



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Submitted on:
(COB Stamp)

Department Name: County Executive Office
Department No.: 012
For Agenda Of: 7/25/06
Placement: Set Hearing
Estimate Time: 30 minutes on 8/1/06
Continued Item: NO
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Director: Michael F. Brown, County Executive Officer
Contact Info: Jim Laponis, Deputy CEO, 568-3400

SUBJECT: Board of Supervisors' Response to the 2005-2006 Grand Jury Reports on Disaster Preparedness

County Counsel Concurrence:

As to form/legality: Yes No N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence:

As to form: Yes No N/A

Recommended Action(s):

That the Board of Supervisors:

A. Set a hearing on the departmental agenda for August 1, 2006 to discuss and adopt the Board of Supervisors' responses to the 2005-2006 Grand Jury Reports on Disaster Preparedness. These reports include the following sections: "Santa Barbara County Emergency Operations Center," "Emergency Public Information," "Emergency Sheltering," and "Emergency Medical Response to Disaster."

B. Conduct a hearing on August 1, 2006 (estimated thirty minutes) to:

1. Adopt the responses in the attachment as the Board of Supervisors' responses to the 2005-2006 Grand Jury Reports on Disaster Preparedness as specified above.
2. Authorize the Chair to execute the letter included in the attachment forwarding the responses to the Presiding Judge.

Summary:

On May 15, 2006, the Civil Grand Jury released a series of related reports on the County's state of disaster preparedness. These reports are being presented to the Board as one combined report and include the following sections: "Disaster Preparedness: Are We Really Ready," "Santa Barbara County Emergency Operations Center: Up and Ready or Down and Out?," "Emergency Public Information: What's Happening? Where Do I Go? What Should I Do?," "Emergency Sheltering: Where Do We Go?" and "Emergency Medical Response to Disaster: Will Our Vulnerable Populations be Cared For? Are We Ready for an Epidemic?"

Collectively, the report includes 25 findings and 27 recommendations. It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors adopt the collective responses of the County Executive Office, Office of Emergency Services, the Fire Department, the Sheriff's Department, the Public Health Department and the Department of Social Services to the findings and recommendations contained within these various reports.

Background:

Per California Penal Code Section 933 (b), the governing body of the agency, the Board of Supervisors, must respond within 90 days after the issuance of the Grand Jury Report. Therefore, the Board of Supervisors' response must be finalized and transmitted to the Presiding Judge of the Courts no later than August 8, 2006.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

There are no fiscal or facility impacts associated with setting the hearing or responding to the Civil Grand Jury. Several of the recommendations contained within the report have fiscal and facility impacts.

Budgeted: Yes No

Fiscal Analysis:

Staffing Impact(s):

Legal Positions:

0

FTEs:

0

Special Instructions:

The response of the Board of Supervisors must be transmitted to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court no later than August 8, 2006. The Clerk of the Board is requested to return the signed letter to Jennie Esquer, County Executive Office, for distribution to the Superior Court. The signed letter, written responses and a 3 ½" computer disc with the response in a Microsoft Word file must be forwarded to the grand jury.

Attachments: (list all)

- (1) Letter to the Presiding Judge with Board of Supervisors Responses
- (2) Consolidated Departmental Responses
- (3) Copy of the 2005-2006 Grand Jury Reports on Disaster Preparedness

Authored by:

Sharon Friedrichsen, County Executive Office, 568-3107

cc: Chief John Scherrei, County Fire
Jim Anderson, Sheriff
Elliot Schulman, MD, Director of Public Health/Health Officer
Kathy Gallagher, Director of Social Services

August 1, 2006

Honorable Judge Rodney Melville
Presiding Judge
Superior Court
312-M East Cook Street
Santa Maria, California 93455-5165

**Board of Supervisors' Response to the 2005-06 Civil Grand Jury Reports on:
*"Disaster Preparedness"***

Dear Judge Melville:

During its regular meeting of Tuesday, August 1, 2006, the Board of Supervisors adopted the following responses as its responses to the 2005-06 Grand Jury's report on "Disaster Preparedness".

The Board of Supervisors thanks the Grand Jury for its findings and recommendations on this important matter.

Emergency Operations Center

Finding 1

The Santa Barbara County EOC is housed in a temporary modular building that is not rated for an emergency government function and could fail in an earthquake.

Response: The Board adopted both the CEO and the Fire Department's responses as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

Recommendation 1

The Board of Supervisors and County Administration should immediately prioritize the process of identifying a new site for the EOC that meets construction standards for emergency government functions.

Response: The Board adopted both the CEO and the Fire Department's response as its response. (The recommendation has been implemented.)

The CEO has identified a new site for the EOC that meets construction standards for emergency government functions. The identified site is at the Santa Ynez Airport and staff have been collaborating with the Airport Authority and the Federal Aviation Administration on the logistics of developing a new EOC at this location. The CEO and the Board of Supervisors have committed funding toward the construction of a new EOC. Specifically, the Adopted 2006-2007 Budget includes \$3 million for a new EOC. Additionally, the Sheriff has committed \$300,000 and an additional \$1.7 million may be allocated toward the EOC contingent on financial health of the County's General Fund (bringing the project total to \$5 million). The County Architect has commenced with the drawing of a conceptual design of the new EOC.

Finding 2

In the event of a power failure at the EOC after business hours, emergency back-up power must be manually hooked up to the facility by employees living outside the south coast area.

Response: The Board adopted both the Fire Department and OES's responses as its response. (Partially disagrees with the finding with respect to only South Coast employees being able to hook up the back-up power.)

Recommendation 2

Install a dedicated electrical hook-up between the EOC and the emergency generator whereby the generator will automatically start and provide power to the EOC in the event of a local power failure.

Response: The Board adopted both the Fire Department and OES's responses as its response. (The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.)

The County has secured homeland security grant funding to install an automated switch for the emergency generator. Installation of the automated switch will be completed within 6 months.

Finding 3

Telephone switching and computer networking equipment necessary to activate the communications systems in the EOC is located in a hall closet of the facility and is not anchored to the structure, making it subject to damage in the event of an earthquake.

Response: The Board adopted the both the Fire Department and OES's response as its response. (Disagrees with the finding. All County-owned computer and communication equipment is anchored to the structure.)

Recommendation 3

Secure the EOC telephone system and computer networking switching equipment with earthquake mounting bracketing. Printed instructions on the equipment should be visible to inform persons activating the EOC how to hook up the emergency communications lines.

Response: The Board adopted both the Fire Department and OES's response as its response. (The recommendation has been implemented.)

County-owned computer and communications equipment located in the EOC are rack-mounted, with the rack attached at the floor, and braced to the walls. Since the EOC is housed within the Employees University, there is some equipment that is the property of the Santa Barbara City College and affiliated with the Employees University rather than the EOC. It is this equipment that was not secured at the time of the Grand Jury's visit. However, the lease agreement between the City College and the County's Employee University facility ends June 30, 2006 and will not be renewed. Therefore, the non-secured equipment will be removed from this facility with the remaining equipment already having been anchored. There are printed instructions on the equipment.

Finding 4

At the time of the Grand Jury's visit to the EOC, it appeared that the facility lacked updated emergency maps, plans, procedure manuals, logistical resource information, and support supplies. Emergency responders, participants, and decision-makers staffing the EOC are expected to go first to their daily work site (office) and pick up information they need before going to the EOC.

Response: The Board adopted both the Fire Department and OES's response as its response. (Disagree partially with the finding, as there are section boxes at the EOC that contain manuals, maps and decision-making information for relevant staff.)

Recommendation 4

Provide updated manuals, maps and decision-making information at the EOC at all times for agencies with assigned functions in the EOC.

Response: The Board adopted both the Fire Department and OES's response as its response. (The recommendation has been implemented.)

The EOC section boxes (file box for each EOC section) contain this information already. However, OES staff is working on producing updated maps, manuals and decision-making information at the EOC so that staff does not need to first go to their daily work

site (office). The OES will continue to ensure that updated materials are located at the EOC for relevant persons.

Finding 5

Employees of Santa Barbara County who are not employed in one of the public safety departments may receive as little as one hour of emergency training regarding their roles in a major disaster.

Response: The Board adopted OES's response as its response. (Agrees with the finding, although many employees outside of the public safety departments do receive more than one hour of emergency training).

Recommendation 5

Expand employee emergency training programs to not just focus on new employees but to train all employees on an annual basis so they will remain informed of current County emergency procedures and what is expected of them in a disaster.

Response: The Board adopted OES's response as its response. (The recommendation has been implemented in part and will continue to be implemented throughout the year.)

In terms of training all employees about the County's emergency procedures and expectations during a disaster, the County's Employee Handbook states that "In emergencies, the public relies on County services for information and assistance. All County employees, by the nature of their employment, are emergency workers. Employees may be called upon to perform duties other than their regular assignments to aid County emergency efforts."

Many departments augment this policy by showing a twelve minute video on County employees' responsibilities during disasters at departmental staff meetings.

In addition, County departments routinely conduct fire and earthquake drills, including evacuation procedures, so that employees are aware of emergency procedures. OES conducts specialized technical training on emergency management such as the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) training for personnel assigned to the Emergency Operations Center. County employees attending the new orientation course at the Employees University are all provided with SEMS training. In addition, the CEO's office annually sponsors 10 employees with EOC responsibilities to attend a 40-hour course in emergency management at the California Specialized Training Institute in San Luis Obispo.

Finding 6

Presently there is no motivating factor that requires the County Administrative Officer or County department heads to keep emergency and disaster training as a high priority for themselves or their employees.

Response: The Board adopted the CEO's response as its response. (Disagrees with the finding as the CEO and other department heads are motivated to keep emergency and disaster training as a high priority for themselves and their employees and, furthermore, are required to do so as stated in their job descriptions.)

The motivating factor that requires the County Executive Officer to keep emergency and disaster training as a high priority is that emergency management is a requirement of the job responsibilities for this position. Specifically, the areas of responsibility and accountability for the County Executive Officer as containing in the job description for this position include "emergency management: Controls and directs the effort of the emergency organization of the county; appoints and supervises the coordinator of the office of emergency services; provides leadership in the development of public policy; acts as liaison with other agencies; has authority to proclaim a "state of emergency" when locally available resources are inadequate to cope with the emergency" .

The County Executive Officer, as noted in Ordinance No. 4564, is the ex officio Director of Emergency Services. As such, he has coordinated and commanded emergency efforts for the County during various emergencies related to severe winter storms, flooding, tsunami warning and fires. Both the County Executive Officer and several County Department heads such as General Services, Fire (includes OES staff), Public Health, Public Works and Sheriff have made training regarding disasters a high priority for themselves and essential executives within their department.

Furthermore, emergency training has been provided to many department heads and other executives. For example, the County sponsors ten spaces each year for department heads and other executives to attend a four day course on Emergency Operations Center/Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) Training for earthquakes and other disasters at the California Specialized Training Institute. The County Executive Officer and Deputy County Officer have attended this training in the past. Training in National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) has commenced with such departments as Public Health, Sheriff, Fire and OES rolling the training out to all their employees. Various County employees involved in the County's pandemic planning efforts have also undergone this type of training. NIMS/SEMS training will be required of all department heads starting in the beginning of 2007.

Recommendation 6

Incorporate emergency related functions and employee training in emergency preparedness in the job descriptions of the County Administrative Officer and department managers and as a goal in their annual performance evaluations.

Response: The Board adopted the CEO's response as its response. (The recommendation has been implemented in part and the remainder of the recommendation will be implemented in the beginning of 2007.)

The County Executive Officer job description already requires emergency management and preparedness. Specifically, the County Executive Officer “controls and directs the effort of the emergency organization of the county; appoints and supervises the coordinator of the office of emergency services; provides leadership in the development of public policy; acts as liaison with other agencies; has authority to proclaim a "state of emergency" when locally available resources are inadequate to cope with the emergency.”

The County Department Directors annual “Executive Performance Appraisal and Plan” currently contains an assessment on the Director’s cooperation in emergency preparation and operations as well as an assessment of whether the Director has completed appropriate emergency preparedness and operations training for his/her department. Furthermore, NIMS/SEMS training will be required of all department heads starting in the beginning of 2007.

Emergency Public Information

Finding 1

The present system of getting information to the public will likely fail in a major disaster. Recent consolidations of radio and television stations in Santa Barbara have led to prerecorded formatting. This format makes the availability of live emergency information difficult if not impossible.

Response: The Board adopted OES’s response as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

Recommendation 1

The Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Services should work with news media representatives in Santa Barbara County to develop an emergency public information system that will keep the public informed during a disaster.

Response: The Board adopted OES’s response as its response. (The recommendation has been implemented.)

OES has been involved with the Emergency Public Information Communicators (EPIC) group since its inception and is also working in partnership with the local broadcasters to further enhance the emergency public information system. The County has also funded a full-time Public Information Officer (PIO) in the Adopted 2006-07 budget and is actively recruiting to fill this position. The County PIO will be a full-time position tasked with working with the media in order to enhance the County’s ability to disseminate emergency public information in a disaster. In addition, a memorandum of understanding with the broadcasters in the area should be in place by the end of 2006.

Finding 2

The Office of Emergency Services presently relies on voluntary participation of radio and television providers to participate in the Emergency Alert System.

Response: The Board adopted both the CEO and OES's response as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

Recommendation 2

The County of Santa Barbara should enter into a permanent agreement with local media stations guaranteeing their participation in the Emergency Alert System.

