilitate compilation of the county tax roll, geographic areas that contain specific combinations of public agencies are grouped together as Tax Rated Areas (TRA). There are approximately 4,700 TRAs in San Diego County, each containing a distinct combination of public agencies. Property taxes generated within each TRA are allocated to the public agencies within the TRA according to formulas contained in state law.

OTHER REVENUE SOURCES
Fire protection districts, whether dependent or independent, have the ability to supplement their funding with alternative revenue from special taxes and assessments and fees. Fees are restricted in their use, and can be utilized only for specific purposes.

SPECIAL TAXES
After the property tax, special taxes are the principal revenue source for funding fire protection operations. Section 4, Article XIII A of the California Constitution authorizes cities, counties, and special districts to impose non-ad valorem special taxes with a two-thirds approval of the electorate.

---

[2] (Source) San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission, Funding Fire Protection Report, 2003

FEES

Fire districts impose fees for a variety of services, including issuing service availability letters and plan checks. The California Constitution defines fees as charges that do not exceed the reasonable cost by local governments in providing the regulation, product or service for which they are charged. Proposition 218 introduced procedural requirements on fees that are imposed as an incident of property ownership.

ASSESSMENTS

Assessments are levies against real property, based on the special benefit conferred upon the property. Proposition 13 restrictions concerning voter approval of taxes do not apply to special assessments.

BONDS

Bonds are used to finance the acquisition and construction of public facilities and real property, and may not be used for equipment purchases or to pay for operations and maintenance.

MELLO-ROOS

The 1982 Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act enables cities, counties, special districts and school districts to establish community facilities districts, and to levy special taxes to fund a wide variety of facilities and services.

LOCAL PUBLIC SAFETY PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1993 (Prop 172)

The Local Public Safety Protection and Improvement Act of 1993 (Proposition 172) placed an additional one-half percent state sales and use tax rate in the State Constitution effective January 1, 1994. Revenues from the additional tax are to be used exclusively for local public safety activities, including police and sheriff departments, fire protection, county district attorneys, county probation and county jail operations.

FEDERAL HOMELAND SECURITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING

There are numerous federal funding grant opportunities available to local government [e.g. Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program (LETPP), Cities Readiness Initiative, Transportation Security, etc].

Funding in San Diego County[3]

Funding fire protection services in San Diego County is vested in a number of jurisdictions. Seventeen cities fund their own fire protection through city fire departments and one maintains a subsidiary fire protection district. In specific unincorporated communities, structural fire protection is funded through 16 fire protection districts, 5 municipal water districts and 7 county service areas. The State, through the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), funds the provision of wildland fire protection to 1,234,551 acres of state responsibility area within the County.

---

[3] San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission, Funding Fire Protection Report, 2003

Fire Protection Districts in San Diego County

Fire Service Provided By:	Funding Agency:

INDEPENDENT SPECIAL DISTRICTS

1 Alpine Fire Protection District	District plus contract foradmin/San Miguel Consolidated FPD
2 Bonita-Sunnyside Fire Protection District	District
3 Borrego Springs Fire Protection District	District
4 Deer Springs Fire Protection District	Contract/ CDF
5 East County Fire Protection District	District
6 Julian-Cuyamaca Fire Protection District	District
7 Lakeside Fire Protection District	District
8 Lower Sweetwater Fire Protection District	Contract/ City of National City
9 North County Fire Protection District	District
10 Pine Valley Fire Protection District	District
11 Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District	District
12 San Diego Rural Fire Protection District	District
13 San Miguel Consolidated Fire Protection District	District
14 Valley Center Fire Protection District	District
15 Vista Fire Protection District	Contract/City of Vista
16 Mootamai Municipal Water District	Contract/ CDF
17 Pauma Municipal Water District	Contract/ CDF
18 Ramona Municipal Water District	Contract/CDF
19 Rincon Municipal Water District	Contract/City of Escondido
20 Yuima Municipal Water District	Contract/CDF

DEPENDENT SPECIAL DISTRICTS

1 San Marcos Fire Protection District	District
2 County Service Area 107 (Elfin Forest)	District
3 County Service Area 109 (Mt. Laguna)	District
4 County Service Area 110 (Palomar Mountain)	District
5 County Service Area 111 (Boulevard)	District
6 County Service Area 112 (Campo)	District
7 County Service Area 113 (San Pasqual)	District
8 County Service Area 115 (Pepper Drive)	Contract/City of Santee

CITY FIRE DEPARTMENTS

1 City of Carlsbad	City
2 City of Chula Vista	City
3 City of Coronado	City
4 City of Del Mar	City
5 City of El Cajon	City
6 City of Encinitas	City
7 City of Escondido	City and Rincon MWD
8 City of Imperial Beach	City
9 City of La Mesa	City
10 City of Lemon Grove	City
11 City of National City	City
12 City of Oceanside	City
13 City of Poway	City
14 City of San Diego	City
15 City of Santee	City
16 City of Solana Beach	City
17 City of Vista	City

Additionally, there are a number of other special districts including schools, hospitals, Port District and others.

This roster includes local agencies that provide structural fire protection and emergency medical services as of November 2003. The State and Federal agencies, Indian Tribal Governments, and volunteer agencies that participate in various levels of mutual aid agreements for fire protection, do not fall under the definition of local government.

NEW RESOURCES NEEDED

Additional funding for dedicated staff and support materials to research, coordinate and execute best business practices to improve our regional approach to homeland security needs to be identified.

SUSTAINABILITY OPTIONS

Sustainability is a significant issue as once a new program is established, expectations are that the program will be sustained. However, federal funding through grants is year-to-year and unpredictable.

ISSUE 2D

Review Successful Strategies

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

There are many lessons that can be learned from disasters that have occurred in the past and reviewing the information that is available. The purpose of this committee was to find and provide to other committees information that might be of value.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

Since the beginning of the 20th century and the buildup of firefighting resources after the end of World War II, there have been records of large and damaging fires in the nation. For San Diego County, since the Laguna Fire in 1970 there have been many reviews and reports generated regarding local fires. Many of the issues that were present in the past reports are still relevant today.

TECHNICAL ISSUES/SOLUTIONS

Since this was an information gathering committee, there are no significant issues.

RESEARCH SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

This committee's responsibility was to provide successful strategies to other committees.

EXISTING RESOURCES/IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

N/A

NEW RESOURCES NEEDED

N/A

SUSTAINABILITY OPTIONS

The Task Force should continue to research successful strategies to assist the County in the continual development of its emergency plans.

