COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW OF THE COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

January 2006

MANAGEMENT PARTNERS
INCORPORATED

January 22, 2006

Mr. Mike Brown
Chief Executive Officer
County of Santa Barbara
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Dear Mr. Brown:

Management Partners is pleased to present this report for the Organizational Review of the County Fire Department done by our firm. Our review of the organization and management of the Fire Department looked at key elements regarding the department's current financial conditions, administrative functions, interdepartmental coordination, and the internal and external support functions. Our review did not include technical firefighting tactics of the department.

While this report was comprehensive and in keeping with the scope of work for this project, there are some select subject matter areas we feel could be further analyzed which would provide the County with some key data for future financial decision-making. Management Partners is prepared to assist the County in the identification and analysis of the necessary data to facilitate this decision-making.

County staff from a variety of departments participated in the development of information included in this report. Please extend our thanks to the staff from all the involved departments who provided their time, insight and expertise for this report. They were very accommodating and responsive. We look forward to assisting the County in implementing these recommendations.

Sincerely,

John Baker
Senior Partner

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Santa Barbara County Fire Department (SBCFD) provides a wide variety of fire protection, suppression, emergency medical, hazardous materials and other miscellaneous services to a vast geographic area including highly urban and extremely remote rural locations. While officially a dependent fire district with its own revenue source, department operations are also subsidized by the County's General Fund. The department serves not only the unincorporated areas of the County but also State of California Department of Forestry (CDF) areas and the University of California Santa Barbara, and the Cities of Goleta and Buellton

Financially the department is in a difficult position. Due to restrictions on the base property tax revenues from Proposition 13, revenue growth has been relatively modest. The County, as would be expected, hopes to minimize the level of General Fund subsidy required for fire operations. Meanwhile expenditures have increased significantly over the years, in large part due to salaries and benefits. The department is not in a position to make drastic expenditure cuts without reducing personnel and/or closing stations. If the department is to close the gap of General Fund subsidy, or at least maintain the current level, it must focus on consolidation and regionalization of services along with alternative revenue sources, possibly including taking a public safety initiative to County voters. It cannot continue to do business as usual – using the same model of service – and just expect more support from funding sources outside the independent district revenues.

In order to maintain quality service, the County must invest in the Fire Department despite the above-noted financial difficulties. Additional staff are necessary to improve department training programs and, possibly, to expand hazardous materials responses (with the cost largely recovered through user fees). Some County fire facilities are in fair to poor condition and a long-range plan must be prepared for investing in their renovation and/or replacement. The County needs a dedicated and disaster-proof Emergency Operations Center and a better system for expanded fire dispatch without going to the additional expense of a standalone fire dispatch center. The investment in a roving mechanic for repair of fire vehicles and apparatus would reduce overall downtime.

The Department can continue to improve operations through better internal policies and outreach to other County departments. Relations with the Sheriff's Department, County Emergency Management Services

Agency (EMSA), which is part of the Public Health Department and the General Services Department (GS) can and should be strengthened through improved communication and attitude. Internal financial controls and procedures can be streamlined and purchasing habits brought into line with more effective procedures. Finally, the County's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and his staff should assist the department in clarifying some of the inter-departmental issues which include fleet and vehicle maintenance, purchasing practices, and dispatch and response issues. It should be noted that the CEO, Fire Chief and their staff are currently actively working with these other departments to address various operational issues.

There are 47 recommendations associated with this report. Some can be implemented immediately and others will require more time for research and analysis. We are confident the County and Fire Department are ready to harness the energy and enthusiasm of an obviously talented workforce to move things forward.

The very nature of a study of organization and process is to look for ways of improving the services under review. As such, the positive aspects of the service delivery and those employed in providing that service are considered to be givens. As the findings and recommendations for the County Fire Department operations are reviewed herein, it is important to note that there is a dedicated and loyal group of employees working in the department who, on a daily basis, provide good service to the user public. Examples of positive findings include 1) management staffing in the department is very lean; a lot is accomplished with no room for overlap; 2) basic emergency response staffing levels are adequate; 3) overtime, while initially thought to be an issue, is well within reason for a service that is required to provide response 24 hours a day, 365 days a year; 4) fire and building regulatory functions operate effectively; 5) labor/management relations which can often be very divisive are good; 6) response times for emergency services are good and 7) relationships with the community at large are very good.

INTRODUCTION

The County of Santa Barbara occupies 2,774 square miles of land, one third of which is the Los Padres National Forest. The County houses approximately 415,000 residents. That population is split between seven cities (280,000) and several unincorporated areas (135,000). A five member Board of Supervisors elected from districts governs the County. Many of the County's services are provided to all residents of the County (e.g., social services, health, courts) while others are restricted to residents of the unincorporated areas (e.g., parks and planning). Still other services are provided through contracts to municipalities.

In November 2004 the Board of Supervisors directed the County Executive Office to implement a process whereby one department a year would be selected for a Management Services Study ("Study"). The Study would be comprised of staff from the County Executive Office, Auditor-Controller, Human Resources, the department being reviewed along with an outside consultant. Together this team would conduct the following aspects of the study:

- Develop a scope;
- Research comparable jurisdictions to identify best practices;
- Evaluate departmental goals and standards;
- Evaluate a department's organizational structure; and
- Provide options for potential effectiveness, service and systems enhancements and resource optimization.

As the Board requested, the study would commence with the Fire Department. Thus, a project team composed of staff from these identified County departments and the consulting firm Management Partners began the study in May 2005.

The Fire Department is comprised of three divisions: Administration and Support Services, Code Regulation and Planning, and Emergency Operations. It is staffed with 254.5 full time equivalent employees and serves the unincorporated area of the County, the Cities of Buellton and Goleta, the University of California Santa Barbara and the Los Padres National Forest. It houses emergency personnel in 15 stations throughout the County. The administrative functions of the department are housed in three offices located in the southern, central and northern sections of the County. In addition, the department serves all County residents with its Office of Emergency Services (OES) and Hazardous Materials Unit. The operating budget for the department for the 2005-06 fiscal year is $38,760,000; the capital budget for the year is $245,000

PROJECT APPROACH

The review of the County's Fire Department involved a number of different activities. Considerable time was spent reviewing the departmental budget and other documentation regarding structure, services and operations. Interviews were conducted with representatives of the CEO's Office, Emergency Medical Services Agency, County Assessor, General Services, Human Resources, and the County Sheriff's Department. In addition, interviews were conducted with a cross-section of members of the Fire Department. Finally, visits and discussions were held with representatives of agencies outside the County "family" to gather additional information regarding emergency response operations and make comparisons with the operations of the County's Fire Department. The 47 recommendations included in this report are summarized in Attachment A.

A key component of this project was to compare the Santa Barbara County Fire Department (SBCFD) with other fire agencies in an effort to benchmark performance and identify "best practices" within the industry. As part of accomplishing the objectives of the study, the project team identified ten peer agencies and gathered data from these peers via the Internet, publications and phone calls. The discussion which follows describes how fire protection agencies were selected as peers of Santa Barbara County's Fire Department for the purpose of developing benchmark data against which to measure the efficiencies and effectiveness of the department's current operational arrangements.

The selection process began by examining the list of benchmark counties included in the Santa Barbara County FY 05-06 Operating Plan, which identified comparable counties based on the following criteria:

- Total population of more than 250,000 but less than 500,000;
- Suburban to rural environments;
- Do not contain a large metropolitan city;
- Coastal or Bay Area counties (7 fit this criteria); and,
- Known for their scenic beauty and environmental focus.