Response: The Board adopted both the CEO and OES's response as its response. (The recommendation will not be fully implemented because the County does not have any jurisdiction over the radio stations.)

The Federal Communications Commission regulates both radio and television broadcasting and the County of Santa Barbara has no direct regulatory authority over radio or television station broadcasting content, only over the County's Government Access Television (CSBTv). The Santa Barbara Local Emergency Alert System (EAS) Plan portion of the California State Emergency Alert System Plan is governed by part 11 of the Rules and Regulations of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Under this Plan broadcast and Cable Television stations in Santa Barbara County will voluntarily rebroadcast, using EAS equipment specified by the FCC, selected messages originated by the National Weather Service (NWS) and the Santa Barbara County, who are accountable for their content. In addition, there is currently no single radio station that with coverage for the entire geographical boundaries of the County. However, Santa Barbara County is currently working in partnership with the broadcasters in Santa Barbara County. A memorandum of understanding with the broadcasters in the area should be in place by the end of 2006.

Finding 3

Only the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department and the Lompoc Police Department Dispatch Centers have a Reverse 911 Notification System. These dispatch centers could be greatly impacted by large populated cities like Santa Maria and Santa Barbara requesting the use of their systems in a County-wide emergency.

Response: The Board adopted the Sheriff Department's response as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

Recommendation 3

Within Santa Barbara County, each city and special fire district dispatch center should establish its own independent Reverse 911 Emergency Notification System. This will reduce the possibility of overloading the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department and Lompoc Police Department Dispatch Centers in the event of a County-wide major disaster.

Response: The Board adopted the Sheriff Department's response as its response. (The recommendation will not be implemented by the Sheriff as it pertains to other agencies.)

The Sheriff's Department is committed to the reverse 911 technology to notify the public in emergency situations and to training other agencies in using this technology. Since the Sheriff's Department, through its Public Safety Dispatch Center, dispatches for the special fire districts of Carpinteria-Summerland, Solvang and Orcutt, they should not be responsible for establishing their own independent Reverse 911 notification system. Neither should the city of Guadalupe need to have a Reverse 911 notification system as their police and fire are dispatched through the Sheriff's center. Nothing should preclude the Montecito Fire District from obtaining a Reverse 911 notification system if they choose to do so. However, both the Sheriff's Department and the Montecito Fire District would prefer to use the current Sheriff's Reverse 911 notification system to prevent duplicate messages and in times of emergency conflicting messages. Notification to the public in a County-wide emergency could be severely taxed if Santa Maria or Santa Barbara also request to use either the County system or the Lompoc City system simultaneously to those agency's current use of their systems in notifying the public. If those two cities purchased the Reverse 911 notification system all agencies could share the telephone lines for single event notification thereby getting the word out to the public faster.

Finding 4

Based upon results, the Low-Power Radio Emergency Alert System presently utilized by residents of Painted Cave is an excellent means of notifying people of emergencies occurring in their area. Presently this system is only used in the Highway 154 Painted Cave area.

Response: Response not required from the Board of Supervisors.

Recommendation 4

All areas within Santa Barbara County that have the unique topography and vulnerability to wildfires or flooding should install a Low-Power Radio Emergency Alert System to warn their residents.

Response: Response not required from the Board of Supervisors.

Finding 5

Santa Barbara County and emergency agencies within its borders do not have an emergency website or telephone number where citizens can access real-time emergency information.

Response: The Board adopted both the CEO and OES's response as its response. (Partially disagree with the finding as the County's website is regularly updated and provides real-time emergency information when an emergency does occur within the County.)

Recommendation 5

Santa Barbara County should immediately develop an emergency Internet website or hotline telephone number that will allow its residents to get real-time accurate

emergency information. This website or hotline telephone number should be updated with the same information that is given to the media.

Response: The Board adopted both the CEO and OES's response as its response. (The recommendation has not yet implemented, but will be implemented by the end of 2006.)

While the County already places emergency information on its website for residents to get real-time information during defined emergencies, it will also work with the "2-1-1" system, which is a 24/7 system that provides callers with information about and referrals to human services for every day needs and in times of crisis. A memorandum of understanding between the County and the "2-1-1" system is being crafted that will allow the County to utilize this system to provide real-time accurate emergency management system.

Finding 6

The Office of Emergency Services has not designated an emergency radio station to which residents may tune to receive accurate updated emergency information on a 24-hour basis.

Response: The Board adopted OES's response as its response. (Disagrees with the finding, as OES has not designated an emergency radio station because there is no single radio station that will provide coverage for the entire geographical boundaries of the County. Rather, there are four radio stations, including one that broadcasts in Spanish, which serve the area and are included in the County's Emergency Alert System Plan.)

Recommendation 6

The Office of Emergency Services should enter into an agreement with a 24-hour media radio station that will be designated as the official emergency station for Santa Barbara County.

Response: The Board adopted OES's response as its response. (The recommendation will be implemented in part by the end of the year, but will not be implemented as proposed by the Civil Grand Jury.)

There is no single radio station that will provide coverage for the entire geographical boundaries of the County; therefore, it cannot enter into an agreement with one 24-hour media station. The County is working on developing a memorandum of understanding with the several broadcast stations in the area, which will be in place by the end of 2006.

Finding 7

Parent education programs in schools throughout Santa Barbara County have had varying degrees of success in informing parents what will happen to their children during and after an emergency.

Response: The Board adopted OES's response as its response. (Agrees with the

finding.)

Recommendation 7

School districts throughout Santa Barbara County should review their school site disaster plans with their local emergency agencies to ensure that the plans are updated and appropriate. Schools should expand their efforts to keep students and parents informed of all aspects of emergency preparedness and survival through written information provided in both English and Spanish when appropriate.

Response: The Board adopted OES's response as its response. (The recommendation will not be implemented by the County because it is outside of the County's jurisdiction. However, OES will continue to support disaster planning efforts in the local schools.)

Finding 8

In late 2005, representatives of agencies in Santa Barbara County that are responsible for providing the public with emergency information formed a public information group (EPIC), with the goal to address problems relating to the collection, verification and dissemination of accurate emergency information.

Response: The Board adopted both the Sheriff Department and OES's response as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

Recommendation 8

All participating agencies should continue to support the efforts of the Emergency Public Information Communicators Group (EPIC), which is dedicated to improving the emergency public information system throughout Santa Barbara County.

Response: The Board adopted both the Sheriff Department and OES's response as its response. (The recommendation has been implemented. The Sheriff and ES have been involved with EPIC since its inception and will continue to participate within this group.)

Emergency Sheltering

Finding 1

Only a small number of the Santa Barbara County residents are prepared to shelter in place in a disaster. This means that the community as a whole will not be prepared when an emergency occurs.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Social Services' response as its response. (Agrees with the finding. While no data exists concerning the number of residents who are prepared to shelter in place we believe that few residents are prepared.)

Recommendation 1

The Board of Supervisors should fund an outreach and educational program designed to explain to all residents of Santa Barbara County how to survive in place in a disaster.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented in part, and will be further implemented in fiscal years 2006-2008.

The Board of Supervisors currently funds the Fire Department's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program, which trains people to respond to disasters and other emergencies. The 20-hour CERT course provides training in disaster preparedness, fire suppression, first aid, and light search and rescue. As noted in the response to Recommendation 5 of the Emergency Public Information section, the County is also entering into a memorandum of understanding with the "2-1-1" system to provide information to residents about disaster survival. The Board of Supervisors has also charged the County Executive Officer with creating an overall pandemic strategy for the County. A public education/information/training team has been created as part of this project and this team is developing an outreach and educational program. The Board will review the outreach and educational program and any funding implications associated with it when the pandemic strategy is brought to the Board later this calendar year for final approval.

Finding 2

The Red Cross provides leadership in planning for and meeting sheltering needs during an emergency. Two County agencies, Social Services and the Public Health Department, assist the Red Cross in emergency sheltering.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Social Services' response as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

Recommendation 2

The Department of Social Services should request a budget allocation for emergency planning and training.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Social Services' response as its response. (The recommendation will not be implemented.)

The Department of Social Services' budget includes funding for basic emergency planning and training. However, if the current State budgeting system changes for FY 2007-08 and allows counties to request line items Department of Social Services will submit a request for additional funds for more emergency planning and training activities.

Finding 3

The Department of Social Services does not have an adequate budget for emergency preparedness.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Social Services' response as its response. (Disagrees with the finding.)

The Department of Social Services' budget includes funding for basic emergency preparedness for our staff. This includes planning and executing building evacuations for each facility on a yearly basis; informing new staff of their disaster response responsibilities as county employees and providing sheltering training for our staff from the Red Cross. The Department of Social Services plans to send staff to the SEMS Earthquake training in FY 2006-07.

Recommendation 3

The Board of Supervisors should allocate funding for the Department of Social Services for emergency preparedness, to enable Social Services to quickly increase its preparedness for its role in disaster sheltering and to conduct joint exercises with the Red Cross on a regular basis.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented in part, and will be further implemented in fiscal year 2007-2008.

As noted by the Department of Social Services in its response to Finding 3, the department's current budget includes funding for basic emergency preparedness for its staff. Further, the Department cited in responding to Recommendation 4 of the section on emergency sheltering that it will be working with the Red Cross to conduct exercises and training. As noted in the response to Recommendation 1 of this section, the County Executive Officer is creating an overall pandemic strategy for the County. The roles of Social Services and the Red Cross are being examined as part of this project. Any funding implications related to the implementation of the pandemic strategy as it relates to the Social Services Department will be considered by the Board when the overall strategy is approved. Finally, the Social Services Department will send staff to the four day Emergency Operations Center/Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) training conducted by the California Specialized Training Institute.

Finding 4

The Department of Social Services does not adequately prepare for a disaster. Its personnel have only limited disaster preparedness training to support emergency sheltering set up by the Red Cross.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Social Services' response as its response. (Disagrees with the finding.)

The Red Cross is the first responder for emergency sheltering and as such requests assistance from DSS when their own resources are outpaced by demand. Approximately 25% of our staff have been trained by the Red Cross for sheltering functions and our goal is to increase that each year beginning in FY 2006-07. Our goal will be to have at least 50% of our staff trained over the next two years.

Recommendation 4

The Department of Social Services should send more of their personnel to Red Cross emergency training and plan more emergency exercises in order to support the Red Cross in an emergency.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Social Services' response as its response. (The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.)

The Department of Social Services will work with the Red Cross to increase the training to two times per year. The first training will be scheduled in the fall of 2006. We will work with the Red Cross and County OES to design one exercise each year.

Finding 5

Emergency shelter registration using a manual paper process limits the usefulness of the registration process, having no search, sort, or transmission capability.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Social Services' response as its response. (Agrees with this finding. This is a Red Cross System and is not administered by DSS.)

Recommendation 5

Paper registration at all shelters should be supplemented with computerized filing for rapid access to registrant data and to support searches for family members who are separated.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Social Services' response as its response. (The recommendation will not be implemented, as the Red Cross is responsible for the registration function.)

Emergency Medical Response

Finding 1

There has been very limited activity and planning for vulnerable populations at the County level since 2002 when the Task Force first issued its Vulnerable Populations Plan. This resulted from the Public Health Department no longer having a staff person to assist with the maintenance of the Plan in general and the Geographic Information System (GIS) maps. The vulnerable populations' location maps have not been updated and are only available in their current state for use by the Emergency Operations Center.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health's response as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

The Department of Public Health agrees that the Vulnerable Populations Plan should be

updated. Over time, key sections of the plan have been updated and are available in multiple County locations — Emergency Operations Center, the Public Health Department Operations Center as well as within the Emergency Medical Services Agency.

Recommendation 1

The Public Health Department should take the lead in revitalizing the Emergency and Disaster Plan for Vulnerable Populations. This plan should be further developed, implemented and kept current. Additional human and financial resources should be allocated to accomplish this.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health’s response as its response. (The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in fiscal year 2006-2007.)

The County has a need for an updated Emergency and Disaster Plan for Vulnerable Populations and will determine the best department to lead this effort. Since planning for responding to the emergency needs of these special populations crosses over many departments it would be better suited to house this plan in the County’s all hazard multi-functional disaster plan. This plan addresses all threats and will be including the pandemic planning efforts the County is involved with currently. One option is to build a web-based application to create a mechanism for maintaining an updated inventory. This approach will be discussed with the IT pandemic planning team.

Finding 2

The Public Health Department is not currently coordinating any ongoing outreach or education programs for licensed facilities, community-based organizations, or care providers and families of vulnerable populations. There is no organized method to ensure that the Plan is reviewed and updated annually or that any of the support documentation is current.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health’s response as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

Recommendation 2

The Public Health Department should update the Disaster Plan to reflect new threats, for example, bioterrorism and epidemics such as avian flu.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health’s response as its response. (The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. Revisions to the PHD disaster plan with an all-hazard focus will be completed in 2006.)

Finding 3

There are no specific steps that are targeted to provide coordination for individual disaster plans with licensed programs and facilities, such as skilled nursing facilities, assisted-living, home care and hospice programs.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health's response as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

Recommendation 3

The Director of the EMS Agency should participate in meetings of the County Disaster Council.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health's response as its response. (The recommendation has been implemented, as the EMS Agency Director will attend these meetings.)