ISSUE 2E

Consider Additional Volunteer Resources

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

There is a volunteer resources structure to deal with disasters, and for the most part it works well. San Diego/Imperial Counties Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (SDIVOAD) is cohesive and well organized, and has been in existence since the end of 2000. However, it is not well known enough, its membership needs to grow, and its informal relationships and methods of operation need to be formalized and written down.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

Voluntary Organizations Active In Disaster (VOAD) is the umbrella organization for voluntary groups and non-profits that do disaster work. This includes agencies that have a role in preparedness, education, mitigation, and planning, agencies that deal with emergency response issues, and agencies that work on long-term recovery from disasters for years after the emergency response has ended. VOAD was created in 1969 after it was recognized that the volunteer groups were duplicating services in the wake of Hurricane Camille and needed to talk to each other. VOAD serves two purposes: first, to be the organization where the voluntary agencies can coordinate, communicate, cooperate, and collaborate; and second, to provide the link between the agencies and government. Therefore, National VOAD (www.nvoad.org) works with FEMA, Southern California VOAD (SCVOAD) coordinates with the California Office of Emergency Services (California is the only state split in half and considered to be two states), and SDIVOAD (www.sdivoad.org) meets monthly with the San Diego County OES, Animal Control, Mental Health Services, Sheriff's Department, and Public Health Department.

The relationships between the member agencies (approximately 40) of SDIVOAD are harmonious. For three years SDIVOAD has held monthly meetings, and addressed topics as diverse as epidemiological outbreaks, wildfires, geographical difficulties in providing services between the City of San Diego and the county's rural areas, mental health and spiritual care developments, school shootings, feeding and sheltering in disaster, radio communications difficulties, and aviation disasters. Its membership is equally diverse including agencies that specialize in animal issues, librarians, mental health and spiritual care providers, volunteer management, information management, senior citizens and the disabled, a 4-wheel drive club, church groups devoted to disaster relief, and large multi-faceted agencies like the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army.

SDIVOAD needs to improve in two respects: it needs to bring into its membership entities in the county that up until now have not participated in its activities that have large potential volunteer resources; and it needs to mature so that its informal methods of operation become

formalized.   Accordingly, member organizations are formally registering Statements of Understandings (SOU) with SDIVOAD, which will specify response and recovery resources they are willing to invest in future disaster efforts.

Agencies that need to get involved include colleges and universities, the business community, Boy and Girl Scouts, volunteer programs at police and fire departments, hospitals, FireSafe Councils, and some senior citizen groups. Most of those agencies have been contacted and are in the process of becoming formally involved.

SDIVOAD has written By-Laws and membership documents, but has no disaster plan or operations plan. A committee is working on this project now under the leadership of the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Sheriff's Department's Retired Senior Volunteer Program, and others.

TECHNICAL ISSUES/SOLUTIONS

The biggest challenge in volunteer management during disasters, is that, in the first day or two of a major emergency, a glut of spontaneous volunteers with no training or experience descend on the voluntary agencies, and they all expect to volunteer immediately. They have no concept of the steps needed to absorb them into personnel intake systems, the training needed before they can be used, and the notion that volunteer needs do not all exist on the first days of a disaster, that only some of them will be needed at any one time, and that volunteer needs can extend for months after the beginning of the disaster. As part of SDIVOAD's emerging disaster plan, methods of dealing with this issue are being addressed by the relevant agencies, especially Volunteer San Diego (www.volunteersandiego.org).

Similarly, information management is also an issue. In the first few days of a major disaster, erroneous information on shelters and evacuations, damage done to communities and infrastructure, the desirability of unsolicited donations, volunteer needs, and resources available to victims is profligate. Relationships between SDIVOAD and the media are needed so that better information is distributed. The county's 2-1-1 System is in the process of being implemented, and will be operational by the end of 2004. Once in place, victims of disaster will be able to call one number (211) or look up one website to acquire disaster response and recovery information, instead of having to deal with pages of phone numbers and agencies that are bewildered and exasperated. INFOLINE of San Diego is the lead agency on this issue. It is the agency implementing 211, and it will work with county and city government to insure that in the future SDIVOAD and government are working together on information management and referral issues. In addition, INFOLINE is in the process of creating Memorandums of Understanding with the City of San Diego's 9-1-1 call center and the San Diego Police Department's Community Access Phone System (CAPS). These formalized agreements will be designed to improve information management, victim assistance and coordination of volunteer resources.

SDIVOAD sends one representative to the San Diego Citizen Corps Council as a voting member. Citizen Corps is the coordinating body for Community Emergency Response Teams

(CERT), the Medical Reserve Corps, and other federally inspired groups in the Citizen Corps movement (www.citizencorps.gov) in San Diego County.

As time passes, Citizen Corps activities will become another vital part of the volunteer resources pool. SDIVOAD and Citizen Corps must formalize the methods local CERT programs and SDIVOAD response agencies will use to interact with each other during an emergency.

In the rural areas, FireSafe Councils exist with varying degrees of viability. The FireSafe Council of San Diego County must become a member of SDIVOAD, so that FireSafe has access to greater resources, and so that member agencies of SDIVOAD and the FireSafe Council do not duplicate efforts.

SDIVOAD has a seat in the Red Cross Disaster Operations Center, and although this arrangement is always subject to revision, it is a logical location during a crisis for it to be because the Red Cross Operations Center is in direct contact with the San Diego County Emergency Operations Center, and the ability to transmit information between the two is easy.

Recently, INFOLINE of San Diego County has completed a Wildfire Recovery Resource Directory, including a comprehensive listing of recovery services provided by SDIVOAD members, as well as other non-profit and government disaster recovery resources. INFOLINE plans to update and revise the directory and associated website continuously. The directory is also available online at (www.informsandiego.org).

RESEARCH SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

Emergency Network Los Angeles (www.enla.org) is the local VOAD for the Los Angeles Basin. Through SCVOAD, SDIVOAD has warm relations with ENLA, whose plans and protocols are on its website. This is something SDIVOAD has, and will continue, to emulate. In addition, the 2-1-1 Southern California Collaborative Partners has executed a mutual aid agreement, which formalizes the availability of human resources, phone centers, and other resources required by any region following a major disaster.

EXISTING RESOURCES/IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The Planning Committee of SDIVOAD has been formed and is in the process of creating a SDIVOAD operational plan, which is integrated into OES' Regional Area Operational plan, as well as other emergency operations plans. It is SDIVOAD's intent to have this plan-in-progress widely reviewed, and to conduct table top exercises in tandem with the County as a method of evaluating plan effectiveness and the need to continuously revise the plan. Once complete and tested, it will be distributed to member organizations and related external first responder agencies.

NEW RESOURCES NEEDED

Agencies and organizations not participating with SDIVOAD need to be continually sought after and recruited. Important is SDIVOAD's philosophy of inclusiveness, which extends to agencies and organizations outside of voluntary agencies, non-profits, and government. Just as welcome are institutions like colleges, universities, and chambers of commerce for, as the October 2003 Wildfires clearly demonstrated, volunteer resources come from those institutions as well.

SUSTAINABILITY OPTIONS

Through its membership in SCVOAD, SDIVOAD's continued existence and growth are not in jeopardy. On the contrary, the October 2003 Wildfires have stirred up unprecedented levels of interest in volunteer roles in an emergency. In the future, SDIVOAD will need to become a 501(c)3 agency itself, so that it can acquire and administer funds more easily. This will go a long way toward ensuring its future and functionality as a vital piece of the regional disaster response and recovery system.

ISSUE 2F

Review Automatic and Mutual Aid

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

Review the current automatic and mutual aid system within San Diego County.