Benchmark counties include Marin, Monterey, Placer, San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz, Solano, Sonoma, Stanislaus and Tulare. In order to determine whether the fire agencies of these counties were indeed comparable to SBCFD, the National Fire Department Census Database

administered by the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) was queried for fire agencies within California. It provided the following information:

- Organizational type (agency structure). This includes local, state government, federal government, authority, private or industrial fire brigade, contract fire department, other and unknown.
- Department type (range of staffing) including career (100% career firefighter), mostly career (51-99% career), mostly volunteer (1-50% career) and volunteer (0% career).
- Number of stations
- Number of firefighter staff, and
- Paid call for firefighter staff.

Based on this information, most of the fire agencies within the benchmark counties were removed from the final peer list as they were volunteer or paid call based agencies and small in size with respect to the number of stations and staff. Using this database the project team next identified all other counties in California with substantial wild land, a county-based fire protection service, and a population greater than 100,000. On the basis of these criteria, 20 county fire departments were identified for further review.

Special attention was paid to counties that (like Santa Barbara) contract with the California Department of Forestry (CDF) to provide fire protection within State Responsibility Areas for the state rather than the state providing this protection directly (which is the case in the other 50 counties). Those counties included Kern, Los Angeles, Marin, Orange, and Ventura in addition to Santa Barbara. These departments were evaluated based on factors including:

- County population;
- Service area population (where available);
- Acreage of wild land;
- Ratio of developed acreage to wild land;
- Categorization of combustible materials; and
- Number/distribution of incidents in 2003.

Ultimately all the CDF counties but one was judged to be a reasonable peer for Santa Barbara. Los Angeles was removed due to its enormity in terms of stations, staff, budget and population served. Kern and Orange are also much larger than Santa Barbara, but not to the same extent as Los Angeles. Also, since Orange offered an example of a fire authority and Kern is a neighboring county, both are included in the peer list.

The peer departments ultimately selected are shown in Table 1 below. County names in **bold print** indicate CDF counties.

TABLE 1: PEER BENCHMARK FIRE AGENCIES

					Number of Firefighters	
County	**Fire Dept Name**	**Department Type**	**Organ. Type**	**No. of Stations**	**Active Career**	**Active Volunteer**
ALAMEDA	Alameda County Fire Department	Mostly Career	Local	19	225	50
CONTRA COSTA	Contra Costa County Fire Protection District	Mostly Career	Local	30	283	0
KERN	Kern County Fire Department	Mostly Career	Local	45	474	0
MARIN	Marin County Fire Department	Mostly Career	Local	6	81	14
ORANGE	Orange County Fire Authority	Mostly Career	Local	60	804	357
SACRAMENTO	Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District	Mostly Career	Local	42	600	0
SAN LUIS OBISPO	San Luis Obispo County Fire Department	Mostly Volunteer	Local	18	85	0
SANTA BARBARA	Santa Barbara County Fire Department	Mostly Career	Local	15	200	0
SANTA CLARA	Santa Clara County Fire Department	Mostly Career	Local	16	186	24
VENTURA	Ventura County Fire Protection District	Career	Local	31	480	0

Source: Management Partners based on information from USFA National Fire Department Census State download.

The final list of peers included a mix of organizational types representing county departments, one authority, and special districts with and without a state contract with CDF. Most of the agencies have comparable levels of stations and staffing as Santa Barbara County's Fire Department. Moreover, most of the counties where these agencies are located have a similar demographic profile as Santa Barbara (see Attachment B). The information gleaned from the review of these comparison county operations was used primarily in the development of budget and staffing analysis, with some attention also paid to operating procedures.

Santa Barbara was distinguished from the peer groups in several areas that would be of importance in the demand for fire services and the delivery of the services. First, Santa Barbara has a population density much lower than the average for the peer agencies. SBCFD must serve a population that is dispersed over a large area. This has implications in terms of response times and the cost of delivering services per capita and per structure. Santa Barbara also had a higher than average population of persons over 65 years old, a population cohort which creates a demand for emergency medical protection.

Perhaps the closest peer organization for the SBCFD would be in the neighboring County of Ventura. While the Ventura County Fire Protection District (VCFPD) is quite a bit larger than SBCFD in terms of budget and

staff, it serves a similar geography. Like Santa Barbara, the VCFPD delivers service to both urbanized and rural areas.

Table 2 below provides a comparison of various metrics for the SBFCD and the VCFPD.

TABLE 2: COMPARISON OF SANTA BARBARA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT (SBCFD) AND VENTURA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT (VCFPD), FY 2004-05

Resource or Service Parameter	SBCFD	VCFPD
Firefighters	199	484
Total FTE	250.5	555
Stations	15	31
Population Served	153,460	452,584
Area Served (sq. mi.)	2,737	1,013
Budget	$37,503,808	$105,599,454
Calls	9,799	28,821
Comparative Statistics		
Firefighters / 1000 Pop	1.30	1.07
FTE / 1000 Pop	1.63	1.23
Pop (1000) per Station	10.23	14.60
Budget / Capita	$244.39	$233.33
Budget / Station	$2,500,254	$3,406,434
Calls / Station	653	930
Budget / Calls	$3,827	$3,664

(It should be noted that this data is more recent than the comparison data for all peers, so the data varies.)

In terms of resources it is clear that SBCFD has about half the number of stations and less than half the number of calls of Ventura. However the SBCFD budget is only approximately 37% of Ventura's. The budget numbers are actual totals for the 2005 Fiscal Year and include significant capital expenditures in the case of Ventura (approximately $15 million). Santa Barbara's reported capital expenditures were just $290,000. However, Ventura does not budget all Office of Emergency Services expenditures as is the case in Santa Barbara. For both reasons, the comparisons are approximate.

Further discussion of differences in the tax allocation that may account for some of this variation is discussed later in this report. In terms of service costs per capita, Santa Barbara is higher than Ventura, probably because the population served is so far flung. The dispersed population served by SBCFD is also reflected in the number of firefighters per thousand population. Service areas with a low population density typically display a higher staffing level per capita. According to the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) Fire Protection Handbook:

> *The greater the geographic area protected, the greater the resource requirement of the mobile fire suppression forces (i.e., given the same service level expectations, a community providing service to 20 square miles will require more resources than a community providing protection to only 10 square miles; this is caused by the need for timely arrival at the scene of fire, medical, or environmentally threatening incidents).*

A major difference between Santa Barbara and Ventura is the fact that Ventura serves more than half the population within Ventura County cities (Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley, Camarillo, Moorpark, Port Hueneme and Ojai), while Santa Barbara serves only the cities of Buellton and Goleta.

From this comparison it can be concluded that SBCFD generally serves a less urbanized area than VCFPD and does not enjoy the economies of scale available to its larger neighbor, especially with respect to the number of firefighters it must have to provide services to a largely dispersed population. Ironically, SBCFD does serve one of the most urbanized and densely populated areas in the tri-county area when the area of the University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB) and the surrounding community of Isla Vista. This does not translate, however, into additional funding for coverage of the less urbanized areas of the County.