Finding 4

The Public Health Department does not have mutual aid agreements with the military, for example, Vandenberg Air Force Base.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health's response as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

Recommendation 4

The Public Health Department should work collaboratively with skilled nursing homes, board and care, and other licensed facilities needing assistance in developing coordinated plans to ensure that their populations' needs are met in a disaster and that inpatient facilities have current evacuation plans and memorandums of understanding with like facilities.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health's response as its response. (The recommendation has been implemented.)

The Department of Public Health's currently works with health care facilities in their disaster planning efforts when requested and will continue to provide assistance to interested agencies. It should be noted that facilities such as skilled nursing homes, board and care and other licensed care facilities are required to have current evacuation plans, plans to ensure that their populations' needs are met in a disaster, and to meet other State licensing requirements. PHD will invite these agencies to participate in medical and health disaster planning exercises that are conducted throughout the year.

Finding 5

The Chumash Tribe is not actively involved in the County's disaster planning activities.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health's response as its response. (Disagrees with the finding as the Chumash are involved in disaster planning activities with the Office of Emergency Services. The Chumash participate in other emergency management activities of the County, which are spearheaded by the County OES.)

Recommendation 5

The Public Health Department should coordinate with the local Department of

Homeland Security Office to ensure that each is aware of the other's activities. The Public Health Department should continue to conduct exercises and drills with its community and regional partners, including emergency management and other agencies.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health's response as its response. (The recommendation has been implemented as the Department coordinates with our local FBI disaster/terrorism response coordinator. There is not a separate local Homeland Security Office in the County. PHD does coordinate with local law enforcement and the Office of Emergency Service (OES).)

Finding 6

The County does not have a current registry of potential volunteers (licensed physicians, nurses, pharmacists, veterinarians) who could be called on to assist in a disaster.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health's response as its response. (Agrees with the finding.)

Recommendation 6

The Public Health Department should develop mutual agreements with the military, and ensure that the Department has current contact information for base leaders and healthcare providers.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health's response as its response. (The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The Department is currently working with Vandenberg Air Force Base on a MOU for medical /health mutual aid. We have a verbal understanding in place to provide mutual aid in the event of a medical emergency.

Recommendation 7

The Public Health Department should engage the Chumash Tribe so it can be involved in the planning and disaster preparedness process.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health's response as its response. (The recommendation has been implemented.)

The Department of Public Health has invited the Chumash Tribe to participate in planning and disaster preparedness activities. We will continue to solicit the Tribes participation in planning efforts as well as disaster exercises and drills. It should be noted however that the Chumash do participate in other emergency management activities of the County which are spearheaded by the County OES.

Recommendation 8

The Public Health Department should continue to work with the State to ensure that volunteer activities of healthcare workers are coordinated and that this resource is available in the event of an emergency. It should make certain that the list of retired

nurses and physicians and other local private healthcare professionals contains current information. Medical registries need to be developed in conjunction with the State EMS to pre-identify medical personnel who are willing and able to participate in a disaster response system.

Response: The Board adopted the Department of Public Health's response as its response. (The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in 2006.)

As part of the county-wide pandemic planning efforts the PHD has established a team to develop a Medical Reserve Corp (MRC), using the State's newly develop Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VIP) on-line registry for licensed medical professional within the county. In addition the PHD through the county-wide pandemic planning efforts, the IT group is also planning to help the MRC team develop a database to track all MRC volunteers in the county to track participation, training and deployment. We are working closely with the Medical Society to develop policies and procedures to coordinate a MRC response plan. We will be beginning enrolling health professionals into the system in August 2006. This will be an on-going process.

Sincerely,

Joni Gray
Chair, Board of Supervisors

cc: Ted Sten, Foreperson Civil Grand Jury 2005-06

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

Finding 1: The Santa Barbara County EOC is housed in a temporary modular building that is not rated for an emergency government function and could fail in an earthquake.

Responses:

CEO: The CEO agrees with this finding.

Fire: The Fire Department agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 1: The Board of Supervisors and County Administration should immediately prioritize the process of identifying a new site for the EOC that meets construction standards for emergency government functions.

Responses:

CEO: This recommendation has been implemented. The CEO has identified a new site for the EOC that meets construction standards for emergency government functions. The identified site is at the Santa Ynez Airport and staff have been collaborating with the Airport Authority and the Federal Aviation Administration on the logistics of developing a new EOC at this location. The CEO and the Board of Supervisors have committed funding toward the construction of a new EOC. Specifically, the Adopted 2006-2007 Budget includes \$3 million for a new EOC. Additionally, the Sheriff has committed \$300,000 and an additional \$1.7 million may be allocated toward the EOC contingent on financial health of the County's General Fund (bringing the project total to \$5 million). The County Architect has commenced with the drawing of a conceptual design of the new EOC.

Fire: This recommendation has been implemented. The Fire Department and the Office of Emergency Services have been aware of the need for a new EOC as evidenced by the project's inclusion within the County's Capital Improvement Plan for many years. The financial health of the County has enabled the Board of Supervisors, under the leadership of the County Executive Officer, to include \$3 million towards construction of a new EOC that meets essential facilities standards in the Adopted 2006-07 budget, which goes into effect on July 1, 2006.

Finding 2: In the event of a power failure at the EOC after business hours, emergency back-up power must be manually hooked up to the facility by employees living outside the south coast area.

Responses:

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OES: OES partially disagrees with this finding. While the emergency back-up power must be manually hooked up, there are County employees living within the South Coast area that are capable of hooking up the back-up power.

Fire: The Fire Department partially disagrees with this finding. While the emergency back-up power must be manually hooked up, there are County employees living within the South Coast area that are capable of hooking up the back-up power.

Recommendation 2: Install a dedicated electrical hook-up between the EOC and the emergency generator whereby the generator will automatically start and provide power to the EOC in the event of a local power failure.

Responses:

OES: This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented within 6 months. The County has secured grant funding to install an automated switch for the emergency generator. Installation of the automated switch will be completed within 6 months.

Fire: This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented within 6 months. The County has secured homeland security grant funding to install an automated switch for the emergency generator. Installation of the automated switch will be completed within 6 months.

Finding 3: Telephone switching and computer networking equipment necessary to activate the communications systems in the EOC is located in a hall closet of the facility and is not anchored to the structure, making it subject to damage in the event of an earthquake.

Responses:

OES: OES disagrees with this finding. County-owned computer and communications equipment located in the EOC are rack-mounted, with the rack attached at the floor, and braced to the walls. Since the EOC is housed within the Employees University, there is some equipment that is the property of the Santa Barbara City College and affiliated with the Employees University rather than the EOC. It is this equipment that was not secured at the time of the Grand Jury's visit.

Fire: The Fire Department disagrees with this finding. County-owned computer and communications equipment located in the EOC are rack-mounted, with the rack attached at the floor, and braced to the walls. Since the EOC is housed within the Employees University, there is some equipment that is the property of the Santa Barbara City College and affiliated with the Employees University rather than the EOC. It is this equipment that was not secured at the time of the Grand Jury's visit.

Recommendation 3: Secure the EOC telephone system and computer networking switching equipment with earthquake mounting bracketing. Printed instructions on the equipment should be visible to inform persons activating the EOC how to hook up the emergency communications lines.

Responses:

OES: This recommendation has been implemented. County-owned computer and communications equipment located in the EOC are rack-mounted, with the rack attached at the floor, and braced to the walls. Since the EOC is housed within the Employees University, there is some equipment that is the property of the Santa Barbara City College and affiliated with the Employees University rather than the EOC. It is this equipment that was not secured at the time of the Grand Jury's visit. However, the lease agreement between the City College and the County's Employee University facility ends June 30, 2006 and will not be renewed. Therefore, the non-secured equipment will be removed from this facility with the remaining equipment already having been anchored. There are printed instructions on the equipment.

Fire: This recommendation has been implemented. County-owned computer and communications equipment located in the EOC are rack-mounted, with the rack attached at the floor, and braced to the walls. Since the EOC is housed within the Employees University, there is some equipment that is the property of the Santa Barbara City College and affiliated with the Employees University rather than the EOC. It is this equipment that was not secured at the time of the Grand Jury's visit. However, the lease agreement between the City College and the County's Employee University facility ends June 30, 2006 and will not be renewed. Therefore, the non-secured equipment will be removed from this facility with the remaining equipment already having been anchored. There are printed instructions on the equipment.

Finding 4: At the time of the Grand Jury's visit to the EOC, it appeared that the facility lacked updated emergency maps, plans, procedure manuals, logistical resource information, and support supplies. Emergency responders, participants, and decision-makers staffing the EOC are expected to go first to their daily work site (office) and pick up information they need before going to the EOC.

Responses:

OES: OES partially disagrees with this finding. Currently there are section boxes, or file boxes, located at the EOC that contain maps, manuals and other information for relevant EOC staff.

Fire: The Fire Department partially disagrees with this finding. Currently there are section boxes, or file boxes, located at the EOC that contain maps, manuals and other information for relevant EOC staff.

Recommendation 4: Provide updated manuals, maps and decision-making information at the EOC at all times for agencies with assigned functions in the EOC.

Responses:

OES: This recommendation has already been implemented. The EOC section boxes (file box for each EOC section) contain this information already. However, OES staff is working on producing updated maps, manuals and decision-making information at the EOC so that staff does not need to first go to their daily work site (office). The OES will continue to ensure that updated materials are located at the EOC for relevant persons.

Fire: This recommendation has already been implemented. The EOC section boxes (file box for each EOC section) contain this information already. However, OES staff is working on producing updated maps, manuals and decision-making information at the EOC so that staff does not need to first go to their daily work site (office). The OES will continue to ensure that updated materials are located at the EOC for relevant persons.

Finding 5: Employees of Santa Barbara County who are not employed in one of the public safety departments may receive as little as one hour of emergency training regarding their roles in a major disaster.

Responses:

OES: OES agrees with this finding. However, many employees outside of the public safety departments do receive more than one hour of emergency training (see response to recommendation 5).

Recommendation 5: Expand employee emergency training programs to not just focus on new employees but to train all employees on an annual basis so they will remain informed of current County emergency procedures and what is expected of them in a disaster.

Responses:

OES: This recommendation has been implemented in part, and will continue to be implemented throughout the year by OES, the County's Human Resources Department and other County Departments. In terms of training all employees about the County's emergency procedures and expectations during a disaster, the County's Employee Handbook states that "In emergencies, the public relies on County services for information and assistance. All County employees, by the nature of their employment, are emergency workers. Employees may be called upon to perform duties other than their regular assignments to aid County emergency efforts."

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Many departments augment this policy by showing a twelve minute video on County employees' responsibilities during disasters at departmental staff meetings.

In addition, County departments routinely conduct fire and earthquake drills, including evacuation procedures, so that employees are aware of emergency procedures. OES conducts specialized technical training on emergency management such as the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) training for personnel assigned to the Emergency Operations Center. County employees attending the new orientation course at the Employees University are all provided with SEMS training. In addition, the CEO's office annually sponsors 10 employees with EOC responsibilities to attend a 40-hour course in emergency management at the California Specialized Training Institute in San Luis Obispo.

Finding 6: Presently there is no motivating factor that requires the County Administrative Officer or County department heads to keep emergency and disaster training as a high priority for themselves or their employees.

Responses:

CEO: The CEO disagrees with this finding. The motivating factor that requires the County Executive Officer to keep emergency and disaster training as a high priority is that emergency management is a requirement of the job responsibilities for this position. Specifically, the areas of responsibility and accountability for the County Executive Officer as containing in the job description for this position include "emergency management: Controls and directs the effort of the emergency organization of the county; appoints and supervises the coordinator of the office of emergency services; provides leadership in the development of public policy; acts as liaison with other agencies; has authority to proclaim a "state of emergency" when locally available resources are inadequate to cope with the emergency" .

The County Executive Officer, as noted in Ordinance No. 4564, is the ex officio Director of Emergency Services. As such, he has coordinated and commanded emergency efforts for the County during various emergencies related to severe winter storms, flooding, tsunami warning and fires. Both the County Executive Officer and several County Department heads such as General Services, Fire (includes OES staff), Public Health, Public Works and Sheriff have made training regarding disasters a high priority for themselves and essential executives within their department.

Furthermore, emergency training has been provided to many department heads and other executives. For example, the County sponsors ten spaces each year for department heads and other executives to attend a four day course on Emergency Operations Center/Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) Training for earthquakes and other disasters at the California

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Specialized Training Institute. The County Executive Officer and Deputy County Officer have attended this training in the past. Training in National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) has commenced with such departments as Public Health, Sheriff, Fire and OES rolling the training out to all their employees. Various County employees involved in the County's pandemic planning efforts have also undergone this type of training. NIMS/SEMS training will be required of all department heads starting in the beginning of 2007.

Recommendation 6: Incorporate emergency related functions and employee training in emergency preparedness in the job descriptions of the County Administrative Officer and department managers and as a goal in their annual performance evaluations.

Responses:

CEO: This recommendation has been implemented in part and the remainder of the recommendation will be implemented in the beginning of 2007. The County Executive Officer job description already requires emergency management and preparedness. Specifically, the County Executive Officer "controls and directs the effort of the emergency organization of the county; appoints and supervises the coordinator of the office of emergency services; provides leadership in the development of public policy; acts as liaison with other agencies; has authority to proclaim a "state of emergency" when locally available resources are inadequate to cope with the emergency."