BACKGROUND

Since the mid 1970s, California has operated under a master mutual aid system for disaster response that today, is generally acknowledged within the Fire Service as the best in the country. California's system has been continuously improved as the result of on-going self-examination and critique by the state's fire service leaders. All of the fire departments in San Diego County are signatories to the County's mutual aid agreement that references and follows the State's Master Mutual Aid Agreement. The current automatic and mutual aid system works well. Any changes made to the local and Master Mutual Aid Agreement should come from the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission and FIRESCOPE.

This subcommittee does recommend changes to communications that directly affect the mutual aid system.

TECHNICAL ISSUES/SOLUTIONS

The question is how, if at all, San Diego County could possibly have further protected itself without hurting the existing automatic and mutual aid system that it relied heavily upon. The October 2003 firestorms in San Diego County were unprecedented in size and scope. The mutual aid system worked well and as designed. Over 700 fire engines were deployed in San Diego County at the peak of the firestorms, with 500 of those from outside San Diego County. All available resources from throughout California and other states were directed to San Diego County through

the mutual aid system as the fires grew in size. Off-duty firefighters were immediately called in by all local fire departments to staff reserve fire vehicles prior to the County's firestorm that began on October 25, 2003.

SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES ELSEWHERE

There is no better automatic and mutual aid system than California's. Other states use California as a model. San Diego County is part of California's system.

SUSTAINABILITY OPTIONS

There will need to be new sustained funding resources to implement most of the recommendations of this subcommittee. Several options are available for that funding support, including Federal and State Homeland Security grants. New local property and sales tax proposals should also be evaluated.

ISSUE 2G

Review Existing Military/Civilian Interface

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

The Existing Military/Civilian Interface Sub Committee was appointed to determine what current Military/Civilian Interface agreements and/or resources were currently in place or available. This report will address the following subjects:

- Current Military/Civilian Agreements
- Available Trained Military Resources for local Emergency Incidents
- Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission Findings and Recommendations
- Sub Committee Findings and Recommendations

BACKGROUND

CURRENT MILITARY/CIVILIAN INTERFACE AGREEMENTS

The San Diego County Region currently has no formal Military/Civilian aid agreements in place.

The County of San Diego has one of the highest concentrations of military installations in the country. The U.S. Navy (USN), U.S. Marine Corps (USMC), and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) have a strong presence and provide broad potential resources for the region in the event of a catastrophic emergency event. Those resources include personnel trained in a variety of disciplines, fixed wing and helicopter air support for fire and rescue, and a variety of military vehicles and equipment.

Because no formal agreements exist between San Diego County civilian agencies and the military, military resources are difficult to deploy due to the lack of coordinated training, communications, and availability.

Two specific Military/Civilian Interface Agreements were identified:

1. An agreement between the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) and the California National Guard (CNG) currently exists. CDF has utilized CNG aircraft on past fires in San Diego County (Pines Fire 2002, Paradise Fire 2003, and MAFF aircraft on the Viejas Fire in 2002).

2. An agreement between the USMC and the Camp Pendleton Fire Department currently exists. USMC provides helicopters with water dropping capability to Camp Pendleton during wildfire events. Training between the two agencies is conducted annually. USMC support is dependent on resource availability.

AVAILABLE TRAINED MILITARY RESOURCES FOR LOCAL EMERGENCY INCIDENTS

With the exception of the USMC/Camp Pendleton agreement, no specific training of military personnel or resources for deployment to civilian emergency events currently exits. Military representatives from USN, USMC, and USCG have expressed a desire to develop agreements with San Diego regional emergency agencies to provide available military resources in the event of a catastrophic emergency. All military organizations made clear that the availability of trained resources is dependent on commitment to existing and planned military priorities.

TECHNICAL ISSUES/SOLUTIONS

N/A

RESEARCH SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

The Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission identified the following Findings and Recommendations specific to the Military/Civilian Interface:

FINDINGS

"There is confusion as to whether there is a requirement that all available local resources, including civilian contract aircraft, be exhausted before requesting federal resources to assist in fighting (WUI) Wildland/Urban Interface fires."

"Funding for the Army National Guard to conduct or participate in multi-agency training is not available at a time when integration of their resources into the state's firefighting resources is needed."

"Communications interoperability is essential in effective command and control of personnel and resources during multi-agency, multi- discipline responses to major incidents."

NEW RESOURCES NEEDED

N/A

ISSUE 3A

Review Inconsistencies, Changes to, and Enforcement of Countywide Building/Fire Codes

Issue 3B

Review and Recommend Changes to and Enforcement of Countywide Urban Interface With Brush Management Codes

Issue 3C

Review and Recommend Changes to Open Space Brush Management Policies

Issues 3A, B and C were grouped into a Fire/Building Code task group.

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

Since the first wildland/urban interface fire destroyed 584 homes in Berkeley in 1923, California has lost well over 16,000 residential structures and hundreds of lives to similar fires. Suffering a disproportionate share of California's life and structure loss is San Diego County, which accounts for 20%. Past studies have shown that with proper vegetation clearance and building construction, over 95% of structures threatened by wildland/urban interface fires would survive unharmed. Yet most cities in San Diego County do not have fire and building codes to address these issues, and the codes in the County and fire districts are not uniformly enforced.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

The October 2003 Southern California fires burned over 739,587 acres, destroying 3,631 homes, 36 commercial properties, and 1,169 outbuildings. Even worse, 246 people were injured and 24 were killed, including one firefighter. The majority of these losses occurred in San Diego County. After the fires, the San Diego Regional Fire Prevention Emergency Preparedness Task Force was formed by the City and County of San Diego to determine what can be done to prevent such losses in the future.

The Task Force was given three goals, which were then divided into tasks. While achieving each of the goals will make the region better prepared for future wildland fires, we believe that enactment and enforcement of consistent fire and building codes that address wildland/urban interface issues will provide the greatest benefit in creating a fire-safe environment in San Diego County. It is critical that structures are designed and constructed so that they will survive the flammable environment in which they are placed.

California faces two significant environmental threats known to destroy structures: earthquakes and wildland fires. For over 20 years, California's building codes have addressed the earthquake threat. Building standards have become more stringent as more earthquakes occur and more information is learned about protecting structures from damage. Wildland fires have not received the same amount of attention, even though more than 50 catastrophic wildland/urban interface fires have burned in California.

The California Fire and Building codes have no specific requirements pertaining to structures built in wildland/urban interface areas. Some local jurisdictions, including the County of San Diego and 17 of the county's fire districts, have adopted a fire code that includes more stringent requirements for building in wildland/urban interface areas; yet, even these codes are not uniformly enforced.

Despite the fact that past wildland fires have destroyed more homes and killed more people than past earthquakes, California and most cities in San Diego County still have no codes to address the wildland/urban interface fire threat. If the needless loss of structures and lives is going to be stopped in San Diego County, we have to muster the "political will" to adopt and enforce effective wildland/urban interface codes.