While keeping the above factors in mind, current SBCFD staffing levels compare reasonably well with national averages. According to U.S department profiles through 2003, published by the National Fire Protection Academy in January 2005, the median number of firefighters in the western US is 0.83 per thousand population, as compared to 1.30 for Santa Barbara County shown in Table 2 above.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Budget Issues

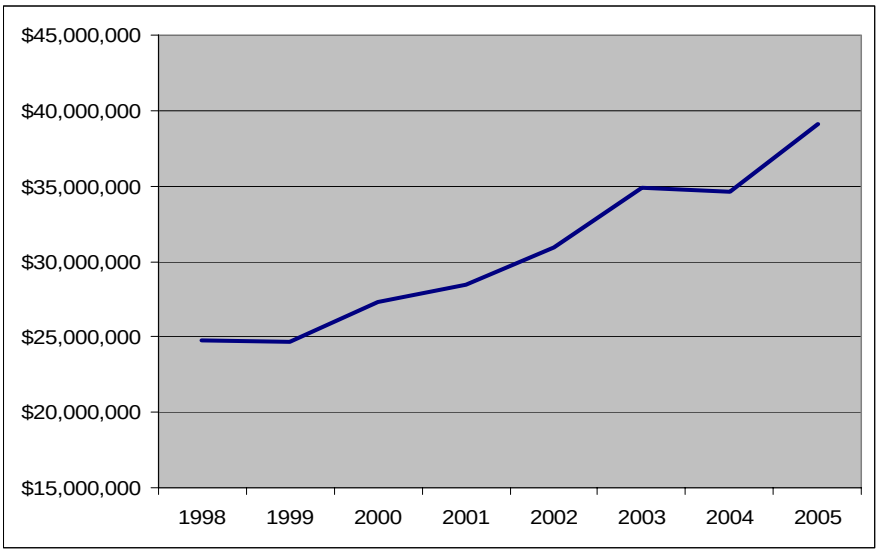
Before reviewing specific operational and other issues in this report, it is important for the reader to have an understanding of the financial situation of the Santa Barbara County Fire Department. The Fire Department is unique in that it is a fire district with its own discrete revenue source but it is also treated as a regular County department and receives General Fund contributions toward overall operating costs.

In this section we will review the department's current expenditures and revenues, a projection of these expenditures and revenues into the future using various financial scenarios, and discuss fiscal and revenue options available to the department and County.

Expenditures

Fire District expenditures have grown rapidly during the late 1990s and the first half of the 2000s. Total departmental expenditures (total personnel and non-personnel costs, including County services and designated expenditures) are up 58% since 1998, a rate of increase averaging slightly over 8% per year. This is shown in Figure 1 below:

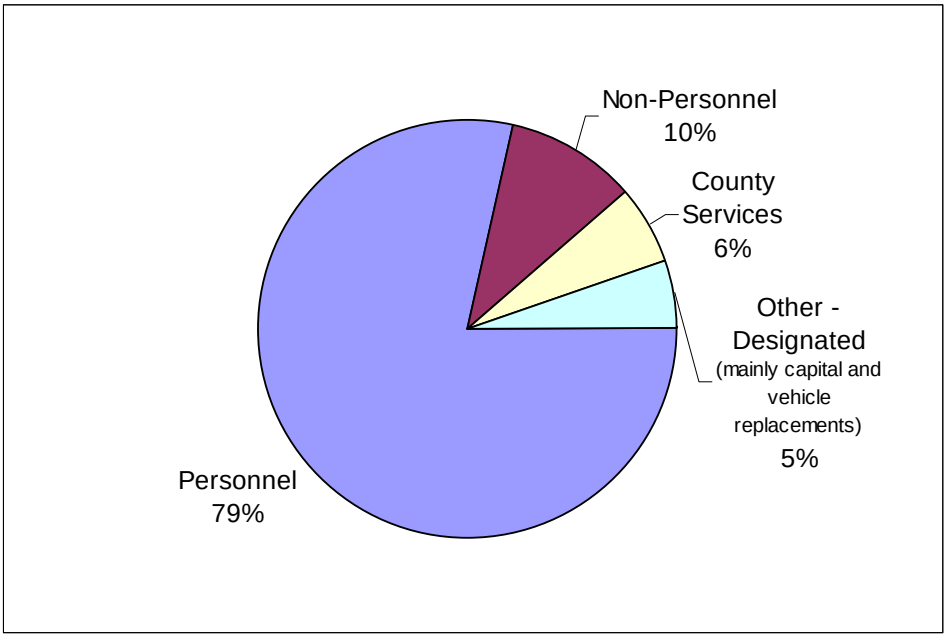
FIGURE 1: FIRE EXPENDITURES 1998-2005 (INCLUDING COUNTY COSTS AND DESIGNATED EXPENDITURES)



This is more than twice the rate of growth observed in other County spending. Major reasons for the increase in expenditures relate to labor costs, although non-personnel costs in the department are also up substantially, partially due to the receipt of homeland security grant funds ($1 million in 2005 alone).

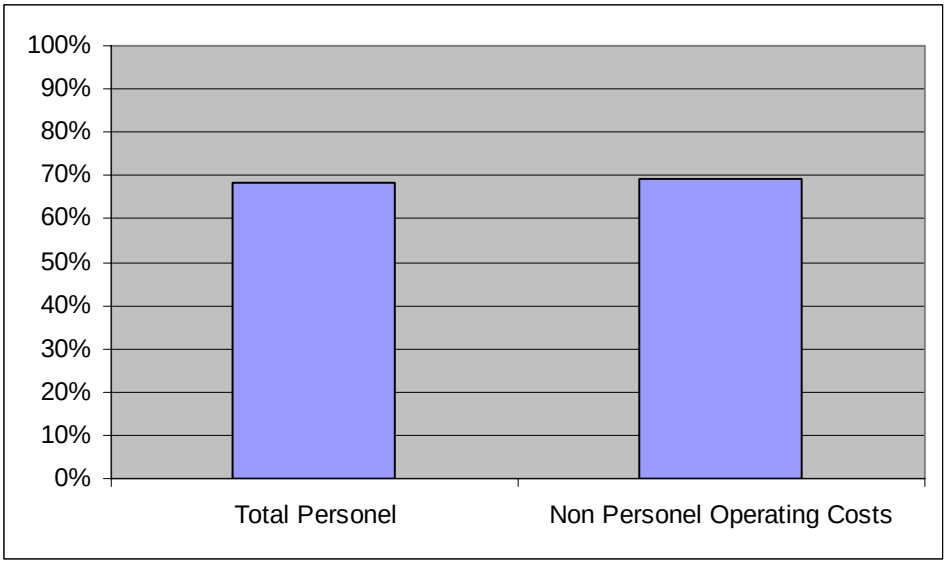
All fire departments are labor intensive. Personnel costs constitute by far the largest segment of the budget. This is shown in the Figure 2 below.

FIGURE 2: MAKE-UP OF COUNTY FIRE EXPENDITURES-2005



Labor accounts for the vast majority of operating costs. Cost increases in labor have been approximately equal to all other operating costs in the period 1998-2005 Figure 3 shows the percentage increase since 1998 in the fire operations budget. Capital and certain other one time designated expenditures are not included in this analysis which accounts for the differential between the percentage increases shown here and overall budget changes. In the figure below total personnel costs include all salaries and benefits, including retirement and workers compensation costs. Non-personnel costs include such items as clothing, communications, equipment purchases and maintenance, office expenses and professional services. Non-personnel spending has been significantly increased by receipt of Homeland Security grants for equipment and supplies. Additionally while County cost allocations (or overhead) have been quite stable, (actually decreasing as a percentage of budget) some internal service fund costs, notably for motor vehicle costs have increased significantly.

FIGURE 3: FIRE DEPARTMENT SPENDING LEVEL INCREASES BY TYPE



It also is important to note that the areas of the department budget that are increasing fastest – those relating to personnel and operations – are also the largest components of district spending. This rate of growth in both personnel and non personnel spending is substantially above the rate of general price level increases during the period analyzed. The Consumer Price Index in the United States is up by just under 20% in the 1998-2005 period

It is not hard to see that the relative importance of personnel spending as a driver of the Fire Department's overall spending vastly outweighs any other expenditure area. Of the $14.3 million increase in spending since 1998, $12.5 million is attributable to personnel costs. This means that approximately 87% of the total increase is related to personnel costs.