The County Department Directors annual "Executive Performance Appraisal and Plan" currently contains an assessment on the Director's cooperation in emergency preparation and operations as well as an assessment of whether the Director has completed appropriate emergency preparedness and operations training for his/her department. Furthermore, NIMS/SEMS training will be required of all department heads starting in the beginning of 2007.

EMERGENCY PUBLIC INFORMATION

Finding 1: The present system of getting information to the public will likely fail in a major disaster. Recent consolidations of radio and television stations in Santa Barbara have led to prerecorded formatting. This format makes the availability of live emergency information difficult if not impossible.

Responses:

OES: OES agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 1: The Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Services should work with news media representatives in Santa Barbara County to develop an emergency public information system that will keep the public informed during a disaster.

Responses:

OES: This recommendation has been implemented. OES has been involved with the Emergency Public Information Communicators (EPIC) group since its inception and is also working in partnership with the local broadcasters to further enhance the emergency public information system. The County has also funded a full-time Public Information Officer (PIO) in the Adopted 2006-07 budget and is actively recruiting to fill this position. The County PIO will be a full-time position tasked with working with the media in order to enhance the County's ability to disseminate emergency public information in a disaster. In addition, a memorandum of understanding with the broadcasters in the area should be in place by the end of 2006.

Finding 2: The Office of Emergency Services presently relies on voluntary participation of radio and television providers to participate in the Emergency Alert System.

Responses:

OES: OES agrees with this finding.

CEO: The CEO agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 2: The County of Santa Barbara should enter into a permanent agreement with local media stations guaranteeing their participation in the Emergency Alert System.

Responses:

OES: This recommendation will not be fully implemented because the County does not have any jurisdiction over the radio stations. The Federal Communications Commission regulates both radio and television broadcasting and the County of Santa Barbara has no direct regulatory authority over radio or television station broadcasting content, only over the County's Government Access Television (CSBTv). The Santa Barbara Local Emergency Alert System (EAS) Plan portion of the California State Emergency Alert System Plan is governed by part 11 of the Rules and Regulations of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Under this Plan broadcast and Cable Television stations in Santa Barbara County will voluntarily rebroadcast, using EAS equipment specified by the FCC, selected messages originated by the National Weather Service (NWS) and the Santa Barbara County, who are accountable for their content. In addition, there is currently no single radio station that with coverage for the entire geographical boundaries of the County. However, Santa Barbara County is currently working in partnership with the broadcasters in Santa Barbara County. A memorandum of understanding with the broadcasters in the area should be in place by the end of 2006.

CEO: This recommendation will not be fully implemented because the County does not have any jurisdiction over the radio stations, which are regulated by the Federal Communications Commission. However, both the CEO and OES are working in partnership with the broadcasters in Santa Barbara County and developing a memorandum of understanding, which should be ratified by the Board of Supervisors and in use by the end of 2006.

Finding 3: Only the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department and the Lompoc Police Department Dispatch Centers have a Reverse 911 Notification System. These dispatch centers could be greatly impacted by large populated cities like Santa Maria and Santa Barbara requesting the use of their systems in a County-wide emergency.

Responses:

Sheriff: The Sheriff agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 3: Within Santa Barbara County, each city and special fire district dispatch center should establish its own independent Reverse 911 Emergency Notification System. This will reduce the possibility of overloading the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department and Lompoc Police Department Dispatch Centers in the event of a County-wide major disaster.

Responses:

Sheriff: This recommendation will not be implemented by the Sheriff as it pertains to other agencies. However, the Sheriff's Department is committed to the

reverse 911 technology to notify the public in emergency situations and to training other agencies in using this technology. Since the Sheriff's Department, through its Public Safety Dispatch Center, dispatches for the special fire districts of Carpinteria-Summerland, Solvang and Orcutt, they should not be responsible for establishing their own independent Reverse 911 notification system. Neither should the city of Guadalupe need to have a Reverse 911 notification system as their police and fire are dispatched through the Sheriff's center. Nothing should preclude the Montecito Fire District from obtaining a Reverse 911 notification system if they choose to do so. However, both the Sheriff's Department and the Montecito Fire District would prefer to use the current Sheriff's Reverse 911 notification system to prevent duplicate messages and in times of emergency conflicting messages. Notification to the public in a County-wide emergency could be severely taxed if Santa Maria or Santa Barbara also request to use either the County system or the Lompoc City system simultaneously to those agency' current use of their systems in notifying the public. If those two cities purchased the Reverse 911 notification system all agencies could share the telephone lines for single event notification thereby getting the word out to the public faster.

Finding 4: Based upon results, the Low-Power Radio Emergency Alert System presently utilized by residents of Painted Cave is an excellent means of notifying people of emergencies occurring in their area. Presently this system is only used in the Highway 154 Painted Cave area.

Responses:
Not applicable.

Recommendation 4: All areas within Santa Barbara County that have the unique topography and vulnerability to wildfires or flooding should install a Low-Power Radio Emergency Alert System to warn their residents.

Responses:
Not applicable.

Finding 5: Santa Barbara County and emergency agencies within its borders do not have an emergency website or telephone number where citizens can access real-time emergency information.

Responses:
CEO: The CEO partially disagrees with this finding. While there is no exclusive website or telephone number dedicated to all types of emergency information, the County's website is updated regularly and provides emergency information when an emergency, such as severe storms, does occur within the County.

OES: OES partially disagrees with this finding. While there is no exclusive website or telephone number dedicated to all types of emergency information, the County's website is updated regularly and provides real-time emergency information when an emergency, such as severe storms, does occur within the County.

Recommendation 5: Santa Barbara County should immediately develop an emergency Internet website or hotline telephone number that will allow its residents to get real-time accurate emergency information. This website or hotline telephone number should be updated with the same information that is given to the media.

Responses:

CEO: This recommendation has not yet implemented, but will be implemented by the end of 2006. While the County already places emergency information on its website for residents to get real-time information during defined emergencies, it will also work with the "2-1-1" system, which is a 24/7 system that provides callers with information about and referrals to human services for every day needs and in times of crisis. A memorandum of understanding between the County and the "2-1-1" system is being crafted that will allow the County to utilize this system to provide real-time accurate emergency management system.

OES: This recommendation has not yet implemented, but will be implemented by the end of 2006. While the County already places emergency information on its website for residents to get real-time information during defined emergencies, it will also work with the "2-1-1" system, which is a 24/7 system that provides callers with information about and referrals to human services for every day needs and in times of crisis. A memorandum of understanding between the County and the "2-1-1" system is being crafted that will allow the County to utilize this system to provide real-time accurate emergency management system.

Finding 6: The Office of Emergency Services has not designated an emergency radio station to which residents may tune to receive accurate updated emergency information on a 24-hour basis.

Responses:

OES: OES disagrees with this finding. OES has not designated an emergency radio station because there is no single radio station that will provide coverage for the entire geographical boundaries of the County. Rather, there are four radio stations, including one that broadcasts in Spanish, which serve the area and are included in the County's Emergency Alert System Plan.

Recommendation 6: The Office of Emergency Services should enter into an agreement with a 24-hour media radio station that will be designated as the official emergency station for Santa Barbara County.

Responses:

OES: This recommendation will be implemented in part by the end of the year, but will not be implemented as proposed by the Civil Grand Jury. There is no single radio station that will provide coverage for the entire geographical boundaries of the County; therefore, it cannot enter into an agreement with one 24-hour media station. The County is working on developing a memorandum of understanding with the several broadcast stations in the area, which will be in place by the end of 2006.

Finding 7: Parent education programs in schools throughout Santa Barbara County have had varying degrees of success in informing parents what will happen to their children during and after an emergency.

Responses:

OES: OES agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 7: School districts throughout Santa Barbara County should review their school site disaster plans with their local emergency agencies to ensure that the plans are updated and appropriate. Schools should expand their efforts to keep students and parents informed of all aspects of emergency preparedness and survival through written information provided in both English and Spanish when appropriate.

Responses:

OES: This recommendation will not be implemented by the County because it is outside of the County's jurisdiction. However, OES will continue to support disaster planning efforts in the local schools.

Finding 8: In late 2005, representatives of agencies in Santa Barbara County that are responsible for providing the public with emergency information formed a public information group (EPIC), with the goal to address problems relating to the collection, verification and dissemination of accurate emergency information.

Responses:

OES: OES agrees with this finding.

Sheriff: The Sheriff agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 8: All participating agencies should continue to support the efforts of the Emergency Public Information Communicators Group (EPIC), which is dedicated to improving the emergency public information system throughout Santa Barbara County.

Responses:

OES: This recommendation has been implemented. OES has been involved with EPIC since its inception and will continue to participate within this group.

Sheriff: This recommendation has been implemented. The Sheriff's Department has been committed to the EPIC group since its inception and will continue to support this group.

EMERGENCY SHELTERING

Finding 1: Only a small number of the Santa Barbara County residents are prepared to shelter in place in a disaster. This means that the community as a whole will not be prepared when an emergency occurs.

Responses:

DSS: The Department of Social Services agrees with this finding. While no data exists concerning the number of residents who are prepared to shelter in place we believe that few residents are prepared.

Recommendation 1: The Board of Supervisors should fund an outreach and educational program designed to explain to all residents of Santa Barbara County how to survive in place in a disaster.

Responses:

Only a Board of Supervisors' response is required.

Finding 2: The Red Cross provides leadership in planning for and meeting sheltering needs during an emergency. Two County agencies, Social Services and the Public Health Department, assist the Red Cross in emergency sheltering.

Responses:

DSS: The Department of Social Services agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 2: The Department of Social Services should request a budget allocation for emergency planning and training.

Responses:

DSS: This recommendation will not be implemented. The DSS budget includes funding for basic emergency planning and training. However, if the current State budgeting system changes for FY 2007-08 and allows counties to request line items DSS will submit a request for additional funds for more emergency planning and training activities.

Finding 3: The Department of Social Services does not have an adequate budget for emergency preparedness.

Responses:

DSS: The Department of Social Services disagrees with this finding. The DSS budget includes funding for basic emergency preparedness for our staff. This includes planning and executing building evacuations for each facility on a yearly basis; informing new staff of their disaster response responsibilities as county employees and providing sheltering training for our staff from the Red Cross. DSS plans to send staff to the SEMS Earthquake training in FY 2006-07.

Recommendation 3: The Board of Supervisors should allocate funding for the Department of Social Services for emergency preparedness, to enable Social Services to quickly increase its preparedness for its role in disaster sheltering and to conduct joint exercises with the Red Cross on a regular basis.

Responses:

Only a Board of Supervisors' response is required.

Finding 4: The Department of Social Services does not adequately prepare for a disaster. Its personnel have only limited disaster preparedness training to support emergency sheltering set up by the Red Cross.

Responses:

DSS: The Department of Social Services (DSS) disagrees with this finding. The Red Cross is the first responder for emergency sheltering and as such requests assistance from DSS when their own resources are outpaced by demand. Approximately 25% of our staff have been trained by the Red Cross for sheltering functions and our goal is to increase that each year beginning in FY 2006-07. Our goal will be to have at least 50% of our staff trained over the next two years.

Recommendation 4: The Department of Social Services should send more of their personnel to Red Cross emergency training and plan more emergency exercises in order to support the Red Cross in an emergency.

Responses:

DSS: This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. DSS will work with the Red Cross to increase the training to two times per year. The first training will be scheduled in the fall of 2006. We will work with the Red Cross and County OES to design one exercise each year.

Finding 5: Emergency shelter registration using a manual paper process limits the usefulness of the registration process, having no search, sort, or transmission capability.

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Responses:

DSS: The Department of Social Services (DSS) agrees with this finding. This is a Red Cross System and is not administered by DSS.

Recommendation 5: Paper registration at all shelters should be supplemented with computerized filing for rapid access to registrant data and to support searches for family members who are separated.

Responses:

DSS: This recommendation will not be implemented. The Red Cross is responsible for the registration function.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONSE

Finding 1: There has been very limited activity and planning for vulnerable populations at the County level since 2002 when the Task Force first issued its Vulnerable Populations Plan. This resulted from the Public Health Department no longer having a staff person to assist with the maintenance of the Plan in general and the Geographic Information System (GIS) maps. The vulnerable populations' location maps have not been updated and are only available in their current state for use by the Emergency Operations Center.

Responses:

PH: The Public Health Department (PHD) agrees with this finding. The PHD agrees that the Vulnerable Populations Plan should be updated. Over time, key sections of the plan have been updated and are available in multiple County locations — Emergency Operations Center, the Public Health Department Operations Center as well as within the Emergency Medical Services Agency.

Recommendation 1: The Public Health Department should take the lead in revitalizing the Emergency and Disaster Plan for Vulnerable Populations. This plan should be further developed, implemented and kept current. Additional human and financial resources should be allocated to accomplish this.

Responses:

PH: This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in fiscal year 2006-2007. The County has a need for an updated Emergency and Disaster Plan for Vulnerable Populations and will determine the best department to lead this effort. Since planning for responding to the emergency needs of these special populations crosses over many departments it would be better suited to house this plan in the County's all hazard multi-functional disaster plan. This plan addresses all threats and will be including the pandemic planning efforts the County is involved with currently. One option is to build a web-based application to create a mechanism for maintaining an updated inventory. This approach will be discussed with the IT pandemic planning team.