TECHNICAL ISSUES/SOLUTIONS

The causes for structure loss in wildland/urban interface fires were first identified after the 1923 Berkeley Fire. The two main causes are flammable vegetation too close to structures, and structures that are built in a way that they are easily ignited by these fires. These same causes are identified after every major fire, yet we continue to build structures without regard to the environment in which they are being placed. The solution to this is the adoption and enforcement of codes that specifically address these issues. The International Urban-Wildland Interface Code, 2003 Edition, provides a compressive set of accepted standards for building in wildland/urban interface areas that will stop the cycle of structure loss.

RESEARCH SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

Los Angeles County, Orange County, and other jurisdictions have adopted wildland/urban interface standards that have proven successful in past fires. A recent example of this was in a community called Stevenson Ranch, built under Los Angeles County's wildland/urban interface standards. The community was directly threatened by wildfire in October 2003, and not a single structure was damaged.

EXISTING RESOURCES/IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Unfortunately, wildland/urban interface standards generally get adopted after a major wildland fire. As an example, the International Urban-Wildland Interface Code was recently adopted by Los Alamos, New Mexico, and Prescott, Arizona after major fires in those areas. This code has

also been adopted by approximately 15 other jurisdictions, including Kern County. Other areas either considering adopting this code or already in the adoption process include the states of Oregon, Montana, Utah, Wyoming, as well as Napa and Santa Cruz counties.

NEW RESOURCES NEEDED

None.

SUSTAINABILITY OPTIONS

The adoptions of new codes and regulations will not immediately resolve the wildland/urban interface fire problem in San Diego County. Unfortunately tens of thousands of structures have been built without regard to the wildland fire threat. Adoption of new building codes will only resolve the problem for the new structures built under these codes. For existing structures, the removal of highly flammable vegetation within 100-feet of structures and the replacement of combustible roofing will provide a heightened level of wildland fire protection.

After the adoption of past fire codes, problems arise in the ability of jurisdictions to maintain and enforce the new code requirements. Typically, new codes are passed and enforcement is increased after a large fire or similar catastrophe. After a while, the public's attention is drawn to a different issue and many times the new codes are rescinded. Additionally, enforcement efforts are often curtailed due to budget pressures.

ISSUE 3D

Review Countywide Ambulance Ordinance

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

During the firestorms of 2003, while the majority of the ambulance agencies within San Diego County offered any and all support needed to the Medical Health branch at the County Emergency Operations Center and the Ambulance Coordinator, there were anecdotal reports of a few ambulance agencies that were refusing to provide information and resources. This task force subcommittee was tasked with review of the existing Countywide Ambulance Ordinance as it pertains to requirements for agency participation in disaster response.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

For many years the County of San Diego has enjoyed exceptional commitment and participation from the private ambulance agencies within the county in providing sufficient transport units during a large-scale incident or declared disaster. During Firestorm 2003, the majority of the private ambulance agencies offered any support needed to the public safety agencies and the private ambulance coordinator, although there have been a few anecdotal reports of a limited number of agencies who were unwilling to provide information as to the availability of transport units to assist. Although staff was unable to substantiate the reports, it was felt that a review of the existing ambulance ordinance to include language relating to disaster response would be useful for the future.

The review of the existing ordinance revealed that there were no requirements for permitted agencies to cooperate with local authorities/private ambulance coordinator in any large-scale event/declared disaster.

RESEARCH SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES and NEW RESOURCES NEEDED

N/A

EXISTING RESOURCES / IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

As identified above, the subcommittee reviewed the existing ambulance ordinance for language relating to the requirements for private ambulance agencies to cooperate with local authorities/private ambulance coordinator during a large-scale event/declared disaster and found that such language did not exist. New language was drafted that would require "each ambulance provider to cooperate with the ambulance coordinator during a declared Annex D event to provide adequate transporting units for the incident." This language was taken to the San Diego County Ambulance Association for concurrence, and then forwarded to the Emergency Medical Care Committee for their review and approval.

Once approval was gained by all community stakeholders, the revised ordinance was forwarded to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors for their review and approval. The revised ordinance was approved at the June 23, 2004 Board of Supervisors meeting. Second reading of the ordinance was scheduled for July 14, 2004 for further consideration and adoption by the Board of Supervisors.

ISSUE 3E

Review Countywide Emergency Operations Plan

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

The San Diego Operational Area Emergency Plan is an all-hazard, multifaceted document that describes the Operational Area's emergency response organization and details agency/organizational roles during a disaster or emergency. The process of updating/revising this plan must ensure that:

- The plan encompasses any newly identified hazards
- It details the roles and responsibilities of all regional response agencies
- The plan is compatible with and integrated into the plans developed by the incorporated cities and key non-governmental organizations (such as the local American Red Cross) and it is organized in accordance with the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS)
- Users do not lose their familiarity with the document
- The plan is easier to amend based on current conditions and lessons learned from actual events

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

The San Diego Operational Area first transitioned from multiple single-hazard plans to one consolidated multi-hazard plan in 1985. This plan is designed to provide the organizational framework for response to any and all disasters/emergencies that may occur in the San Diego Operational Area. This includes natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, drought and wildland fires, as well as man-made disasters such as nuclear power plant accidents, hazardous materials incidents, and terrorist attacks.

The San Diego County Office of Emergency Services maintains the Operational Area Emergency Plan. The plan consists of a basic plan that outlines the many hazards faced by the Operational Area. This is followed by a series of functional annexes that address topics such as fire mutual aid, law enforcement operations, medical examiner operations, Medical Multi-Casualty Plan, terrorism, etc. The plan is updated/revised every 3 to 5 years. To accomplish this, an Operational Area Plan review Committee was established in 1994.

TECHNICAL ISSUES/SOLUTIONS

The Unified San Diego County Emergency Services Organization (Unified), established in 1961, is responsible for emergency planning within the San Diego Operational Area. The governing body of the Unified is the Unified Disaster Council (UDC). The UDC membership consists of one voting member from the County of San Diego and each of the incorporated cities within the County. This helps ensure that all emergency plans in force throughout the Operational Area are coordinated and interlocking.

The Operational Area Plan Review Committee consists of representatives from the Unified. There is a representative of the City of San Diego; a representative of the north coastal cities (Carlsbad, Del Mar, Encinitas, Oceanside and Solana Beach); a representative of the north inland cities (Escondido, Poway, San Marcos, Vista); one for the east county cities (El Cajon, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Santee) and one for the south county cities (Chula Vista, Coronado,

Imperial Beach, National City). The Office of Emergency Services is staff to this committee.

Each of the functional annexes is updated and revised by the appropriate discipline (i.e., law enforcement updates the law enforcement annex). The final revised draft is then submitted to the Operational Area Plan Review Committee. They may either recommend acceptance by the full UDC, or ask for the draft to be revised further. When completed, the Review Committee forwards the basic plan and annexes to the UDC for adoption. Once adopted by the UDC, the plan is published and distributed to all local jurisdictions by OES. The Operational Area Plan is then modified to reflect the organization of the local jurisdiction and adopted as its emergency plan.

RESEARCH SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

The strategy employed by the UDC is successful in that it provides input from all disciplines and jurisdictions throughout the Operational Area. Planning cannot be accomplished in a vacuum. This ensures all appropriate agencies have a stake in the final plan.

