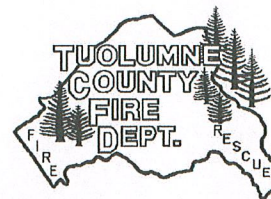




EP 8/25/11 2

CAL FIRE
TUOLUMNE COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT
Cooperative Fire Protection
Services



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FILED

AUG 23 2011
Superior Court of California
County of Tuolumne

BY Jayce Barnes
Clerk

August 22, 2011

The Honorable Eric L. DuTemple
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
41 W. Yaney Street
Sonora, Ca. 95370

Re: Response to 2010-11 Grand Jury Findings & Recommendations-Future
Of Fire Safety in Tuolumne County

Dear Judge DuTemple:

The following is the response related to the Future of Fire Safety in Tuolumne County section of the 2010-11 Grand Jury Report as requested and required pursuant to Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05. Below you will find listed each Grand Jury finding or recommendation followed by responses to each.

Grand Jury Findings

1. Combining all existing Tuolumne County fire districts and departments under a single management structure would address the following:
 - (a) Improvement must be made in the use of currently available funding. Having a paid staff-member of Fire Chief status in multiple districts and Departments is increasing costs unnecessarily.

Response: *Agree*

- (b) Training and equipment is not consistent among districts and departments.

Response: *Disagree*. Each department sends new firefighters through the Joint Basic Firefighter Academy. The training received in the Joint Basic Fire Fighter Academy allows the cadet upon graduation, to apply for the California Office of the State Fire Marshal's, (OSFM) Fire Fighter I certification. The curriculum comes from the OSFM and every firefighter gets the same training. The county fire department has participated with the other county fire

departments in training for the new self contained breathing apparatus, (SCBA) which were purchased by each agency through a regional grant. This training was also completed for the rope rescue equipment purchased by every agency. Tuolumne County Fire Department also trains with neighboring departments. Further consistency would be possible if all agencies came under one management structure.

The equipment on board each county fire apparatus is consistent with what is required to be on the apparatus to meet Incident Command System Engine specifications for Type I, II, & III fire apparatus. Consistency in apparatus countywide will only be possible by creating a countywide fire agency.

(c) An inventory of County-wide resources, both human and equipment, would be a useful tool in addressing how to provide economical and efficient use of what is available.

Response: *Agree*

(d) Parochial attitudes are a barrier to change. Making sure future purchases of equipment and training of staff are compatible throughout the system will result in an emergency response capability and potential cost savings beneficial to everyone in the County, not just within a single district. Maintaining the integrity of current benefit assessments so that local taxpayers continue to receive what they voted to gain will be challenging to any proposal combining County-wide resources.

Response: *Agree*

(e) Renewal or renegotiation of the CAL Fire Contract must be done with flexibility in mind and with careful attention to administrative cost reduction.

Response: *Agree.* The Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors have agreed to a three year agreement with Cal Fire. The Agreement was entered into in June of 2011. I would also add, the contract is reviewed on a yearly basis by County Staff and The Board of Supervisors on a yearly basis through the budget process.

2. The public's perception of emergency response is outdated. Actual fire related calls are a small portion of demand. The shift from firefighting to medical response is a large part of increased costs. New funding sources are required to meet the increasing demands for emergency response. Since most of this demand is likely to be in medical response, emphasis must be on how to address these expenses.

Response: *Agree*

3. Emergency dispatch is complicated. Centralization is needed now. The current dispatching system results in multiple actions necessary to send a response, (Appendix A), as well as errors in dispatching needed resources to the proper location. California Highway Patrol is the only available dispatch for 911 calls made from cellular phones.

Response: *Agree*

4. It is essential to educate the public about how their demand for services relates to cost. The public's expectation of service must be defined. What it costs to provide those services must be explained. Funding methods can then be established to provide that level of service.

Response: *Agree*

5. Volunteer numbers are declining due to several factors. An aging population, the demands on today's working families and discouragement from some professional firefighters are lesser issues. Training requirements appear to be the main obstacle to recruitment. Lack of opportunity to engage in actual fire fighting appears to be the primary obstacle to retaining volunteers because medical response is usually not their focus. Attrition will always be a factor. It is necessary that recruitment efforts remain constant.

Response: *Agree*

6. Some volunteer fire stations have a low response rate or are inactive. These stations mislead residents regarding safety-response times and may affect ISO ratings.

Response: *Agree.*

7. The "Amador" Plan allows CAL Fire resources to be used for local structural fire protection during the non-fire season winter months.

Response: *Agree.* CAL FIRE responds to all emergencies.

8. Groveland Community Service District provides response outside its district's boundaries to Mariposa County. Mariposa County assists Groveland when necessary. This cooperation is essential to isolated and remote residents. It has 22 volunteers, successfully uses part-time employees, supports a ROP fire cadet program and has community appreciation activities.

Response: *Agree.* I would add there is a South County Auto-Aid Agreement between both of these agencies as well as the Tuolumne County Fire Department.

9. Any centralization of responders will offer savings in some areas and increase costs in others. For some positions, personnel costs are likely to increase as "equal pay for equal work" will be a factor. There are many undefined benefits CAL Fire provides in services and equipment that must be included in a cost analysis. The success of methods to save on maintenance, purchasing and other budget items will vary.

Response: *Agree*

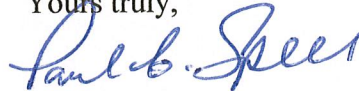
Grand Jury Recommendations

(e) While negotiating a new CAL FIRE contract, include language that allows phasing out the broader services CAL FIRE provides and provides flexibility to address those changes. Maintain the Amador Plan type of winter support for a defined term. Every effort should be made to reduce costs subject to the administration fee.

Response: *The recommendation requires further analysis.* Further clarification is needed to explain what is meant by broader services. The contracts CAL FIRE enters into with cooperating agencies are based upon the needs of the local department.

I trust that the responses provided above are found to be fully responsive to the findings and recommendations contained in the 2010-11 Grand Jury Report.

Yours truly,



Paul G. Speer

Assistant County Fire Warden

Cc: Board of Supervisors
Bill Morris, HR/Risk Manager
Gregory Oliver, County Counsel