Finding 2: The Public Health Department is not currently coordinating any ongoing outreach or education programs for licensed facilities, community-based organizations, or care providers and families of vulnerable populations. There is no organized method to ensure that the Plan is reviewed and updated annually or that any of the support documentation is current.

Responses:

PH: The Department of Public Health agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 2: The Public Health Department should update the Disaster Plan to reflect new threats, for example, bioterrorism and epidemics such as avian flu.

Responses:

PH: This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. Revisions to the PHD disaster plan with an all-hazard focus will be completed in 2006.

Finding 3: There are no specific steps that are targeted to provide coordination for individual disaster plans with licensed programs and facilities, such as skilled nursing facilities, assisted-living, home care and hospice programs.

Responses:

PH: The Department of Public Health agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 3: The Director of the EMS Agency should participate in meetings of the County Disaster Council.

Responses:

PH: This recommendation has been implemented. The EMS Agency Director will attend these meetings.

Finding 4: The Public Health Department does not have mutual aid agreements with the military, for example, Vandenberg Air Force Base.

Responses:

PH: The Department of Public Health agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 4: The Public Health Department should work collaboratively with skilled nursing homes, board and care, and other licensed facilities needing assistance in developing coordinated plans to ensure that their populations' needs are met in a disaster and that inpatient facilities have current evacuation plans and memorandums of understanding with like facilities.

Responses:

PH: This recommendation has been implemented. The PHD currently works with health care facilities in their disaster planning efforts when requested and will continue to provide assistance to interested agencies. It should be noted that facilities such as skilled nursing homes, board and care and other licensed care facilities are required to have current evacuation plans, plans to ensure that their populations' needs are met in a disaster, and to meet other State licensing requirements. PHD will invite these agencies to participate in medical and health disaster planning exercises that are conducted throughout the year.

Finding 5: The Chumash Tribe is not actively involved in the County's disaster planning activities.

Responses:

PH: The Department of Public Health disagrees with this finding as the Chumash are involved in disaster planning activities with the Office of Emergency Services. The Chumash participate in other emergency management activities of the County, which are spearheaded by the County OES.

Recommendation 5: The Public Health Department should coordinate with the local Department of Homeland Security Office to ensure that each is aware of the other's activities. The Public Health Department should continue to conduct exercises and drills with its community and regional partners, including emergency management and other agencies.

Responses:

PH: This recommendation has been implemented. The PHD coordinates with our local FBI disaster/terrorism response coordinator. There is not a separate local Homeland Security Office in the County. PHD does coordinate with local law enforcement and the Office of Emergency Service (OES).

Finding 6: The County does not have a current registry of potential volunteers (licensed physicians, nurses, pharmacists, veterinarians) who could be called on to assist in a disaster.

Responses:

PH: The Department of Public Health agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 6: The Public Health Department should develop mutual agreements with the military, and ensure that the Department has current contact information for base leaders and healthcare providers.

Responses:

PH: This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. PHD is currently working with Vandenberg Air Force Base on a MOU for medical /health mutual aid. We have a verbal understanding in place to provide mutual aid in the event of a medical emergency.

Recommendation 7: The Public Health Department should engage the Chumash Tribe so it can be involved in the planning and disaster preparedness process.

Responses:

PH: This recommendation has been implemented. The PHD has invited the Chumash Tribe to participate in planning and disaster preparedness activities. We will continue to solicit the Tribes participation in planning efforts as well as disaster exercises and drills. It should be noted however that the Chumash do participate in other emergency management activities of the County which are spearheaded by the County OES.

Recommendation 8: The Public Health Department should continue to work with the State to ensure that volunteer activities of healthcare workers are coordinated and that this resource is available in the event of an emergency. It should make certain that the list of retired nurses and physicians and other local private healthcare professionals contains current information. Medical registries need to be developed in conjunction with the State EMS to pre-identify medical personnel who are willing and able to participate in a disaster response system.

Responses:

PH: This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in 2006. As part of the county-wide pandemic planning efforts the PHD has established a team to develop a Medical Reserve Corp (MRC), using the State's newly develop Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VIP) on-line registry for licensed medical professional within the county. In addition the PHD through the county-wide pandemic planning efforts, the IT group is also planning to help the MRC team develop a database to track all MRC volunteers in the county to track participation, training and deployment. We are working closely with the Medical Society to develop policies and procedures to coordinate a MRC response plan. We will be beginning enrolling health professionals into the system in August 2006. This will be an on-going process.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Are we really ready?

INTRODUCTION

In 2005, countries around the world were hit by national disasters that took hundreds of thousands of innocent lives, leaving entire regions devastated and lives forever changed. The lack of early warning, planning, communications, and medical relief evident in all these major disasters led to the unnecessary loss of life and devastation to property and the environment. Citizens and governments, complacent about emergency planning, were unprepared to effectively help themselves or provide emergency assistance to those in need.

These scenes were broadcast night after night, not only from the poorer countries of the world but from the richest and most advanced country, the United State of America. Citizens questioned, “How can this be happening? Where are the firemen, the police, and my government? If I need medical help, where do I go?”

Citizens were stunned to see that political leaders, government officials, and relief organizations were unprepared for and overwhelmed by these events. In almost all cases, emergency planning, training, public information, sheltering, and relief efforts lacked direction and coordination, resulting in the tragedy of events we all witnessed unfold on television.

Over the years, Santa Barbara County and its citizens have experienced major earthquakes, landslides, fires, floods, and other life- and property-threatening disasters, all of which can occur again at any time. The United States Geological survey ranks the Santa Barbara area third in the United States, behind Los Angeles and San Francisco, for having significant seismic potential.

In early August of 2005, the Grand Jury launched an inquiry into emergency preparedness, looking at four specific areas of emergency response:

1. Santa Barbara County Emergency Operations Center – the coordination of the emergency response
2. Emergency Public Information – how we are informed
3. Emergency Sheltering – assisting those displaced
4. Emergency Medical Response – helping those in need of medical assistance

Disaster Preparedness

The Grand Jury examined each of these areas of emergency preparation and response and developed recommendations to improve the County's ability to deliver essential emergency services in a timely manner. The following reports explain the roles and responsibilities of each of these functions in providing our citizens with the emergency services that are so vital to their safety and critical to our County's ability to coordinate and manage a major disaster.

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

Up and ready or down and out?

SUMMARY

The Santa Barbara County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is a facility designed to bring together representatives of all relevant agencies during a major emergency. The Grand Jury evaluated the EOC's physical facilities, back-up emergency systems, operations planning documents, and on-site emergency supplies.

Serious deficiencies were found in the physical facility itself along with cumbersome procedures for providing emergency power and communications systems. County employees with knowledge of how to manually hook up the emergency power to the EOC must respond to the site and make it operational. Most of these personnel live beyond the Santa Barbara south coast region, which could greatly delay the activation of the EOC.

The Grand Jury recommends relocating the EOC to a new location more suitable to withstanding an earthquake and equipping it with emergency electrical systems that will automatically provide emergency power.

INTRODUCTION

A trained and educated emergency management team coming together in an efficient centralized multi-agency command and control center during a major emergency provides our citizens and rescue personnel with leadership and coordination.

Throughout Santa Barbara County, fire and law enforcement personnel deal with daily emergencies by managing them locally, utilizing a proven and efficient management system called the Incident Command System. This system has worked so efficiently for first responders that it has been adopted by State and Federal agencies along with the United States military to coordinate major emergencies.

The Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS), developed at the State level, has been adopted by local jurisdictions within Santa Barbara County. SEMS reduces confusion and inefficiency by ensuring that all emergency management tasks and assignments are carried out under the same management system.

At the heart of both of these management systems is the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The EOC function is designed to bring together the representatives of all participating emergency agencies during a major emergency. They gather

Emergency Operations Center

information from emergency responders, present it to the incident decision makers, develop management and containment strategies, and coordinate timely emergency information notification to the public.

The Grand Jury conducted an inquiry into the emergency training that County employees receive at the EOC. The suitability of the present EOC to be functional and provide vital coordination during a major disaster was also evaluated. The Grand Jury witnessed demonstrations at Santa Barbara County's EOC and an Emergency Operation Center in a neighboring county. Santa Barbara County employees and management staff were interviewed, site visits to support facilities were conducted, and training exercises were witnessed. Emergency procedures and planning documents were examined and verified from the agencies that have direct responsibilities for these emergency functions.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The EOC is activated when large emergency events occur in Santa Barbara County that require the coordination of multiple agencies and affect large populations of our County. The EOC provides a centralized location where local authorities are able to have face-to-face coordination among persons who must make the emergency decisions.

Over the past twenty years, the County has moved this Emergency Operations Center function from various facilities and departments to its present location within the Santa Barbara County Employees University. This facility is a non-rated (fire, earthquake) portable modular classroom building located in the parking lot of the old County General Hospital building. It serves as a day-to-day classroom facility and is only intended to be used as an EOC when an actual major emergency occurs.

The management of the EOC falls under the jurisdiction of the Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Services, headed by an Emergency Services Manager under the direction of the County Fire Chief. The County Office of Emergency Services is responsible for the emergency training of all County employees, planning, preparations, staffing, and exercising of the functions of the EOC.

The Grand Jury found that emergency plans and procedures used by EOC participants need to be updated. Vital decision-making information needs to be on-site rather than in participants' offices spread throughout the County. Emphasis on improved planning, preparation, and rapid activation of a new EOC location should be a top goal of the County Board of Supervisors and County administration.

Emergency Operations Center Structure

The EOC is presently located within the Santa Barbara County Employees University

Emergency Operations Center

building, 267 Camino del Remedio, Santa Barbara, with an alternate location at the Santa Barbara County Fire Headquarters at 4410 Cathedral Oaks Road, Santa Barbara.

The EOC is located in a room within a portable modular classroom facility. This building, while presently being used as a training facility for County employees, is not rated to house a critical emergency function of government and has a high probability of failing in an earthquake or local fire similar to the Paint Fire. The facility was originally intended to temporarily house the EOC. No funding for the relocation of this vital emergency function to another more secure and appropriate location has been provided or planned for by elected or administrative officials. The Grand Jury finds this structure to be an unsatisfactory site for the EOC.

The Grand Jury recommends the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and County Administration immediately prioritize the process of identifying a new dedicated or shared site for the EOC. This location, new or existing, should meet construction standards for housing emergency government functions. Further, the Board of Supervisors and County administration should secure funding for this relocation. Procrastination of this effort places our County at risk of not having a functioning EOC during a major disaster.

Emergency Power at the EOC

An electrical generator located in a locked garage adjacent to the EOC building is intended to supply emergency power to the EOC. In the event of a local power failure, a County public works employee must respond to the site, hook up an emergency power cable from the generator to the EOC, and start the generator. At the time of the Grand Jury's site visit, all County public works employees with knowledge of how to perform these tasks lived outside the south coast area. Until this emergency power can be hooked up and operational, the EOC will be without power. Further, while the emergency generator is run on a regular basis, the actual hook-up and operation of the EOC using this emergency generator is not tested on a regular basis.

A dedicated electrical hook-up should be installed between the EOC and the emergency generator whereby the generator will automatically start and provide power to the EOC in the event of a local power failure. Relying on personnel responding from home in order to establish emergency power may greatly delay the activation of a functional EOC.

Communications Switching Equipment

Telephone switching and computer networking equipment necessary to activate these systems in the EOC is located in a hall closet of the facility. The equipment is not anchored to the structure, making it subject to damage in the event of an earthquake.

Emergency Operations Center

The EOC telephone switching and computer networking equipment should be equipped with earthquake mounting bracketing. Printed instructions on the equipment should be visible to inform persons activating the EOC how to hook up the emergency communications lines. Presently these systems have to be manually connected.

Information and Supplies

At the time of the Grand Jury's visit to the EOC it appeared that the facility lacked updated maps, plans, procedure manuals, logistical resource information, and support supplies. Emergency responders, participants, and decision makers staffing the EOC are expected to respond first to their daily work site (office), in order to pick up needed information before they go to the EOC.

The Office of Emergency Services should develop a process whereby agencies with assigned functions in the EOC have updated manuals, maps, and decision-making information at the EOC at all times. This information should be updated as necessary and maintained at the EOC to eliminate the delay of employees traveling to their remote offices throughout the County before going to the EOC.

Training

At the time of this report, employees of Santa Barbara County who are not employed in one of the public safety departments receive as little as one hour of emergency training regarding their roles in a major disaster.

The Office of Emergency Services should expand its employee emergency training programs to not just focus on new employees but continue to train all existing employees. This training should occur on an annual basis so employees will remain informed of current County emergency procedures and what is expected of them during a disaster.

Further, the County Administrator and department managers reporting to the Office of Emergency Services should incorporate emergency related functions and employee training in emergency preparedness in their job descriptions and as a goal in their annual performance evaluations.

Conclusion

When a major emergency or disaster strikes our area, no one facility will be more important to the residents of Santa Barbara County than the EOC. The Grand Jury faults the leadership of Santa Barbara County for not providing its citizens and emergency agency leaders with a permanent EOC location capable of withstanding the very emergency events that it is designed to manage. Although the total inadequacy of this facility was brought to the attention of the County Administrator

Emergency Operations Center

and Board of Supervisors by the 1995-1996 Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury, no action has been taken to correct a dangerous and potentially life-threatening situation.