The Standardized Emergency Management System Group Los Angeles (SEMS Group LA) has developed a template for cities to use in developing their own plans. This is a similar system to the one employed by the UDC in that a uniform template is used for all jurisdictions in the region.

The Operational Area Plan Review Committee intends to revise the current format of the plan. The intent is to follow the Standardized Emergency management System (SEMS). In addition, the plan will be streamlined and contain basic roles and responsibilities of response agencies. Specific protocols and checklists will be supplemental to the plan instead of incorporated into the plan. This will allow for more flexibility in revising procedures and protocols to reflect lessons learned and changing conditions.

EXISTING RESOURCES/IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The Operational Area Plan Review process works well for San Diego. It provides a multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplined approach that accounts for all identified hazards in the region. County OES will continue to refine and revise the Operational Area Plan to meet regional needs. Funding is available under current grants to hire staff/consultants.

NEW RESOURCES NEEDED

There are no new resources required for the UDC Operational Area Plan Review Committee. New committee members are recruited as current sitting members resign or retire.

SUSTAINABILITY OPTIONS

The Operational Plan Review Committee is sustainable. As a committee of the Unified Disaster Council, adequate membership is assured. The review process also ensures all functional areas are in accordance with current standard operating procedures and agreements. The process makes the plan truly regional in scope, and this fosters commitment on the part of the Review Committee members to keep the procedure viable.

RECOMENDATIONS

The Task Force has identified Action Items and general timelines for each subcommittee recommendation. It is intended that the recommendations of the Task Force report be action-oriented to ensure that the report does not turn into a shelf or archived document, not seeing attention until the next local disaster.

1A.   Education of the Public

1. Encourage all agencies that develop/provide educational or informational literature/presentations to promote the universal message of self-reliance in times of disaster.

   ACTION ITEMS:

   a. County OES, working with Public Information Officers from other County Departments and first responder agencies, to develop standardized language for the universal message of self-reliance and distribute to all appropriate agencies.

   b. All agencies agree to include universal message of self-reliance in all future public education materials when completed in March 2005 by OES

2. Encourage the local American Red Cross to host a yearly disaster preparedness academy using the Orange County ARC Disaster Preparedness Academy as a model.

   ACTION ITEMS:

   a. San Diego Regional Fire Prevention Emergency Preparedness Task Force, Education of the Public Subcommittee to provide written request by January 2005 to the American Red Cross, San Diego/Imperial Counties Chapter that they develop and host a yearly preparedness academy based on the Orange County model.

   b. San Diego Regional Fire Prevention Emergency Preparedness Task Force, Education of the Public Subcommittee will initiate a follow-up meeting in the first quarter of 2005 with the San Diego/Imperial Counties Chapter of the American Red Cross to collaborate on the development of actions and milestones towards this goal.

1B.   Review Alerting Notification Procedures and Plans

1. Implement a countywide Community Notification System for emergencies.

   ACTION ITEMS:

   a. County OES to coordinate implementation via the Unified Disaster Council and all Law Enforcement Agencies by August 2005.

2. With local media and SignOnSanDiego, implement the two-tier Media Alert System.

ACTION ITEMS:

  a. County OES to establish a committee to develop the two-tier Media Alert System by August 2004. *Status: completed by the Sheriff's Department.*

  b. The Media Alert System Committee with County OES shall implement the two-tier Media Alert System by October 2004. *Status: completed.*

3. OES, the Sheriff, KOGO and vendors should streamline the process for getting messages out to the media.

ACTION ITEMS:

  a. San Diego Sheriff's Department to establish a committee with the objective to streamline the process for getting messages out to the media by November 2004. *Status: completed*

  b. San Diego Sheriff's Department shall implement and test the process for getting messages out to the media by September 2004. *Status: completed*

4. Install the direct phone line from OES and the Sheriff to KOGO to facilitate getting Emergency Alert System (EAS) messages released.

ACTION ITEMS:

  a. County OES has identified funding for the installation of the direct phone line by July 2004. *Status: completed*

  c. County OES to install the direct phone line and test the EAS message system by September 2004. *Status: completed*

5. PIO representatives from all regional public safety agencies and jurisdictions should meet at least twice a year to discuss strategies for the formation of a Joint Information Center (JIC).

ACTION ITEMS:

  a. The County OES, by way of the Unified Disaster Council, will establish as an action item for discussion of the JIC by April 2005.

1C. Review Incident Intelligence Communications to Include Evacuation Plans and Procedures

1. Recommend to FIRESCOPE that a formalized law enforcement liaison position be created within the Fire incident command system (ICS) and tasked with the responsibility of providing the law enforcement liaison with direction and intelligence pertaining to evacuation operations.

ACTION ITEMS:

  a. Recommend that representatives from San Diego County attending the

FIRESCOPE meetings make this recommendation by March 2005.

2. Sheriff's Department to complete the process of adopting the Solana Beach model for evacuation planning department-wide by September 2004. *Status: completed*

ACTION ITEMS:

a. It is estimated that this will be accomplished by August 1, 2004.
   Status: completed

3. Present Solana Beach model to the San Diego Chiefs and Sheriff Association at their monthly committee meeting.

ACTION ITEMS:

a. Presentation scheduled for August 4, 2004. *Status: completed*

b. Subsequent to presentation, seek input and guidance from the association members with the goal being countywide adoption of the Solana Beach model.

c. Request Chiefs and Sheriff to designate representatives from their respective agencies to begin this process. These representatives will make up a countywide Law Enforcement Evacuation Planning Committee.

4. Convene a meeting of Countywide Law Enforcement Evacuation Planning Committee.

ACTION ITEMS:

a. Sheriff's Department to facilitate this group and provide assistance to these committee members in developing countywide plans to begin as soon as practical subsequent to the August 4, 2004, Chiefs and Sheriff Association meeting.

b. Set a date in September/October 2004 for Law Enforcement Evacuation Planning Committee to reconvene with evacuation plans for review. Committee members ensure countywide consistency, make necessary modifications and develop a final product. *Status: completed*

d. Once plans are in place, coordinate countywide tabletop evacuation exercises to include OES and fire representatives.

d. Establish a meeting schedule for committee members to review and evaluate the program's progress in order to ensure sustainability and continuity.

5. Develop strategy for implementation of the high tech model

ACTION ITEMS:

a. The Sheriff has appointed staff to develop standardized strategies for acquiring and implementing the web-based technology and GIS technology discussed

under "New Resources Needed" item #2 (page 15).   The process was initiated in September 2004.

1D.   Review and Recommend Technology Improvements

1. Establish a technology committee comprised of representatives from regional law enforcement and fire agencies, as well as the County Office of Emergency Services (OES) to discuss and prioritize technological needs in the San Diego region and develop a funding and implementation strategy.
ACTION ITEMS:

a. County OES to coordinate the development of the Regional Emergency Response Technology Committee through the UDC by January 2005.

b. Include the City of San Diego Office of Homeland Security Director in the establishment of this committee as that office is the Urban Area Security Initiative grant administrator and would be responsible to request Interoperable Equipment Technical Assistance from the federal government.

c. Contact the Regional Communications System Board and identify what role they may have in the committee.