Of course personnel services are the most important part of maintaining a capable fire department. Therefore, it is unfortunate that it is not possible to significantly impact the increasing expenditure pattern without slowing the cost increases in personnel related spending. For example, one would have to reduce spending on all County service costs by 15% in order to obtain the reduction equivalent to a 1% adjustment in personnel spending.
Going deeper into Fire Department expenditures, Table 3 below shows the percentage change in line items with a total expenditure over $100,000 in 2005 (excluding three line items for capital equipment or other capital investments, and FICA taxes).

TABLE 3: LINE ITEM BUDGET ANALYSIS, 1998-2005

Line Item Title	1998	2005	Percentage Change	Notes/Explanation
Facilities and Grounds Improvements	$34,462	$154,965	349.7%	2005 includes one-time catch-up spending
Maintenance - Equipment	$45,046	$199,615	343.1%	Related to the addition of air operations
Instruments and Equipment < $5000	$94,619	$400,831	323.6%	OES Homeland Security grant funding
Extra Help and/or Labor	$51,297	$201,616	293.0%	Mainly related to staffing vegetation management program and logistics
Clothing and Personal	$86,545	$313,087	261.8%	Almost $200,000 from OES Homeland Security grants
Liability Insurance	$72,327	$195,141	169.8%	Rate increases plus addition of high-risk equipment such as helicopters and jet skis
Accrued Salaries and Benefits	$66,242	$150,840	127.7%	Timing of closing date
Dispatch Costs	$75,000	$160,363	113.8%	Increased payments to Sheriff. Going to $360,000 in 2006
Workers Compensation	$821,413	$1,795,092	118.5%	Increased rates, compensation and staffing
Motor Pool Charges	$884,717	$1,788,723	102.2%	Change in methodology increased depreciation funding and larger fleet
Overtime Total	$2,312,474	$4,073,156	76.1%	Increased salaries and staffing
MTC/Radio, Communication	$152,976	$260,821	70.5%	ISF formula
FICA Contribution	$64,744	$108,737	68.0%	Increased salaries and staffing
Regular Salaries	$10,650,189	$17,757,986	66.7%	Increased salaries and staffing
Computers/Software < $5000	$183,135	$285,359	55.8%	OES and Homeland Security grants
Retirement Contribution	$3,063,360	$4,657,462	52.0%	Increased rates, salaries and staffing
Professional and Special Service	$99,343	$141,676	42.6%	Additional testing and temporary finance assistance
Overtime Non-reimbursable only	$2,312,474	$3,290,173	42.3%	Increased salaries and staffing
Health Insurance Contribution	$475,449	$643,034	35.2%	Increased rates and staffing
Administration Fees	$306,668	$341,625	11.4%	Overhead costs
Communications	$174,855	$180,580	3.3%	ISF

It is important to note that the table above does not include the costs associated with the new fuels crew added to the department in FY 2006. This constitutes an expenditure of approximately $700,000 annually for a seven-month crew composed of twelve people.

Table 4 below shows the following major changes that occurred with respect to basic staffing and workloads during the period analyzed.

TABLE 4: STAFFING AND WORKLOAD CHANGES, 1998-2005

	1998	2004 - 2005	Percentage Change
Total Staffing	223	250.5	12.3%
Safety (Firefighter) Positions	183	199	8.7%
Emergency Calls	7563	9799	29.6%

Because staffing grew relatively modestly during the analysis period, most of the increase in personnel costs is due to increases in salaries and benefits as well as workers compensation costs. It is also notable that the number of emergency calls the department is responding to has increased roughly three times as fast as firefighter staffing. This must be put in perspective, however, as the number of operating units in the field has not changed, i.e., the number of stations has remained static at 15. Additionally, calls need to be placed in the context of workload and station availability (see a comparison to Ventura County in Table 2 above). More on this issue will be covered in a subsequent section of this report addressing responses by the County's stations.

Revenues

Table 5 below shows the major Fire Department revenue sources by type and the actual amount for FY 2005.

TABLE 5: MAJOR FIRE REVENUE SOURCES BY TYPE

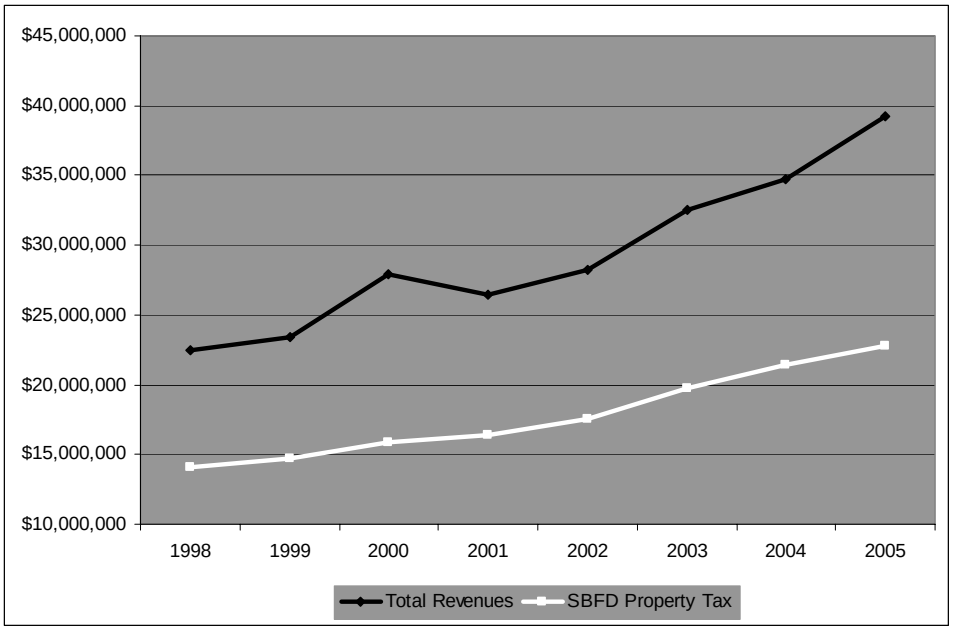
Category	2005
Property Taxes	$21,465,190
Prop 172	$652,430
Federal and State Revenues	$2,409,684
Charges for Service	
HazMat	$900,099
EMS	$192,220
CDF Contract	$5,043,670
Other Charges [w/ reimbursements]	$4,479,058
Licenses/permits	$434,290
General Fund Contribution	$2,308,424

Just as with expenditures, SBCFD revenues are concentrated in one category, the district's share of the basic property tax levy, which accounts for 61% of total revenues.