Santa Barbara County emergency employees continue to try to make the best of this very serious flaw in our County's emergency preparedness system. The Board of Supervisors needs to take direct responsibility to commit funds and resources to provide a suitable EOC for the citizens of Santa Barbara County that will be functional during a major emergency and will provide coordination and management of our emergency resources.

FINDINGS

Finding 1

The Santa Barbara County EOC is housed in a temporary modular building that is not rated for an emergency government function and could fail in an earthquake.

Finding 2

In the event of a power failure at the EOC after business hours, emergency back-up power must be manually hooked up to the facility by employees living outside the south coast area.

Finding 3

Telephone switching and computer networking equipment necessary to activate the communications systems in the EOC is located in a hall closet of the facility and is not anchored to the structure, making it subject to damage in the event of an earthquake.

Finding 4

At the time of the Grand Jury's visit to the EOC, it appeared that the facility lacked updated emergency maps, plans, procedure manuals, logistical resource information, and support supplies. Emergency responders, participants, and decision-makers staffing the EOC are expected to go first to their daily work site (office) and pick up information they need before going to the EOC.

Finding 5

Employees of Santa Barbara County who are not employed in one of the public safety departments may receive as little as one hour of emergency training regarding their roles in a major disaster.

Emergency Operations Center

Finding 6

Presently there is no motivating factor that requires the County Administrative Officer or County department heads to keep emergency and disaster training as a high priority for themselves or their employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

The Board of Supervisors and County Administration should immediately prioritize the process of identifying a new site for the EOC that meets construction standards for emergency government functions.

Recommendation 2

Install a dedicated electrical hook-up between the EOC and the emergency generator whereby the generator will automatically start and provide power to the EOC in the event of a local power failure.

Recommendation 3

Secure the EOC telephone system and computer networking switching equipment with earthquake mounting bracketing. Printed instructions on the equipment should be visible to inform persons activating the EOC how to hook up the emergency communications lines.

Recommendation 4

Provide updated manuals, maps, and decision making information at the EOC at all times for agencies with assigned functions in the EOC.

Recommendation 5

Expand employee emergency training programs to not just focus on new employees but to train all employees on an annual basis so they will remain informed of current County emergency procedures and what is expected of them in a disaster.

Recommendation 6

Incorporate emergency related functions and employee training in emergency preparedness in the job descriptions of the County Administrative Officer and department managers and as a goal in their annual performance evaluations.

Emergency Operations Center

REQUEST FOR RESPONSE

In accordance with Section 933(c) of the California Penal Code, each agency and government body affected by or named in this report is requested to respond in writing to the findings and recommendations in a timely manner. The following are the affected agencies for this report, with the mandated response period for each:

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors – 60 days

Finding	1
Recommendation	1

Santa Barbara County Executive Officer – 90 days

Findings	1, 6
Recommendations	1, 6

Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Services – 90 days

Findings	2, 3, 4, 5
Recommendations	2, 3, 4, 5

Santa Barbara County Fire Department – 90 days

Findings	1, 2, 3, 4
Recommendations	1, 2, 3, 4

EMERGENCY PUBLIC INFORMATION

What's happening? Where do I go? What should I do?

SUMMARY

Emergency public information systems are intended to warn our residents of a major emergency and actions they need to take to protect their lives and property.

Specific areas of review by the Grand Jury resulting in recommendations were:

- existing emergency alert system utilizing television and radio stations
- Reverse 911 notification system
- local low-power radio information systems
- coordination of public information officers
- emergency public education for residents, businesses, and schools

Emergencies occurring in or near Santa Barbara County in 2005 brought to the public's attention major weaknesses in local government and media abilities to provide residents with timely and accurate emergency information. Information regarding specifics of the emergencies, evacuations, road closures, and other vital announcements were slow in reaching the public and, in several cases, were inaccurate and misleading.

While Santa Barbara County has made some improvements in the emergency notification system, many methods presently relied upon remain outdated, unreliable, and ineffective.

The Grand Jury recommends that our County's elected and appointed officials act immediately to improve the methods and the means by which the residents of Santa Barbara County receive vital emergency information required to save lives and property.

INTRODUCTION

Each day Santa Barbara County's law enforcement, fire, and municipal agencies deal with a variety of emergencies that require public information announcements to be broadcast on radio or television. The public may be informed of these events by spot radio announcements, by stations broadcasting live, or by use of frequency scanners and phone calls from neighbors and friends. Most emergencies are local in nature – house fires, traffic accidents, medical emergencies, or even street closures

Emergency Public Information

due to flooding or downed trees, affecting only those persons involved in or located near the event, which may require them to temporarily relocate or evacuate dangerous areas.

The larger the emergency or disaster, the more critical it becomes that emergency officials have reliable and effective communications methods available to them to keep the public informed. The methods of receiving this timely and accurate emergency information should be known to the public through an aggressive and well-supported public information program. Every resident, employee, and school child should know how to access valuable emergency information that will help guide him or her through a major emergency and survive its aftermath.

This inquiry looked at those agencies within the County and private sector with direct responsibility for informing and educating the public. Concern for the effectiveness of our existing methods of informing the public of emergencies came to the Grand Jury's attention from concerned citizens, government employees, business leaders, and school personnel, as well as emergency responders. The Grand Jury conducted interviews, witnessed training exercises, reviewed emergency plans and documents, and performed site visits to formulate its findings and recommendations.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The Grand Jury's inquiry into the current emergency public information methods that exist within Santa Barbara County found the following notification systems that are intended to inform and direct us in an emergency.

- The Santa Barbara County Emergency Alert System is part of the State of California's Emergency Alert System, intended to be broadcast on radio and television networks that have agreed to do so.
- The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has made available a new low-power emergency radio system to local jurisdictions whereby residents can tune to a set radio frequency for emergency information specific to their own area. This system is presently in use by the Painted Cave community, funded by a Homeland Security grant.
- The Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department Dispatch Center has in place a newly developed Reverse 911 notification capability that utilizes specific area telephone systems to notify residents of nearby emergencies and possible evacuations.
- The State, County, and California Highway Patrol all have websites that, when updated, provide emergency information as well as information related to road closures and evacuation routes.

Emergency Public Information

- Local television and radio stations, when staffed, dispatch a reporter to the emergency in order to broadcast live or record information for scheduled news broadcasts. Many of the stations are not staffed late at night.
- In the event of an emergency causing a major loss of power and domestic communication sources, fire and law enforcement agencies plan to utilize patrol vehicles and helicopter public address systems as well as door-to-door notification to advise residents to evacuate.

The Grand Jury found that while some agencies have enhanced their emergency information delivery methods (Reverse 911 Warning System and low frequency radio station) other existing methods appear to be unreliable.

Radio and Television

Radio and television stations in the past have been reliable sources of emergency information within Santa Barbara County. Residents were able to tune to a local radio station or turn on the television and hear and see emergency events occurring and get up-to-date information on what they should do and how to avoid areas where emergencies were occurring. The Grand Jury found that this is no longer the case.

Santa Barbara County has no single designated 24-hour radio station that residents can tune to for accurate updated emergency information. In contrast, the County of Ventura has an agreement with one designated radio station to act as its primary source of emergency information for the general public. A hotline has been installed in the Ventura County Emergency Operations Center that goes directly to the radio station, providing fast broadcast of updated and accurate information to its residents.

Santa Barbara County's local media networks have been consolidated or purchased by large outside network companies, many of which use prerecorded broadcasting and have reduced or no staff on duty during most of the 24-hour day. Often County emergency public information personnel at the scene of an event will send out an emergency news alert to the news media which may result in limited or no response. This adversely affects the ability of emergency personnel to notify the general public of major events affecting them and increases the anxiety and confusion of the public. Events like the La Conchita earth-slide and the 2005 Gaviota fire were examples of this problem. The public was uninformed and confused due to the lack of timely and accurate information about evacuations and highway closures.

The Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Services (OES) and emergency public information personnel need to work with representatives of our local broadcasting networks to develop a system of emergency notification and response that will allow vital information to flow rapidly from an event to the general public. The OES should establish an agreement with a local or out-of-county radio or

Emergency Public Information

television station that will act as our County's designated station to provide emergency information 24 hours a day. This will require exploring new and innovative approaches to gathering and delivering information to the public utilizing our local media or even media outside our County.

These improvements should be joined with an aggressive public education program making residents aware of where to tune to in an emergency.

Emergency Alert System

Santa Barbara County currently utilizes a local emergency alert system. This system is part of the California State Emergency Alert System, whereby local radio and television stations within the County voluntarily broadcast selected messages from the United States Weather Service and the Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Services. These messages appear as information scrolling across the bottom of television screens or audio information interrupting programmed radio broadcasting networks that have agreed to participate in the Emergency Alert System. Local media voluntarily participate in this system and are under no obligation to pass this information on to the public.

Santa Barbara County Administration and the Office of Emergency Services should enter into formal and binding agreements with media providers requiring their active participation in the Emergency Alert System.

Reverse 911

The Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department and Lompoc Police Department Dispatch Centers have installed an emergency telephone notification system called *Reverse 911 Emergency Notification System*. This system can telephone residents in designated areas and give them recorded voice information about an emergency and the actions they should take. This system is modern, progressive, and has been proven to be an effective means of notifying residents of emergencies, provided that the telephone system is operating.

The Grand Jury finds that the Reverse 911 Emergency Notification System is an excellent means of notifying specific areas of limited population and should be expanded into all emergency dispatch centers throughout Santa Barbara County.

While the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department has offered the use of the Reverse 911 Emergency Alert System to other agencies, the Grand Jury recommends that these agencies provide their own capabilities in order not to overload the Sheriff's Department's existing system during a County-wide emergency.

Emergency Public Information

Low-Power Emergency Alert System

An effective Low-Power Radio Emergency Alert System is currently utilized by residents of San Marcos Pass and Painted Cave. This system is similar to a local airport information radio station. The station gives local residents information about events occurring in their area (for example, road closures, fires, traffic accidents). The system does not interfere with commercial broadcasts and can be localized to a specific area.

The Grand Jury recommends that the County of Santa Barbara, City of Santa Barbara, and the Montecito Fire District develop a program within their jurisdictions that provides an opportunity for the community to purchase, install, and operate these radio systems in areas with a wildfire history.

Internet

Santa Barbara County presently does not have an Internet website or hotline telephone number to provide updated information on real-time occurring emergencies. The Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Services and Santa Barbara County Fire Department both operate websites that provide general information about their agencies and basic emergency preparedness information. However, neither agency has an information hotline that provides real-time emergency information.

The Grand Jury recommends that the County of Santa Barbara and cities within the County develop an emergency information website and telephone hotline for the public. This could be done by individual jurisdictions or through a joint powers agreement where residents throughout the County could access one site or dial one number and get fast and accurate emergency information. This system would be relatively inexpensive to implement and would greatly reduce the number of uninformed or curious citizens calling 911 emergency lines directly to inquire about what is occurring and what they should do.

Schools and Children

Parents of children throughout Santa Barbara County have varying degrees of knowledge of what actions they should take when an emergency occurs while their children are at school.

The Grand Jury finds that school districts and emergency agencies need to work together to re-evaluate and update current school disaster plans and procedures for emergencies and perform outreach so parents have better access to knowledge.

Once these plans are updated and approved, school districts should develop a parent

Emergency Public Information

education process whereby parents will know what to expect when their children are at school and a major emergency occurs. Information should be disseminated in both English and Spanish where appropriate.

Informing the Public

The process of collecting and disseminating vital public emergency information from the incident commander to the public needs to be improved County-wide. The Grand Jury found that the problem of getting accurate information about the emergency from the person in charge of the incident, referred to as the incident commander, is not agency-specific. Many factors contribute to this problem: changes in the way the local media is accessible, retirement of experienced personnel, lack of training, and a lack of commitment of resources to solve the problem. This problem involves all emergency agencies and media sources responsible for collecting information and accurately and rapidly getting it to residents so they can react to minimize disorder and danger to life and property.

The awareness of this communication problem and the desire to improve the emergency public information system within Santa Barbara County has motivated those responsible to come together and form the Emergency Public Information Communicators Group (EPIC). The Group has partnered with the American Red Cross and will bring together representatives from all emergency agencies with the goal of improving emergency communications County-wide.

The Grand Jury applauds this first step on the part of the Emergency Public Information Communicators Group. The Grand Jury recommends that this effort be supported by elected and administrative officials and that time and resources be focused on improving the systems that are intended to keep the public informed.

FINDINGS

Finding 1

The present system of getting information to the public will likely fail in a major disaster. Recent consolidations of radio and television stations in Santa Barbara have led to prerecorded formatting. This format makes the availability of live emergency information difficult if not impossible.

Finding 2

The Office of Emergency Services presently relies on voluntary participation of radio and television providers to participate in the Emergency Alert System.

Emergency Public Information

Finding 3

Only the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department and the Lompoc Police Department Dispatch Centers have a Reverse 911 Notification System. These dispatch centers could be greatly impacted by large populated cities like Santa Maria and Santa Barbara requesting the use of their systems in a County-wide emergency.

Finding 4

Based upon results, the Low-Power Radio Emergency Alert System presently utilized by residents of Painted Cave is an excellent means of notifying people of emergencies occurring in their area. Presently this system is only used in the Highway 154 Painted Cave area.

Finding 5

Santa Barbara County and emergency agencies within its borders do not have an emergency website or telephone number where citizens can access real-time emergency information.