1E.   Review and Identify Training Needs

1. Establish law enforcement and fire evacuation and response training countywide.

ACTION ITEMS:

a. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) to continue to provide their annual firefighting training and expand the sessions to include other emergency response entities. *Status: 2004 drill completed*

b. County OES to conduct basic fire behavior and incident command system (ICS) training for law enforcement and emergency responders countywide by June 2005.

c. The San Diego County Chiefs and Sheriff's Association to direct the regional Management Training Committee to develop a curriculum for fire behavior, response and evacuation (based on the Solana Beach model) training for inclusion into the Regional Officers Training program by December 2004.

d. CDF in cooperation with the San Diego Sheriff's Department to produce, duplicate and make available for distribution to various agencies throughout the State a current and applicable videotape on fire behavior training by June 2005.

2. Spearhead the process to encourage government employees and elected and appointed officials to be trained in the various command systems (Incident Command System [ICS], Standardized Emergency Management System [SEMS] and National Interagency Management System [NIMS]).

ACTION ITEMS:

a. SANDAG to take lead on spearheading this initiative by June 2005.

3. Establish countywide urban fire fighter training in wildland brush environments.

   ACTION ITEMS:

   a. The Unified Disaster Council (UDC) to identify funding for "wild-fire specific" drills by June 2005.
   b. The UDC to pursue establishing a wildland fire urban interface full-scale exercise drill by October 2005.

1F. **Review and Recommend Communications Improvements**

1. Public safety agencies throughout the County of San Diego should have compatible, interoperable radio systems to readily communicate with one another during multi-agency responses.

   ACTION ITEMS:

   a. The Law Enforcement Action Network (LEAN) shall establish a committee by January 2005 to identify methods to create an interoperable countywide radio system.

   b. LEAN will conduct a countywide study by March 2005 to determine the number of agencies using the Regional Communications System (RCS) within the region.

   c. Agencies not using RCS shall receive a recommendation from LEAN by May 2005, encouraging the use of RCS, as funding permits.

2. Radio systems used by the agencies should be equipped to handle the volume of radio traffic endemic of natural disasters. It is recommended that all San Diego County Public Safety Agencies upgrade their radio systems to APCO Project 25 Standards.

   ACTION ITEMS:

   a. LEAN will establish a committee by February 2005 to conduct a countywide study to determine the number of emergency services agencies compliant with APCO 25.

   b. Agencies not compliant with APCO 25 shall receive a recommendation from LEAN by April 2005, encouraging compliance as funding permits.

3. Representatives from each regional public safety agency should meet on a quarterly basis to discuss strategies and develop contingency plans for multi-agency responses. Suggested representatives would be drawn from the operational and communications divisions from each agency.

   ACTION ITEMS:

   a. LEAN currently meets monthly to discuss countywide communications issues.

LEAN is comprised of public safety agency representative from throughout the county. LEAN has been in existence since March 1995.

4. All agencies should ensure that appropriate personnel are trained and familiar with the proper use of mutual aid channels and how to "patch" radio frequencies when necessary.

ACTION ITEMS:

    a. LEAN shall establish a committee by January 2005 to develop a training program for distribution to all law enforcement and emergency services personnel as to procedures for utilizing mutual aid radio channels and procedures for "patching" radio frequencies.

    b. LEAN to distribute the training to all public safety agencies throughout the county by May 2005.

5. Agencies shall identify, equip and train their personnel in a designated DOC. Mock DOC activations with designated DOC personnel should be conducted quarterly to assure timely response during actual incidents.

    a. County OES has developed a three-year plan to provide mock DOC and field practical training sessions. The training sessions began in August 2004 and will continue over the next three years at various locations throughout the county.

1G. Consider Public Health System Impacts During Disaster

1. Expand the existing EMS DOC into a Medical Operations Center (MOC) to assist as a technical reference and communications coordinating body for health and medical emergency management decision makers.

ACTION ITEMS:

    a. EMS/ Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Medical Response (EPDMR) to determine the feasibility of locating space at the County Communications Center (or nearby) to establish MOC operations when the County EOC is activated by January 31, 2005.

    b. EMS/EPDMR to finalize make-up of MOC and notification methodology by January 31, 2005.

2. Expand the ability to communicate between the EOC and MOC to field operations and facilities.

ACTION ITEMS:

    a. County Community Epidemiology/EPDMR will include an analysis of the feasibility to the current EMAN system to establish separate portals to allow bi-directional communication between EOC and MOC to field operations and

facilities by June 30, 2005.

b. EPDMR will complete procurement of E-Team licenses for hospital EOC's utilizing CDC Bioterrorism funding by June 30, 2005.

3. Develop a method locally to define and request ALS/BLS "strike teams" and ALS/BLS personnel resources through Incident Command System (ICS) or Standard Emergency Management System (SEMS).

ACTION ITEMS:

a. County Fire Chiefs Association, EMS Section Chiefs in conjunction with the County Ambulance Association and EMS/EPDMR research existing state policies for ambulance strike teams by 1/31/05.

b. County Fire Chiefs Association, EMS Section Chiefs in conjunction with the County Ambulance Association and EMS/EPDMR will develop local policies/procedures for request and deployment of ALS/BLS "strike teams" and personnel resources through Incident Command System (ICS) or Standard Emergency Management System (SEMS) by July 31, 2005.

4. Establish an EMS-Hospital Regional Training Center to provide multi-hazard disaster training for pre-hospital, hospital and clinic personnel.

ACTION ITEMS:

a. EMS/EPDMR in conjunction with various local health care providers will research potential funding sources for the Regional Training Center by June 30, 2005.

b. EMS/EPDMR in conjunction with various local heath care providers will research potential sites for a Regional Training Center. (Timeline contingent upon funding)

All recommendations will require approval/commitment from appropriate community organizations once developed including the:

- Unified Disaster Council (UDC)
- San Diego County Fire Chiefs Association (SDCFCA)
- San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency/Office of Emergency Services
- Hospitals, healthcare agencies, dispatch centers and other governmental agencies

5. Review Countywide Ambulance Ordinance. Add language to the countywide ambulance ordinance that will require "each ambulance provider to cooperate with the ambulance coordinator during a declared Annex D event to provide adequate transporting units for the incident."

ACTION ITEMS:

a. County EMS will draft language to add to the ambulance ordinance by March, 2004. *Status: completed*

b. County EMS will incorporate approved language into the ambulance ordinance and present it to the County Board of Supervisors for review and consideration on June 23, 2004. *Status: completed*

c. County Board of Supervisors adopt the revised ambulance ordinance at its July 14, 2004 meeting. *Status: completed*

2A. Regionalize Services to Avoid Duplication

1. Secure funding for a LAFCO (and possibly a separate consultant) needs assessment and model regionalization plan for San Diego County's fire service. *Status: completed*

ACTION ITEMS:

a. County Board of Supervisors to allocate the necessary funds by August 2004. $50,000.00 allocated. *Status: completed*

b. LAFCO and/or consultant to recommend most efficient and cost-effective fire service regionalization model by March 2005.