Overall SBCFD revenue growth during the period 1998-2005 has been robust, particularly in the period 2002-2004. Overall revenue growth is shown in Figure 4 below. SBCFD property tax has continued to show strong growth and during the analysis period has averaged more than 6%. However the SBCFD property tax is growing slightly slower than overall County property tax revenues, due to the Fire District boundaries excluding high value areas such as Montecito and Carpinteria-Summerland and to detachments. Detachments occur when property is annexed into a city and that property is taken out of the fire district. Annexation does not automatically trigger detachment, since County fire provides services in some cities. Most annexation activity has been related to the City of Santa Maria. Since the City of Santa Maria has its own fire department these annexations result in detachments from the fire district and a transfer of property tax revenues. In addition, detachments from high dollar value areas such as Francisco Torres at UCSB have had an impact**.**

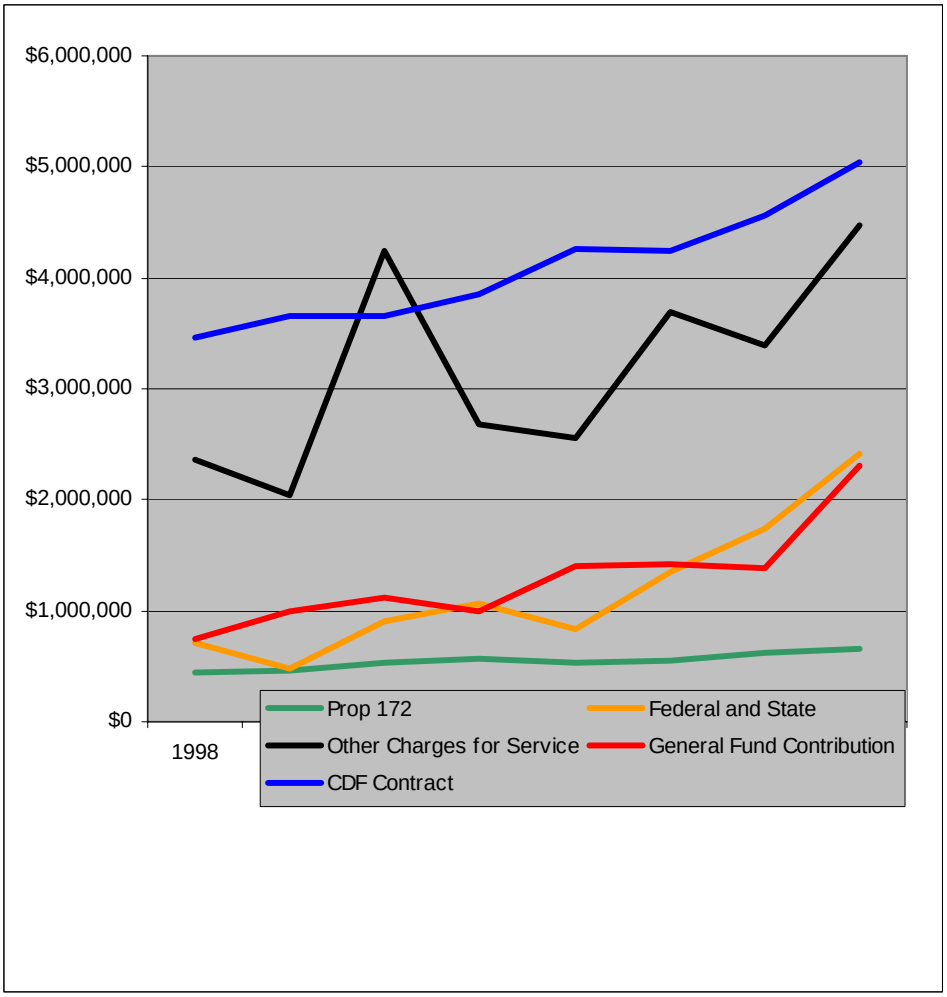
As can be seen in Figure 4 below, SBCFD property tax revenues have grown at a faster rate during the period 2002–2005 than during the period 1998–2001.

FIGURE 4: OVERALL REVENUE GROWTH FOR FIRE, 1998-2005



The trend with respect to other major SBCFD revenue sources (more than $1M in 2005) has been quite variable. The trends on these revenues are shown in Figure 5 below.

FIGURE 5: REVENUE TRENDS OVER TIME BY TYPE, 1998-2005



Each of these revenue sources is quite different.

Federal and State revenues and to some extent charges for services are linked back to incident responses for which the Department is reimbursed for overtime and other expenses, and one time grant funding. These revenues, therefore, are not secure long terms sources of funding for basic operations. The Department should be acknowledged for taking advantage of grant opportunities and for gaining reimbursements for services.

Proposition 172 revenues are local revenues earmarked for public safety services. These revenues have grown slowly, but will increase more quickly over the next several years due to a funding allocation decision previously made by the Board. General Fund support for the department is an annual policy decision, and as can be seen SBCFD operations are requiring a growing allocation. CDF revenues are growing more slowly and are not keeping up with costs. This is reflective of the provisions of the state contract.

From a County budgeting policy position the trends in non-property tax revenues are problematic. Federal funding for homeland security, which has increased rapidly, is for designated uses, but is outside of the control of the County. The next fastest growing revenue source, the General Fund contribution, is controlled by the County, but subject to a myriad of competing funding needs. CDF contract funding has grown, but at a rate that is less than the growth in expenditures. While Federal and State funding may continue to grow, given the funding constraints at both the Federal and State level, it would be questionable to expect continued double digit annual percentage growth in Federal funding or much of an increase in the rate of growth for State funding. , Consequently, it is quite likely that the County will be called on to fund more of the growth in Department expenditures from existing County revenues particularly from the General Fund and using Prop. 172 monies.

A key question for this study is to determine if such support from County discretionary funding is likely to continue increasing and if such a scenario is sustainable.

Revenue and Expenditure Projections

Management Partners has prepared several estimates of SBCFD expenditures and revenues independent of the department's own projections. Specifically nine different scenarios were developed based on assumptions with respect to major expenditure and revenue sources. Because of the importance of district property taxes on the revenue side and personnel costs on the expenditure side, alternatives were developed to reflect a range of possibilities. A forecast of high, medium and low revenue was developed based on a trend analysis of 1995-2005 data. Essentially the revenue forecast is keyed to a linear regression analysis of the property tax data over the ten-year period 1995-2005.

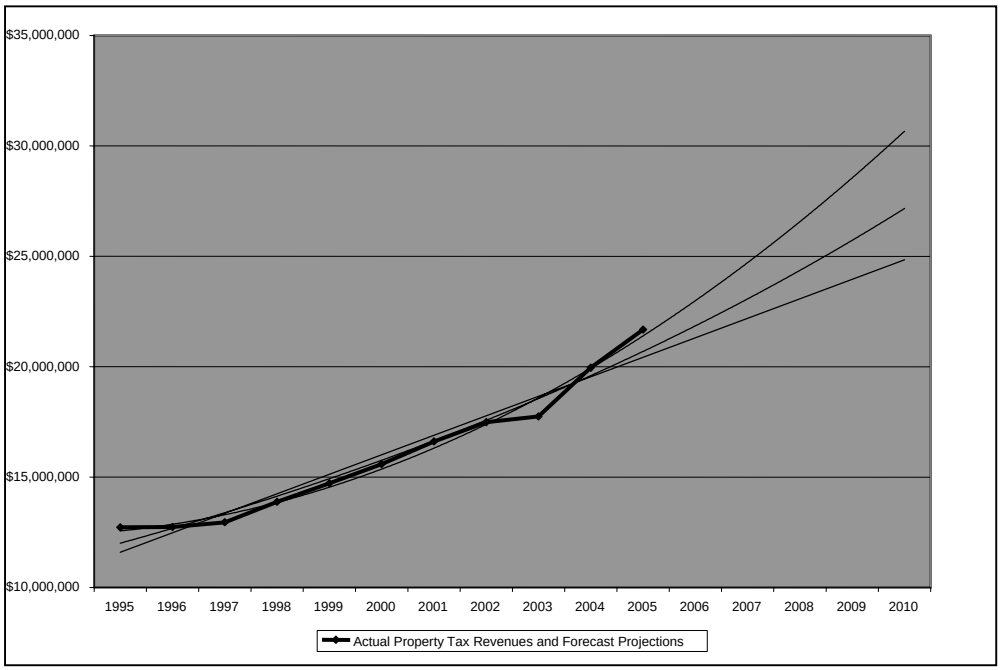
A forecast of high, medium, and low expenditures was also developed for expenditures. The low forecast was based on County budget planning assumptions used by the Fire Department to prepare their Five Year Financing Projections. Generally, these assumptions provide for a declining rate of growth in personnel and benefit costs as pension fund earnings stabilize, and dramatically reduced rates of growth in non-personnel expenditures. The medium forecast was based on a rate of growth in personnel costs of 7% per year and growth in non-personnel expenditures of between 3% and 4% per year. The high forecast was based on the actual rate of growth observed in the 1998-2005 period for the personnel expenditures and somewhat lower than actual rates of growth in non-personnel services. These projections were based on a continuation of FY 2005 service levels but also include additional expenditures for the fuels crew, which has an annual cost of approximately $700,000