Finding 6

The Office of Emergency Services has not designated an emergency radio station to which residents may tune to receive accurate updated emergency information on a 24-hour basis.

Finding 7

Parent education programs in schools throughout Santa Barbara County have had varying degrees of success in informing parents what will happen to their children during and after an emergency.

Finding 8

In late 2005, representatives of agencies in Santa Barbara County that are responsible for providing the public with emergency information formed a public information group (EPIC), with the goal to address problems relating to the collection, verification and dissemination of accurate emergency information.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

The Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Services should work with news media representatives in Santa Barbara County to develop an emergency public

Emergency Public Information

information system that will keep the public informed during a disaster.

Recommendation 2

The County of Santa Barbara should enter into a permanent agreement with local media stations guaranteeing their participation in the Emergency Alert System.

Recommendation 3

Within Santa Barbara County, each city and special fire district dispatch center should establish its own independent Reverse 911 Emergency Notification System. This will reduce the possibility of overloading the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department and Lompoc Police Department Dispatch Centers in the event of a County-wide major disaster.

Recommendation 4

All areas within Santa Barbara County that have the unique topography and vulnerability to wildfires or flooding should install a Low-Power Radio Emergency Alert System to warn their residents.

Recommendation 5

Santa Barbara County should immediately develop an emergency Internet website or hotline telephone number that will allow its residents to get real-time accurate emergency information. This website or hotline telephone number should be updated with the same information that is given to the media.

Recommendation 6

The Office of Emergency Services should enter into an agreement with a 24-hour media radio station that will be designated as the official emergency station for Santa Barbara County.

Recommendation 7

School districts throughout Santa Barbara County should review their school site disaster plans with their local emergency agencies to ensure that the plans are updated and appropriate. Schools should expand their efforts to keep students and parents informed of all aspects of emergency preparedness and survival through written information provided in both English and Spanish when appropriate.

Recommendation 8

All participating agencies should continue to support the efforts of the Emergency

Emergency Public Information

Public Information Communicators Group (EPIC), which is dedicated to improving the emergency public information system throughout Santa Barbara County.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSE

In accordance with Section 933(c) of the California Penal Code, each agency and government body affected by or named in this report is requested to respond in writing to the findings and recommendations in a timely manner. The following are the affected agencies for this report, with the mandated response period for each:

Santa Barbara County Executive Officer - 90 days

Findings	2, 5
Recommendations	2, 5

Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Services - 90 days

Findings	1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8
Recommendations	1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8

Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department - 60 days

Findings	3, 8
Recommendations	3, 8

City of Santa Barbara - 60 days

Findings	3, 4, 8
Recommendations	3, 4, 8

City of Lompoc - 60 days

Findings	3, 4, 8
Recommendations	3, 4, 8

City of Carpinteria - 60 days

Findings	3, 4, 8
Recommendations	3, 4, 8

City of Santa Maria - 60 days

Findings	3, 8
Recommendations	3, 8

Emergency Public Information

Montecito Fire Protection District - 60 days

Findings 3, 4, 8
Recommendations 3, 4, 8

EMERGENCY SHELTERING

Where Do We Go?

SUMMARY

When a natural or manmade disaster strikes, such as a major earthquake, wildfire, flood, terrorism incident, or other large-scale event, normal life for Santa Barbara County residents will be disrupted until, and perhaps after, safety and public services can be restored. The Grand Jury investigated how local government agencies plan to help residents deal with such disruptions.

More importantly, residents should plan to be self-sufficient for at least three and up to seven days. Although County, State, and city governments, as well as the American Red Cross, have published emergency planning information for residents, few are prepared to shelter in place. The Grand Jury recommends an aggressive educational program by our governments to increase awareness and preparedness.

When evacuation is directed during an emergency, the Red Cross, a non-governmental agency, selects the location for a shelter, sets up the shelter with cots and food supplies, and assigns a shelter manager. The County Social Services Department assigns staff who assist in registration, logistics, and food service at the shelter. The Grand Jury found that the Department of Social Services budget does not provide for adequate training of staff and joint exercises with the Red Cross.

Long-term relocation is typically arranged by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The Standardized Emergency Management System, SEMS, includes the role of FEMA in support of emergencies within Santa Barbara County.

INTRODUCTION

When a natural or manmade disaster strikes, such as a major earthquake, wildfire, flood, terrorism incident, or another large-scale event, normal life for County residents will be disrupted until, and perhaps after, safety and public services can be restored.

The Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) states, “A large magnitude (Richter) earthquake will occur in the near future.... The intensity of this anticipated earthquake could cause devastation beyond anything recently experienced in this area....”

Emergency Sheltering

Because most residents will be on their own during the first days after a catastrophic earthquake, the Grand Jury assessed their readiness to be self-sufficient. Because residents may be required to evacuate to emergency shelters set up by the Red Cross, the Grand Jury reviewed the process for setting up and operating shelters. If the emergency is of longer duration, residents may be placed in long-term shelter arrangements provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

In examining the planning for emergency housing in the County, the Grand Jury reviewed documents and conducted interviews with key members of the Red Cross and County Department of Social Services.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

When a disaster occurs, residents may be sheltered in three ways:

1. Shelter in place (three to seven days)
2. Short-term sheltering
3. Long-term sheltering

Shelter in Place

When a disaster occurs, residents may be on their own for several days. Even when outside help is available from a government agency or others, some residents may not be first to receive relief because other residents may need help more urgently. Emergency personnel cannot help all of the residents at the same time. Although emergency services are generally well prepared to handle most emergencies, community needs in a disaster can easily exceed the capability of the government agencies. Staying at home may be the safest course of action. Residents should plan to be self-sufficient for at least three and up to seven days.

Education on the urgency of resident preparedness is not reaching enough Santa Barbara County residents. Although Federal, State, County, and city governments, as well as the Red Cross, have published emergency planning information for residents, it is reported that very few residents are prepared to shelter in place at their own residences. Ways to address this problem include:

- dissemination of information through the school systems, public TV, radio, newspapers and magazines, literature distributed by government agencies, and utility bill mailings
- emergency educational programs sponsored by community organizations
- public education provided by government emergency planning departments

Emergency Sheltering

In a major disaster, especially after an earthquake, many homes will have no water service, no electricity, no gas for cooking or heat, and no local radio. Local telephone, cell phones, and the Internet may be disabled by the emergency or by high usage. Roads may be blocked, either by damage or high traffic.

Families should be prepared with food, water, clothing, and supplies including a portable radio, flashlights and batteries, first-aid kit, plastic sheeting and duct tape, and garbage bags. In addition, families should have all necessary medical supplies on hand. Special medical needs should be planned with alternate solutions identified, depending upon the situation. Residents should know their neighbors and their capabilities, for example, where medical assistance is available in the neighborhood. Residents should create a family plan in case family members are separated during an emergency. There should be a plan to contact family and friends outside the affected area.

Every County resident must be prepared for an emergency. County and city governments have the responsibility to make emergency preparedness a way of life. With increased awareness of the importance of preparedness, a greater portion of the population will be able to provide for themselves in an emergency. The Grand Jury recommends that an aggressive educational program on preparing for emergencies be instituted.

Short Term Sheltering

During an emergency, the officer in charge of the incident, referred to as the Incident Commander, will recommend an evacuation when it is determined that it is unsafe for the residents in a given area to remain in their homes. Examples of evacuation situations include a wildland fire threatening to engulf a neighborhood, an overturned tanker leaking hazardous material, or a flood. If the evacuation is localized to a few homes, only those residents are notified to evacuate. The incident commander can decide to evacuate a wider area. The Incident Command may shift to a higher level of authority when the incident becomes larger.

In the case of an earthquake, the structures themselves may be unsafe to occupy. As emergency personnel reach residents who are sheltering in place, the responders may condemn damaged structures and direct the residents to evacuate to a short-term shelter.

Under Federal statutes, the Red Cross is the lead agency for providing short-term shelter for residents during an emergency. In Santa Barbara County, the Sheriff's Dispatch Center notifies the Red Cross when the incident commander has ordered an evacuation. The Red Cross has an inventory of potential shelter locations from which one or more are selected based upon considerations such as the number of evacuees, the likely duration of the short-term sheltering requirement, and the safety of the site.

Emergency Sheltering

When the Red Cross dispatches volunteers to establish a shelter, a standard sequence of events occurs. After the owners of the shelter location are contacted and approve the shelter usage, the Red Cross assigns one of its people to manage the shelter. The Red Cross then begins to set up the supply line for food, water, cots, and other supplies. The incident commander is notified of the location of the shelter selected by the Red Cross, so as to notify the people who require sheltering. Each person who comes to the shelter is registered using a manual paper registration process as outlined by the Red Cross. The Grand Jury recommends that this registration data also be entered into a computer system for rapid access to registrant data and to support searches for family members who are separated.

The Social Services Department supplements the staff to operate the shelter following standard procedures that the Red Cross has developed and documented. The Red Cross assigns a shelter manager and three shift supervisors. Each supervisor is responsible for:

- registration
- shelter logistics
- food service
- disaster health services,
- special health needs including mental health
- communications within and outside the shelter
- dormitory management
- any other special needs

Staff for the shelter is recruited from many sources, including shelter residents. Shelter facilities may require services such as maintenance or installation of additional utilities. Security supervisors may be required to set rules for the shelter residents and for outside personnel. The Public Health Department provides medical assistance.

The Grand Jury has determined that the Social Services Department does not have a regularly scheduled activity to prepare its staff for this shelter operation role. The Social Services Department budget does not include an allocation for emergency planning or training. Although some of its personnel have attended Red Cross emergency training classes in the past, there is little current activity to prepare to support emergency sheltering.

The Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) includes many activities for Social Services. With a budget for emergency planning and training, Social Services could prepare an emergency plan that would cover all expected responsibilities during an emergency. Social Services should educate and train designated members of its staff including an emergency director. They should more effectively participate in area exercises with other emergency groups.

Emergency Sheltering

Long Term Sheltering

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) supports long-term sheltering needs and provides financial support to those in need during a disaster. The President of the United States appoints a Federal Coordinating Office for any state that is judged officially to be affected by a disaster. The Federal Coordinating Office, in turn, establishes a Regional Field Office near the area where the disaster has occurred. This office then evaluates damages and damage claims. FEMA's involvement in a disaster is typically initiated through a chain of command starting at the local level. A request for assistance from the incident commander is sent through the County Office of Emergency Services (OES), through the State OES to the FEMA office in Sacramento.

The Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) plan includes the role of FEMA in support of emergencies within the County of Santa Barbara. The response by FEMA is on demand when the need arises. In its role as supplying financial support, FEMA might arrange and partially pay for long term sheltering, such as hotels or house trailers.

FINDINGS

Finding 1

Only a small number of the Santa Barbara County residents are prepared to shelter in place in a disaster. This means that the community as a whole will not be prepared when an emergency occurs.

Finding 2

The Red Cross provides leadership in planning for and meeting sheltering needs during an emergency. Two County agencies, Social Services and the Public Health Department, assist the Red Cross in emergency sheltering.

Finding 3

The Department of Social Services does not have an adequate budget for emergency preparedness.

Finding 4

The Department of Social Services does not adequately prepare for a disaster. Its personnel have only limited disaster preparedness training to support emergency sheltering set up by the Red Cross.

Emergency Sheltering

Finding 5

Emergency shelter registration using a manual paper process limits the usefulness of the registration process, having no search, sort, or transmission capability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

The Board of Supervisors should fund an outreach and educational program designed to explain to all residents of Santa Barbara County how to survive in place in a disaster.

Recommendation 2

The Department of Social Services should request a budget allocation for emergency planning and training.

Recommendation 3

The Board of Supervisors should allocate funding for the Department of Social Services for emergency preparedness, to enable Social Services to quickly increase its preparedness for its role in disaster sheltering and to conduct joint exercises with the Red Cross on a regular basis.

Recommendation 4

The Department of Social Services should send more of their personnel to Red Cross emergency training and plan more emergency exercises in order to support the Red Cross in an emergency.

Recommendation 5

Paper registration at all shelters should be supplemented with computerized filing for rapid access to registrant data and to support searches for family members who are separated.

Emergency Sheltering

REQUEST FOR RESPONSE

In accordance with Section 933(c) of the California Penal Code, each agency and government body affected by or named in this report is requested to respond in writing to the findings and recommendations in a timely manner. The following are the affected agencies for this report, with the mandated response period for each:

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors – 60 days

Findings	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Recommendations	1, 3

Santa Barbara County Department of Social Services – 90 days

Findings	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Recommendations	2, 4, 5

EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONSE TO DISASTER

Will Our Vulnerable Populations Be Cared for?

Are We Ready for an epidemic?

SUMMARY

As part of its report on disaster preparedness, the Grand Jury examined how well the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department is prepared to respond to the medical needs of the community in a disaster. The Emergency Medical Services Agency (EMS) is the part of the Public Health Department that plans for and manages emergency response, both on a day-to-day basis and in the event of a disaster. The Grand Jury found that the EMS Agency's leadership has well-organized and documented plans and are conscientious in its efforts to be prepared and to continuously improve the Disaster Plan. However, components of the Plan relating to vulnerable populations, training, coordination with Federal, State and other local agencies, and outreach to nonprofits and caregivers require continued focus, attention, priority and additional resources.