2. Secure adequate and permanent funding source(s) for regionalization of San Diego County's fire service.

ACTION ITEMS:

a. County Board of Supervisors to identify funding source(s) by June 2005.

3. Implement most efficient and cost-effective approach to regionalization.

ACTION ITEMS:

a. County Board of Supervisors to voice support for preferred recommendation by October 2005.

4. Expand UDC to include all fire and emergency response agencies.

ACTION ITEMS:

a. UDC to expand its membership to include all fire and emergency response agencies by October 2004.

b. UDC to develop expanded regional sharing of resources model by January 2005.

c. UDC to implement expanded regional sharing of resources by July 2005.

2B. Regional Resource Subcommittee

1. Implement a countywide Asset Inventory Control System for major emergencies.

ACTION ITEMS:

   a. All public safety agencies to participate in an asset inventory of their resources and that asset inventory to be compiled in a computerized system by December 2004.

2. That "E-Team" software be acquired by all agencies and used as a platform to support the data collection.

ACTION ITEMS:

   a. Each agency to obtain software licensing to participate in the "E-Team" software gathering.

   b. Each agency to enter its data into the software by December 2004.

3. An annual review of the information should occur in the first quarter of each year.

ACTION ITEMS:

   a. A report is to be generated by March 31 of each year and shared with all agencies.

   b. A review of this information to be conducted bi-annually to determine its usefulness should the need arise.

   c. Modifications throughout the system be made as appropriate.

2C.   **Review Existing Funding Priorities and Sources**

1. Identify, on a regional basis, services that could be modeled after the HIRT program and cost shared to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of expensive or unique service delivery programs.

ACTION ITEMS:

   a. County Fire Chiefs Association to discuss and identify potential Joint Powers Authority (JPA) programs and forward to the UDC by January 2005.

   b. Discuss the potential of reorganizing the UDC to include the San Diego County Fire Chiefs Association, Police Chiefs and County Sheriffs' Association, federal military Transportation Security Agency, maritime security, and border security. The UDC would be responsible to develop groups to address prevention, mitigation, response and recovery activities and their subcomponents of planning, equipping, training and exercising across all disciplines and hazards.

   c. Place this as a discussion item on the UDC Agenda by March 2005.

2. Continue to support the efforts of the County Board of Supervisors and LAFCO in developing regionalized fire service delivery in the unincorporated areas of the county.

ACTION ITEMS:

    a. LAFCO to continue to provide progress and update reports to the UDC.

2D. Review of Successful Strategies

1. Continue to research successful strategies.

ACTION ITEMS:

    a. County Fire Chiefs to appoint an ad hoc committee to research strategies and report by March 2005.

    b. County Police Chiefs and Sheriff Association to appoint an ad hoc committee to research strategies and report by March 2005.

    c. The two committees meet together in March 2005 to prepare a report on other successful strategies and develop an action plan to implement recommendations.

2E. Consider Additional Volunteer Resources

1. SDIVOAD continues to expand its membership to include volunteers from colleges and universities, chambers of commerce, law enforcement, fire services, and other relevant agencies.

ACTION ITEMS:

    a. Volunteer recruitment is a never ending, ongoing process for both organizations and individuals. Volunteer San Diego is the lead agency in this process.

2. SDIVOAD's formal operational plan, which is due by Labor Day 2004, needs to be reflected in the revised San Diego County Operational Area Emergency Plan, and vice versa.

ACTION ITEMS:

    a. SDIVOAD's Planning Committee is currently working on the plan, which will be complete by Labor Day, 2004.

    b. The SDIVOAD Response Plan will be included in the San Diego County Operational Area Emergency Plan, pending County approval.

3. The San Diego/Imperial Counties Chapter of the American Red Cross must develop its Disaster Operations Center further, so that volunteer agencies can communicate quickly and easily with the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

ACTION ITEMS:

a. SDIVOAD's presence in the San Diego/Imperial Counties Chapter of the American Red Cross' Disaster Operations Center has been established, with communications capability to the San Diego County EOC.

b. Pending county approval, SDIVOAD will be established in the County EOC.

4. INFOLINE of San Diego County must continue to develop and maintain its disaster related roles, which includes phone service, resource database management, and its website, as it moves toward the implementation of 2-1-1.

ACTION ITEMS:

a. INFOLINE received California PUC designation as the 2-1-1 provider in San Diego County in August 2004.

b. INFOLINE expects initial implementation of 2-1-1 service by summer 2005.

c. SDIVOAD has recognized INFOLINE/2-1-1 as the principal communications agency for disasters in San Diego County.

5. Local and county government must recognize Volunteer San Diego as the lead agency for spontaneous volunteers.

ACTION ITEMS:

a. San Diego County will formally recognize Volunteer San Diego as the lead agency in spontaneous volunteer organization by the end of 2004 in accordance with the template designed by the Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism.

2F.   Automatic and Mutual Aid

1. Mobilize one Unified Command Center very quickly if early conditions point to rapid incident escalation affecting multiple agencies and extensive utilization of the mutual aid system. Integrate law enforcement and public works into a Unified Incident Command.

ACTION ITEMS:

a. County OES to plan annual exercises that focus on a unified multi-disciplinary command by October 2004. *Status: ongoing effort*

b. County OES to stage joint disaster practice exercises among regional fire, rescue, EMS, law enforcement and public works by March 2005.

2. Develop local Incident Management Teams similar to what the State and FEMA now have. Establish North and South regional local teams to assist incident commanders with command functions such as information dissemination, logistics, planning, safety, procurement, etc.

ACTION ITEMS:

   a. San Diego County Fire Chiefs Operations Committee to coordinate and implement local Incident Management Teams by March 2005.

3. During major events, there needs to be continuous knowledge flow among the Area Fire Rescue Coordinator and County Fire Zone Coordinators regarding staffing and resources in and out of the County.

ACTION ITEMS:

   a. County OES to evaluate a centralized fire resource and activity management system that will collect Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) data from multiple disparate CAD sources, for the purpose of cross-jurisdictional incident monitoring and management, and report by March 2005

   b. County OES to implement centralized CAD information sharing system by July 2005.

4. Develop new CAD system(s) capable of dispatching entire region and install Automatic Vehicle Locators (AVLs) in all emergency vehicles to continuously track locations and facilitate closest available unit response.

ACTION ITEMS:

   a. San Diego County Fire Chiefs' Communications Subcommittee to research optimum number of emergency communications centers and to recommend equipment vendor(s) by January 2005.

   b. Emergency communications centers and local agencies to purchase, integrate and interconnect new equipment and AVLs by July 2006.

2G.   Review Existing Military/Civilian Interface

1. Regional and local public safety agencies meet with local military representatives to develop Military Aid Agreements. The agreements should identify specific resource capabilities and possible/probable availability.

ACTION ITEMS:

   a. CDF and the existing Regional Helicopter Advisory Committee to take the lead and establish a meeting between all provider agencies by February 2005.