It is important to note that none of these expenditure forecasts provide a level of growth equal to that actually observed in the 1998-2005 period. In most circumstances this would be unrealistic. However, Management Partners believes that certain pension cost increases and grant funded

expenditures represent one time costs not likely to be incurred over the analysis period (out to 2010). Nevertheless, before one concludes that the expenditure projections are "too gloomy" this fact should be kept in mind.

The revenue projections from property tax only are shown in Figure 6 below.

FIGURE 6: ACTUAL AND ALTERNATIVE FORECASTS OF SBCFD PROPERTY TAX REVENUES



Statistically all of the forecasts fit the data reasonably well. Therefore, they can be considered good estimates of future direction, if the trend period is typical for the variable (in this case SBCFD property tax). The differences between the high and low estimates are essentially based on how much weight is put on recent property tax performance. If the 2002 - 2005 period is a good indicator, actual results would tend to track the high revenue estimate, and could exceed it. If the 1999-2001 period is more representative of future tax growth, the middle or lower range estimate should prove more accurate. The highest revenue estimate actually fits the data best. For comparison, the estimate of property tax revenues developed by the Fire's Five Year Financial Projection is between the high and medium growth projections provided by this simple model. .

A concern with this data is the fact that property valuation growth has been so strong for the last several years that some economists consider that the real estate market may be exhibiting unsustainably high prices (i.e., a bubble). If this is the case, the estimates may be too high. In order to try to correct for this potential, the trend period was pushed back to

1995, when prices were more stable. This would not fully account for overestimate, however, if the real estate market is due for a major correction resulting in a lowering of sales prices. During the 1990-1995 period property values in Santa Barbara County and Southern California dropped by an average of 15%. This results in little if any growth in property tax revenues for almost 6 years. A repeat of this experience would make any of the projections discussed below much more negative.

Table 6 below shows the results of this analysis. For all the projections it is assumed that the County General Fund will act as the "shock absorber" filling the gap between the revenues available from established revenue sources and the expenditures that need to be covered.

TABLE 6: FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS UNDER NINE SCENARIOS

SCENARIO	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
ONE					
Low Expense	$42,013,602	$43,548,949	$46,019,816	$48,380,214	$49,873,367
Low Revenue	$32,683,660	$34,113,765	$35,614,281	$37,200,508	$38,429,818
gap	$9,329,942	$9,435,184	$10,405,535	$11,179,706	$11,443,549
TWO					
Low Expense	$42,013,602	$43,548,949	$46,019,816	$48,380,214	$49,873,367
Medium Revenue	$35,408,196	$37,781,555	$40,134,424	$43,023,070	$45,466,599
gap	$6,605,406	$5,767,394	$5,885,392	$5,357,144	$4,406,768
THREE					
Low Expense	$42,013,602	$43,548,949	$46,019,816	$48,380,214	$49,873,367
High Revenue	$36,546,445	$39,421,639	$42,517,358	$45,846,042	$48,962,757
gap	$5,467,157	$4,127,310	$3,502,458	$2,534,172	$910,610
FOUR					
Medium Expense	$42,013,602	$44,957,130	$47,720,198	$50,669,021	$53,816,366
Low Revenue	$32,683,660	$34,113,765	$35,614,281	$37,200,508	$38,429,818
gap	$9,329,942	$10,843,365	$12,105,917	$13,468,513	$15,386,548
FIVE					
Medium Expense	$42,013,602	$44,957,130	$47,720,198	$50,669,021	$53,816,366
Medium Revenue	$35,408,196	$37,781,555	$40,134,424	$43,023,070	$45,466,599
gap	$6,605,406	$7,175,575	$7,585,774	$7,645,951	$8,349,767
SIX					
Medium Expense	$42,013,602	$44,957,130	$47,720,198	$50,669,021	$53,816,366
High Revenue	$36,546,445	$39,421,639	$42,517,358	$45,846,042	$48,962,757
gap	$5,467,157	$5,535,491	$5,202,840	$4,822,979	$4,853,609
SEVEN					
High Expense	$42,013,602	$45,927,911	$49,812,270	$54,051,082	$58,677,306
Low Revenue	$32,683,660	$34,113,765	$35,614,281	$37,200,508	$38,429,818
gap	$9,329,942	$11,814,146	$14,197,989	$16,850,574	$20,247,488
EIGHT					
High Expense	$42,013,602	$45,927,911	$49,812,270	$54,051,082	$58,677,306

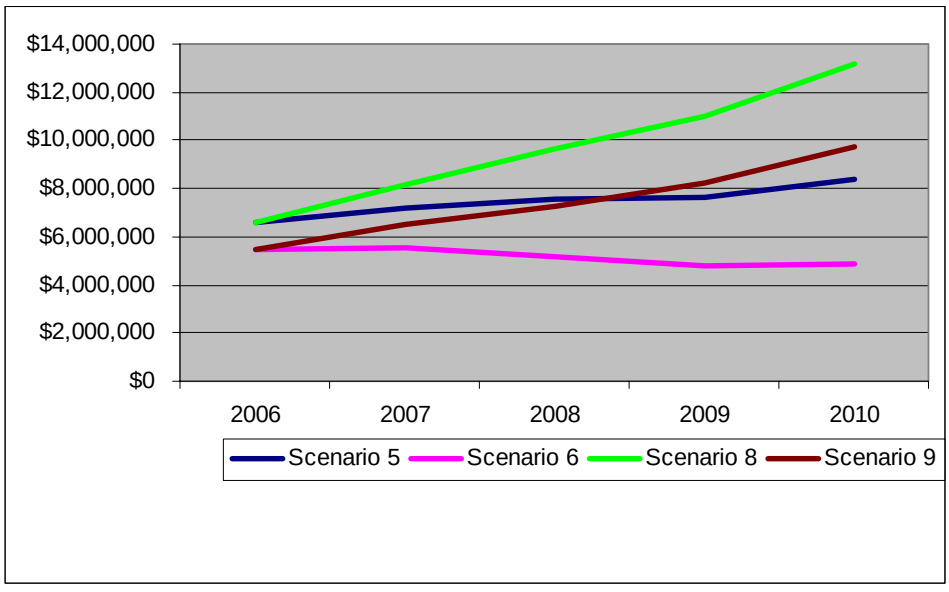
SCENARIO	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Medium Revenue	$35,408,196	$37,781,555	$40,134,424	$43,023,070	$45,466,599
gap	$6,605,406	$8,146,356	$9,677,846	$11,028,012	$13,210,707
NINE					
High Expense	$42,013,602	$45,927,911	$49,812,270	$54,051,082	$58,677,306
High Revenue	$36,546,445	$39,421,639	$42,517,358	$45,846,042	$48,962,757
gap	$5,467,157	$6,506,272	$7,294,912	$8,205,040	$9,714,549

Under each scenario is a gap number. This is the amount of funding that would need to come from either Fire District reserves and / or from the County General Fund in order to balance expenditures and revenues. Even under the most optimistic forecasts the Fire District reserves will be exhausted by 2008, at which point the gap would become purely a General Fund responsibility.