INTRODUCTION

The County serves a population in excess of 400,000, as well as commuters and tourists. The Emergency Medical Services Agency (EMS), which operates under the auspices of the Public Health Department, is responsible for overseeing the emergency medical system from a call being placed to 911, including first responders (police, fire, paramedics), transport providers, hospital receiving facilities and the hospital trauma centers.

The Public Health Department contracts for ambulance services with American Medical Response (AMR) for the majority of transports in the County. AMR's contract requires it to have a specific level of training for all response personnel, to adhere to California's Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS), and to participate in disaster committees, training and exercises as requested by the Agency.

The County has five hospitals:

- Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital in the City of Santa Barbara serves as a regional trauma center for the Tri-Counties.
- Goleta Valley Cottage Hospital is a trauma receiving center located in the City of Goleta.

Emergency Medical Response to Disaster

- Marian Medical Center in Santa Maria is working toward being designated as a trauma center and will serve as the regional resource for the northern portions of Santa Barbara County and southern portions of San Luis Obispo County.
- Lompoc District Hospital and Santa Ynez Valley Cottage Hospital are located in the central part of the County.

Santa Barbara County has signed agreements with its counterparts in San Luis Obispo, Ventura, Los Angeles, and Orange Counties as part of a mutual aid plan. There are 133 hospitals which can be accessed as part of this program.

State statutes call for guidelines to be developed for the planning and implementation of emergency medical services systems that address the following components:

- manpower and training
- communications
- transportation
- assessment of hospitals and critical care centers
- system organization and management
- data collection and evaluation
- public information and education
- disaster response

These elements are the responsibility of the Emergency Medical Services Agency and are coordinated under one manager to improve accountability and reduce redundancy.

The Grand Jury reviewed the Public Health Department's role in disaster response, and particularly that of the EMS Agency. Members of the Grand Jury interviewed staff from the Public Health Department, Department of Social Services, and other County departments. The Grand Jury also spoke with representatives of local nonprofit healthcare agencies, attended workshops and briefings related to medical/health system disaster preparedness, and did extensive reviews of materials, including statutes, policies and procedures, and documentation of disaster training exercises.

The UCLA Center for Public Health and Disasters conducted a comprehensive "Institutional Capacity Review Assessment" of the Public Health Department's disaster preparedness in October 2005. This assessment consisted of a series of questions using 46 criteria based on performance goals developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Interviews were conducted with the County

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bioterrorism coordinator and laboratory director. In addition, the UCLA study team reviewed the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department's Disaster Plan and the Santa Barbara Operational Area Multi-Hazard Functional Plan. The review, which included dealing with vulnerable populations, focused on four areas:

- mutually understood roles and responsibilities
- detecting the outbreak of mass illness
- determining cost and risk factors
- implementing measures to control the outbreak

These topics define the public health threat and containment goals that the CDC Office of Terrorism Preparedness and Emergency Response will use for determining grant allocations.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Disaster Response for Vulnerable Populations

It is estimated that 10% of the population (40,000 people) in the County can be defined as "vulnerable populations". These include the medically fragile, examples of which are:

- bedridden, totally dependent, difficulty swallowing
- requires electrical equipment to sustain life
- critical medications requiring daily monitoring
- insulin-dependent diabetic unable to monitor blood sugar
- requires continuous IV therapy
- terminally ill

A more expansive term identifies other at-risk groups, which include:

- frail seniors
- people with short-term acute or chronic illnesses or with disabilities
- people who are technology dependent
- people with disabling acute or chronic mental illnesses
- the homeless
- children

Emergency Medical Response to Disaster

The 2005 experience with Hurricane Katrina demonstrates that populations with special needs require special consideration in disaster preparedness planning.

In December 2002 the Emergency Disaster Planning for Vulnerable Populations Task Force of the EMS created an emergency disaster plan. The Plan took two years to complete. A significant number of organizations and agencies were involved in the preparation and planning for the vulnerable populations and those that help them to be self-sufficient in an emergency situation. Response organizations need information about where these populations reside, particularly individual residences. When the Plan was published in 2002, it was noted that it was a working document and would require modification over the coming years.

The Task Force concluded that it is of utmost importance that “all residents of Santa Barbara County become educated about the need to plan and prepare for disasters, that they be self-sufficient in a disaster, and that they prepare to help those residents that are unable to act independently.” In addition, “there should be systems available to provide assistance with evacuation, transportation, and the care and shelter of the residents of the County who are unable to use traditional means of support in an emergency or disaster.”

The idea to develop a disaster plan for vulnerable populations came from the EMS Agency in 1998. The Agency was fortunate to receive grant funding in 2001 – 2003 from the State EMS Authority to develop a plan to address the needs of the vulnerable populations. The resulting Disaster Plan for Vulnerable Populations was a model that has been shared throughout California. The Plan included an agreement with the American Red Cross that identifies roles and responsibilities of the agencies and County departments involved in responding to meet the special needs of these populations. There are agreements with alternative transportation, assisted-living, skilled nursing, and board and care services designed to lessen the impact on hospitals, inpatient facilities, and other agencies when they are unable to function adequately in a disaster situation.

The general shelters will be set up by the Red Cross and are intended for individuals and families that have been forced to leave their homes either due to an impending disaster or for short-term emergency shelter after a disaster. The shelters accept people with minor injuries and illnesses and those with physical or emotional limitations who do not require close monitoring, assistance, or equipment. Those evacuees requiring skilled health or personal care are referred to an appropriate health care facility, medical treatment unit or temporary infirmary. General shelters may not be able to provide adequate medical and personal care staff and the necessary supplies for people who require this additional support.

There has been very limited activity and planning for vulnerable populations at the County level since 2002 when the Task Force first issued its Plan. When the grant funding ended, Direct Relief International assumed the outreach, ongoing education,

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and planning activities necessary for agencies that provide services to the vulnerable populations for an additional two years. Since further funding was not provided to support the ongoing cost of the project within the County government agencies, there has been little, if any, recent activity.

The County is not currently coordinating any ongoing outreach or education programs for licensed facilities, community-based organizations, or care providers and families of vulnerable populations. There is no organized method to ensure that the Plan is updated or reviewed annually or that the support documentation is current.

The Plan identifies multiple governmental agencies and their roles and responsibilities in responding to the vulnerable populations. The EMS Agency contacts transportation providers every two years and verbally reviews agreements for alternative transportation including paratransit services. Each year the Public Health Department opens the Department Operations Center (DOC), and part of the exercise is focused on vulnerable populations' issues as they relate to the scenario focus of the drill, for example an earthquake, fire, or flood. During these simulated incidents, the planner inserts questions that require a response to assist vulnerable populations.

There are no specific steps in place to provide coordination for individual disaster plans with licensed programs and facilities, such as skilled nursing facilities, assisted-living, home care and hospice programs. The Public Health Department no longer has a staff person to assist with the maintenance and updating of the Geographic Information System (GIS) maps. Location maps for the vulnerable populations have not been updated and are only available in their current state for use by the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Integrated Response to Mass Casualties and Epidemic

During a local health disaster, such as an avian flu epidemic, public health personnel become a part of an integrated response system that requires different resources, people and activities than in routine emergencies. The Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) Multi-Hazard Functional Plan (MHFP) designates the County Administrator as the Emergency Services Director. He is empowered to direct and control the emergency organization. The Emergency Services Director appoints members to a Santa Barbara County Disaster Council, which includes persons having official emergency responsibility. Disasters often cross jurisdictional and geographic boundaries, requiring many different organizations to coordinate an effective response to protect the general population. Based on interviews and document reviews, the Grand Jury found that the EMS Agency is working to foster productive relationships with other response partners and that the drills and follow-up reporting are done well.

The overall assessment from the UCLA study was that the Santa Barbara Public Health Department has addressed or is addressing all of the CDC criteria and that the

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EMS Agency has worked diligently to foster productive relationships with other response partners. Exercises and drills are conducted as required and the follow-through regarding After-Action reports is excellent. There were suggestions for improvements in most of the “measures” that were evaluated. Those that the Grand Jury found worthy of note included the following:

- Although Public Health Department personnel have attended training on the Incident Command System (ICS), additional training for those persons identified as holding a position within the ICS would be beneficial.
- Include EMS providers, veterinarians, and firefighters in the Department’s future quarterly training. When updating the training plan, consider mapping the training to core competencies.
- The Department should continue to participate in exercises focused on public health disasters with various community and response partners, which would include the Department of Homeland Security, the military at Vandenberg Air Force Base, and the Chumash Tribe.
- The Public Health Department should identify additional people who could be trained in the basics to assist in disease investigation by conducting interviews and performing contact tracings. The Department of Public Health should demonstrate that epidemiological and law enforcement investigators are trained jointly and coordinate investigative activities.
- The Public Health Department should work with the State to ensure that volunteers are handled properly and that this resource is available in an emergency.

A major disaster has the potential to cause mass casualties and/or mass illness that may overwhelm the healthcare system and exhaust medical supplies. The Public Health Department must have plans for “surge capacity” to determine what resources are available and how to best utilize them. The Disaster Plan needs to allow for access to additional medical supplies and to determine if there are enough medical professionals and others to respond when needed. Also, in a major disaster, public-health authorities may have to isolate (separate persons who have specific infectious illnesses from those that are healthy) or quarantine (separate and restrict movement of persons) to stop the spread of illness. Authorities must be familiar with the statutory and regulatory process necessary to enact and enforce applicable directives.

There are a number of steps public health agencies must take to control and manage a disease outbreak situation. During a public health disaster communication is essential. Because some communication systems may not be functioning, public health agencies have to create redundant emergency communication systems that will

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enable public health personnel to communicate with each other and with other agencies. Also, there has to be a way to allow a larger volume of calls to come in from the public. There are two specific communication systems that are utilized by the Department. One is the MEDNEX Disaster System which links EMS, the hospitals and field locations. It works through cellular phones. The other system is the ReddiNet Information Network which serves the hospitals, first responders, and the EMS Agency. It is a dedicated system and is used to manage transport, treatment locations, resource allocation, and victim identification.

The EMS Agency, as part of the Public Health Department, is responsible to oversee the Department's emergency preparedness and response and coordinate a statewide hospital exercise within the local jurisdiction each year. The exercise scenario is different each year in order to test various aspects of the system, for example, bioterrorism and natural disasters. The Agency is currently assessing the level of training that has been provided to Department staff and is developing a training matrix for all staff with specific timelines to achieve competency based on the level of emergency response responsibilities.

FINDINGS

Finding 1

There has been very limited activity and planning for vulnerable populations at the County level since 2002 when the Task Force first issued its Vulnerable Populations Plan. This resulted from the Public Health Department no longer having a staff person to assist with the maintenance of the Plan in general and the Geographic Information System (GIS) maps. The vulnerable populations' location maps have not been updated and are only available in their current state for use by the Emergency Operations Center.

Finding 2

The Public Health Department is not currently coordinating any ongoing outreach or education programs for licensed facilities, community-based organizations, or care providers and families of vulnerable populations. There is no organized method to ensure that the Plan is reviewed and updated annually or that any of the support documentation is current.

Finding 3

There are no specific steps that are targeted to provide coordination for individual disaster plans with licensed programs and facilities, such as skilled nursing facilities, assisted-living, home care and hospice programs.

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Finding 4

The Public Health Department does not have mutual aid agreements with the military, for example, Vandenberg Air Force Base.

Finding 5

The Chumash Tribe is not actively involved in the County's disaster planning activities.

Finding 6

The County does not have a current registry of potential volunteers (licensed physicians, nurses, pharmacists, veterinarians) who could be called on to assist in a disaster.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

The Public Health Department should take the lead in revitalizing the Emergency and Disaster Plan for Vulnerable Populations. This plan should be further developed, implemented and kept current. Additional human and financial resources should be allocated to accomplish this.

Recommendation 2

The Public Health Department should update the Disaster Plan to reflect new threats, for example, bioterrorism and epidemics such as avian flu.

Recommendation 3

The Director of the EMS Agency should participate in meetings of the County Disaster Council.

Recommendation 4

The Public Health Department should work collaboratively with skilled nursing homes, board and care, and other licensed facilities needing assistance in developing coordinated plans to ensure that their populations' needs are met in a disaster and that inpatient facilities have current evacuation plans and memorandums of understanding with like facilities.

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Recommendation 5

The Public Health Department should coordinate with the local Department of Homeland Security Office to ensure that each is aware of the other's activities. The Public Health Department should continue to conduct exercises and drills with its community and regional partners, including emergency management and other agencies.

Recommendation 6

The Public Health Department should develop mutual agreements with the military, and ensure that the Department has current contact information for base leaders and healthcare providers.

Recommendation 7

The Public Health Department should engage the Chumash Tribe so it can be involved in the planning and disaster preparedness process.

Recommendation 8

The Public Health Department should continue to work with the State to ensure that volunteer activities of healthcare workers are coordinated and that this resource is available in the event of an emergency. It should make certain that the list of retired nurses and physicians and other local private healthcare professionals contains current information. Medical registries need to be developed in conjunction with the State EMS to pre-identify medical personnel who are willing and able to participate in a disaster response system.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSE

In accordance with Section 933(c) of the California Penal Code, each agency and government body affected by or named in this report is requested to respond in writing to the findings and recommendations in a timely manner. The following are the affected agencies for this report, with the mandated response period for each:

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors – 60 days

Finding	1
Recommendation	3

Santa Barbara County Public Health Department – 90 days

Findings	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Recommendations	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8