2. Regional and local public safety agencies plan and participate in joint training exercises.

ACTION ITEMS:

   a. Joint training exercises and the development of scheduled joint training of air resources should be discussed at the UDC for action by February 2005.

3. The San Diego Region continues to develop a locally managed and controlled helicopter fire/rescue program to ensure prompt and appropriate response to emergency incidents within San Diego County.

ACTION ITEMS:

a. The UDC should include the County Sheriffs' Department and the City of San Diego in discussing how the two helicopter programs can function efficiently and effectively together in service provision throughout the region by February 2005.

3A. Review Inconsistencies, Changes to and Enforcement of Countywide Building/Fire Codes

1. The Sub-Committee unanimously agreed on the need for a baseline set of uniform urban-wildland interface (UWI) standards for San Diego County. The Subcommittee recommends developing these UWI standards by the next code adoption cycle. The Sub-Committee recommends that all jurisdictions in San Diego County that have wildland/urban interface areas adopt a code to specifically address construction and fuel clearance issues that lead to the loss of structures during wildland fires.

2. The Sub-Committee unanimously supports adopting UWI standards for the following construction elements: roof covering, gutters and downspouts, exterior wall coverings, underfloor protection, appendages and projections, exterior glazing, vents, eaves, fencing, and detached structures. Additionally, the Sub-Committee also agreed with the recommended 100-feet of brush management around structures, while acknowledging that individual cases may warrant more or less clearance.

3. The Sub-Committee recommends using the International Code Council's "International Urban-Wildland Interface (UWI) Code" 2003 Edition (ICC code) as a framework for individual jurisdictions to create their own UWI standards.

4. The Sub-Committee unanimously agreed on the need for basic UWI code requirements addressing the protection of roofs, exterior walls, projections, vents, windows and glazing materials, and gutters and downspouts. The Sub-Committee could not unanimously agree on basic requirements addressing the protection of eaves, however. Although the Sub-Committee acknowledges that some basic level of protection for eaves is warranted, because of the variety in eave design and construction, agreement could not be reached on a basic UWI code requirement for eave construction. Additionally, although supported by the majority of the members of the Sub-Committee, the building and design industries do not support the use of fire sprinklers as a standard UWI requirement.

5. One item that is not covered in the ICC code that the Sub-Committee believes should be covered is combustible fencing. The Sub-Committee believes that for those homes directly along the interface, the first five feet of fencing that connects to the structure should be non-combustible, heavy timber or fire retardant pressure-treated wood.

The Sub-Committee noted that the County of San Diego has developed a fire code for UWI areas that contains both basic and enhanced code requirements to address

the variable wildland fire threat.

The Sub-Committee also reviewed National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standard 1144 and found the current edition did not adequately address the wildland fire problem in San Diego County.

Note: The San Diego County Fire Chiefs' Association has endorsed these recommendations.

ACTION ITEM:

    c. The Fire Chief of each jurisdiction in the County, with a wildland interface, will need to take a UWI code to their governing body for passage and implementation. The San Diego County Fire Chiefs' Association needs to support this effort.

3B. Review and Recommend Changes to and Enforcement of Countywide Urban Interface with Brush Management Codes

The Committee unanimously agreed that the countywide wildland/urban interface fuel clearance standard should be 100-feet for structures, and up to 30-feet for roadways; which is consistent with *The Memorandum of Understanding Between the Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Department of Fish and Game, the California Department of Forestry, the San Diego County Fire Chief's Association and the Fire District's Association of San Diego County*. The Sub-Committee also believes that highly flammable ornamental vegetation should be restricted within 30-feet of structures. The Sub-Committee recommends the use of the San Diego County Fire Chief's Association plant list or other list for acceptable or non-desirable plants within this 30-foot area.

ACTION ITEMS:

    b. The Fire Chief of each jurisdiction in the County, with a wildland interface, will need to take to their governing body a fuel abatement/clearance ordinance for passage and implementation. The San Diego County Fire Chiefs' Association needs to support this effort.

3C. Review and Recommend Changes to Open Space Brush Management Policies

San Diego County has large tracts of land that have been set aside as open-space through the Multiple Habitat Conservation Plan (MHCP), the Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) and other open-space programs. Throughout the county these lands are intermixed with structures. Since each of these parcels is unique in terms of vegetation, topography and threat presented, it is impossible to set a universal policy for managing these fuels. But it is imperative that these fuels are managed and that the volume of fuels is controlled. This is best achieved by developing a fire management plan for each of these parcels so that the wildland fuels do not present an undesirable danger to these structures. The County and cities in the San Diego County region should have fire management plans developed for each open space area within their jurisdiction, and then implement these plans.

ACTION ITEM:

    a. The County of San Diego and each city in San Diego County with a wildland interface will need to develop policies that require all new conservation areas to be included in a fire management plan, before they are accepted as open-space. Additionally these jurisdictions will need to develop fire management plans for all existing conservation areas.

3D.   San Diego Operational Area Emergency Plan

1. Continue multi-jurisdictional, multi-discipline process to revise and update the County's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).

ACTION ITEMS:

    a. County OES to assemble a Plan Review Committee to oversee the plan revision process

    b. The Plan review Committee will, under the guidance of County OES, work with the appropriate responsible agencies on the revisions to their portion(s) of the County's Emergency Operations Plan.

2. Ensure that the revised EOP is distributed to all cities and special districts in San Diego County to maintain consistency in plans countywide.

ACTION ITEMS:

    a. County OES to develop a distribution plan to provide for both electronic and hard copies of the EOP.

APPENDIX

REPORTS AND REFERENCE MATERIALS

The following additional materials were utilized by the Task Force for reference and research:

1. Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission, Report to the Governors. April 5, 2004.

2. Chesterfield Enterprises, Inc. Letter dated March 1, 2004.

3. Draft Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update Study, Unincorporated

4. San Diego County Fire and Emergency Medical Services Agencies. January 2004.

5. 1982 Report of the Blue Ribbon Urban Interface Fire Prevention Committee. February 1982.

6. The Tunnel Incident – Oakland 1991, Ten Years After. October 3, 2001.

7. Southern California Firestorm 2003, Report for the Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center. December 8, 2003.

8. Planning for Brushfire Protection, A Guide for Councils, Planners, Fire Authorities, Developers and Home Owners. N.S.W. Rural Fire Service.

9. Brush Fire Environmental Assessment Code for Asset Protection and Strategic Fire Advantage Zones. July 2003.

10. Ventura County Fire Department, Wildland Fire Protection Strategies.

11. Ventura County Fire Department, Operational Doctrine for Wildland Passive Protection.

12. Ventura County Fire Department, Operational Doctrine for Wildland Fire Fighting.

13. Silicon Valley Regional Interoperability Project, Northrop Grumann.

14. Safety Protocol Review, Southern California Geographic Fire Siege of 2003. USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region. April 26-30, 2004.

15. Advanced Information Engineering Services, Inc. Homeland Security products information.

16. Emergency Operations Center Public Information Guide. City of San Diego. June 2002.

17. City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department, Cedar Fire 2003 After Action Report. June 2004.