Management Partners reviewed all the projections with respect to what outcomes are most probable. Our conclusion was that all the low expense projection scenarios are unlikely, because some of the expenditure assumptions, particularly with regard to workers compensation costs, non-personnel costs and capital expenditures are not probable. We also concluded that the low revenue scenario was unlikely based on the last decade of actual growth in real property values.

This left scenarios five, six, eight and nine as considered most probable. The anticipated gap between expenditures and revenues is shown in Figure 7 below:

FIGURE 7: PROJECTED GAP TO BE MADE UP BY FIRE RESERVES AND / OR GENERAL FUND REVENUES UNDER MOST PROBABLE FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS



Scenario 6 is closest to the Fire Department's Fire Year Financial Forecast. (Fire's analysis projects use of significant reserves in years 2006, 2007 and 2008, which explains why the General Fund cost grows slightly on an annual basis in these projections.)

Since there is no other source of projected revenue for SBCFD (once reserves are exhausted) it is assumed that the gap would have to be filled from the General Fund. The implication of any of the scenarios is that the amount of County General Fund support coupled with the draw of Fire reserves will need to increase in the short run, but may be moderated by high revenue growth or slower expenditure growth in the 2009–2010 period. However even in the most optimistic projection there will be a requirement of approximately $4.8 million from the General Fund by 2010, because existing Fire reserves will be exhausted by 2008.

Perhaps the most realistic assumption would be to expect the General Fund contribution would be in the range of $8 to $10 million by 2010.

The County of Santa Barbara estimates in the current budget show discretionary General Fund revenues to be approximately $148 million. These revenues are expected to grow from 6% to 7.3% annually. However, there is a growing gap between projected growth in General Fund discretionary revenues and projected increases in the County's major expenditure category: personnel costs. Therefore, under current County budget planning models the level of funding increase for fire services possible under some realistic scenarios would not be available without service cuts in other areas.

Fiscal Options

Without generating some new revenues, County General Fund support for fire services will have to increase, or relatively substantial reductions in operations will be necessary. On the issue of expenditure reductions, it is not likely that any combination of budget reductions that would exempt the potential for station closure and/or firefighter layoffs would achieve the level of expenditure reductions necessary to stabilize costs and maintain the level of General Fund support to the current level or below. This is because the level of facility maintenance and repair is already too low, overhead within the department is minimal, and support costs from the County are reasonable.

Although some stations have a relatively minimal workload, any closure would arguably increase public safety risks (see Table 15 later in report). An analysis of the options for station closure is beyond the scope of this analysis. However, this analysis has determined that there are several stations operated by different jurisdictions in close proximity to each other. In such circumstances it is possible that an intergovernmental agreement could result in a station closure with a more limited impact on public safety. Given the significant funding issues facing SBFCD, this report recommends that the potential for station consolidation be considered. Further details on this recommendation are located below in this report.

Other potential expenditure reductions are available with respect to services provided to the State of California, specifically the University of California – Santa Barbara and CDF areas of state responsibility. In both cases the cost of delivering appropriate services is greater than the revenues derived from the service. Based on the analysis, while Management Partners believes a credible case can be made for the state making additional revenue contributions in both areas, the likelihood of such action is negligible, which leaves the County with the very unpalatable idea of reducing services. The collateral impact from service reduction to state areas of responsibility and the University may be greater than the savings achieved. Therefore, these options, which are discussed in more detail later in this report, will have to be approached very carefully.

As noted above, expenditure reductions of the level necessary to balance revenues and expenditures without additional General Fund support would necessitate service level reductions at the station and firefighter level. However, generally speaking, the closure of fire stations is seen as a last resort, and local governments usually seek additional revenues prior to taking such action.

Prior to discussing revenue enhancement options it is worthwhile to review the basis and relative magnitude of the existing SBCFD property tax levy. This property tax levy, like all property tax allocations, was "frozen" by Proposition 13 in 1978 in that the County could no longer set its own tax rate. Proposition 13 only set the rate and base for the property tax. Because after Proposition 13 property tax essentially became a state, not local, revenue, AB 8 approved by the Legislature in 1979 determines how the receipts are allocated among local governments that had a portion of the basic pre-Proposition 13 property tax. The AB 8 allocation formula quickly became very complex and it is continually subject to tinkering by the State Legislature which can siphon off funds, but the basic idea was this: the amount of property tax received by a local agency is a function of its relative share of the property tax levied prior to Proposition 13.

A part of the reason that Santa Barbara fire faces significant budget constraints is the fact that the tax rate for the department prior to Proposition 13 was fairly low relative to other similar jurisdictions. The best example is probably the neighboring Ventura County Fire Protection District. While VCFPD is significantly larger than SBCFD, it serves a similar area and in terms of government structure the two agencies are virtually identical. However, when one looks at the ratio of property tax revenues to assessed valuation in the two districts as shown in Table 7 below, it turns out that Ventura has a significantly higher effective level of tax receipts per $1,000 of assessed valuation. The reason for this relates back to decisions made more than 25 years ago when local government actually set property tax rates.

TABLE 7: COMPARISON OF VCFPD AND SBCFD TAX RECEIPTS

	Ventura County Fire Protection District	Santa Barbara County Fire Department
FY 2005 Assessed Valuation	$ 54,799,237,000	$ 18,355,620,327
FY 2005 District Property Tax Revenues	$ 78,264,659	$ 18,929,393
Effective Tax Receipts Per $1,000 of AV	$ 1.43	$ 1.03

If Santa Barbara had the same effective tax rate as Ventura, the department would be receiving approximately $26 million per year in basic property tax, an increase of 40% relative to the existing base. It should be noted that since the property tax, overall, has a fixed rate and base, other agencies in Ventura County receive slightly less in revenue relative to Santa Barbara due to the variances between the allocations of the county fire districts. Since there are probably 100 or more governments with a "slice" of the property tax pie in the two counties and these agencies vary by type, scale and scope, it is impossible to draw any further conclusions except to say that in Santa Barbara property owners pay less of a percentage in property taxes to the Fire District than in some other counties.

Revenue Options

Any major initiative to increase revenues to the Fire District will hinge on a vote by the residents of the district. The fact that the district includes just a sub-set of the total County population obviously complicates this issue, and it may be better to pursue some type of countywide measure with support from other fire service providers and their governing boards.

Options for the Fire District fall into two main categories: (1) special tax or fee measures and (2) general tax or fee measures. Special tax measures are for designated purposes (e.g., fire protection) and must be approved by a 2/3 vote. General tax measures concern taxes that are used at the discretion of the governing board; they require majority approval. There are numerous categories of taxes and fees in each category including parcel, transaction and use, sales, business license, utility users, transfer and hotel occupancy taxes.

According to *Fiscal Effects of Voter Approval Requirements on Local Governments*, by Kim S. Rueben and Pedro Cerdán, prepared in 2003 by the Public Policy Institute of California, more than half of the 139 tax measures proposed by fire special districts since 1986 have passed. The vast majority of these have been parcel tax measures. However, according to the same study, in southern California only 27% of special district tax measures for police or fire purposes passed. Generally speaking local approval of tax measures is harder to achieve in southern and inland California areas.

According to the same study, countywide tax measures for police, jail and/or fire purposes passed about 33% of the time. The passage rate was about the same in southern California. However, there is less data on countywide measures with only 24 being reported for police and fire purposes.

In the November 2004 elections 17 special parcel tax measures were on the ballot and only 3 garnered the necessary approval margin of 2/3. The only county fire district with a measure on the ballot (Placer County) failed with 50.9% voting in favor.

Recent changes in the law permit a city or a county to place a local transaction and use tax before the voters with a 2/3 vote of the governing board of the agency. A special transactions and use tax for public safety failed in Los Angeles County with a 59.6% approval margin. General tax measures of this class were also offered by five counties, of which one, in Del Norte County, passed. Some of these elections also offered an advisory measure on the use of fund, but this did not seem to have a significant impact on approval rates.

A report by Coleman Advisory Services on the November election results observed that, “Generally earmarking a tax for a special purpose (e.g., police, fire, EMS, libraries, parks etc.) is not worth the two-thirds vote requirement needed to pass a special tax.”

If the County of Santa Barbara considers a tax of some type to support County fire services, it might be best packaged on a countywide basis and use the authority for a transactions and use tax to take advantage of the significant visitor based spending that increases relative sales tax receipts in the area.

Another approach the County may wish to explore in terms of revenue generation would be some type of fire service assessment. While such assessments would require voter approval, the County has considerable flexibility in how such an assessment measure could be designed. For example, it could incorporate different zones based on population densities, the number of multi-story buildings or another proxy for the level of fire response services needed.

Because of the significant uncertainty associated with any meaningful expenditure reductions, the significant additional General Fund resources projected to be necessary to fund “status quo” services, the negative impact this reallocation would have on other County services and the speed with which SBCFD will require new revenues under status quo operations, the County should begin to explore approval of new revenue sources.

Recommendation 1: Direct staff to return with a more in-depth analysis of revenue enhancements and expenditure reductions for the SBCFD, which could begin to help offset departmental revenue expenditure gap in the coming fiscal years. This analysis should be done in conjunction with the budget process and considered in parallel with further analysis of the potential for savings revenue enhancement such as Fire ambulances transporting patients, outsourcing of billings and collections and from station consolidation opportunities. If the County wishes to begin impacting the General Fund contribution to the Fire Department, the alternative will be to begin looking at reductions in service and contingencies following this thinking should be developed. Possible options for the future beyond 2006-07 are discussed in a following section of this report addressing emergency response.

Dispatch Issues

Emergency dispatch operations for the County are handled by the Sheriff's Office. The Santa Barbara County Public Safety Dispatch Center dispatches separately for law enforcement, fire departments and ambulance services. In addition to the County departments and all ambulance services, the Center also acts as the dispatching entity for Carpinteria/Summerland Fire, Guadalupe Police and Fire, Orcutt Fire, and Solvang Fire. The annual costs for operating the Center are $3.9 million including indirect costs, of which $802,000 is allocated on paper to the Fire Department with $360,000 actually being charged with the General Fund making up the difference. This annual operating cost is based on a complex Excel spreadsheet which allocated the dispatch terminals, percent used by each agency, all costs of the Center, and other factors. For the current year, it is anticipated that an additional one-time cost of $500,000 will be allocated to the Fire Department to pay for the upgrade of the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. It is anticipated the Fire Department portion will be funded from a Homeland Security grant.

The Center has 26 authorized dispatcher positions and 4 supervisors. At the time of our review, there were ten vacancies. This vacancy level requires that the Center sometimes be short staffed or require overtime to meet requirements. The stated minimum staffing for any regular 10 hour shift is four personnel. If there were no vacancies in the Center, there would be at least six dispatchers on duty at all times. The dispatchers are cross-trained to be able to handle fire, EMS and law enforcement calls. All are trained in EMD (Emergency Medical Dispatch, medical protocols via telephone with the caller until an appropriate release time).

The minimum staffing of every shift in the Center is four people including, a fire dispatcher, an ambulance dispatcher and two law enforcement dispatchers. All dispatchers are prepared to supplement other positions depending on the incident. The Dispatch Supervisor is also fully trained and can fill in when the incidents require this level of coverage or there are staffing issues requiring the supervisor to fill in.

When a call is received, it is taken by the call taker and transferred to the appropriate dispatcher for a determination of the unit to be sent to answer the call. If the call requires one or more of the emergency service providers, the appropriate dispatcher receives the call and notifies via radio and electronic signals fire, ambulance and/or law enforcement units of the need to respond. Emergency medical responses must be sent to both fire and ambulance units as the two services are on different radio frequencies. EMS calls from designated areas of the County that are considered remote with long distances to medical to emergency medical facilities automatically result in the dispatching of helicopters to facilitate a timely transport to the nearest emergency medical facility. Calls taken that involve incidents on state regulated roadways are transferred to CHP dispatch.

In the case of calls for County fire, once a dispatch has been made, tactical operations are handled on a separate radio frequency. If multiple alarms (i.e., additional equipment and manpower) are required, the Fire Department may open an expanded dispatch operation housed at the Fire Administration headquarters (approximately 1/2 mile away) to manage the resources of the department. The staffing of this dispatch center comes from pre-assigned fire personnel. This operation keeps track of the incident through the tactical radio channel and determines if additional resources are to be ordered. If the need arises, the request is made of the Dispatch Center to assign the appropriate unit based on pre-determined protocols and unit availability. If an incident exceeds the resource capability of the Fire Department, expanded dispatch is used to place “orders” through a regional fire center in Los Angeles County or the state operation located in Riverside.

A new CAD system (Tri-Tech) will be installed at the Santa Barbara County Public Safety Dispatch Center. With new software capabilities, it is fully anticipated that the quality of dispatching operations will be improved. The system also offers the capability of future add-on modules to further enhance the dispatching, monitoring and record keeping for all calls taken at the Center. There will be better information handling all types of calls at both ends of the process (i.e., dispatch and responder) with compatible equipment in the emergency vehicles. The addition of these modules will be part of future budget decisions by the Fire Department.

From the perspective of the Santa Barbara County Public Safety Dispatch Center, the system operates with the best possible efficiency given the available equipment in the Center, and will only improve with the completion of the new CAD installation. The operators of the system see

the benefits of the current operating mode as outweighing any downsides that may exist. The biggest advantage discussed relates to the single point of knowledge regarding an incident that may require multiple disciplines. If the services of fire, medical and law enforcement personnel are required at an incident, all are dispatched from one point, almost simultaneously. If medical needs can initially be addressed by law enforcement personnel closer to the incident while awaiting paramedics from the ambulance and/or fire units, maybe a life can be saved. If an event grows, the availability of trained dispatchers for law enforcement, fire and medical emergencies is seen as an advantage over a stand-alone dispatch center with limited numbers of personnel. During normal operations of the Center, there is also an economy of scale relating to both personnel and equipment. If the radio frequencies for fire and the contracted ambulance provider, American Medical Response (AMR) could be consolidated, there would be even greater benefits in terms of personnel utilization within the Center.

The Fire Department does not see the benefits of the combined communications in the same manner. There is a general feeling among some Fire staff that a separate dispatch center for fire and emergency medical would better serve the department's needs and those of the general public receiving these services. There are several issues the Department raises with the current mode of dispatch:

- The expanded dispatch operation at fire headquarters is second rate; a central dispatch function should have more responsibilities but such is not possible under the current configuration.
- The time keeping system that feeds into the records for both the Fire Department and EMSA can result in different response times being recorded.
- The cost for County fire dispatching is excessive for the service received; better service for the same costs could be achieved through separate fire dispatching operations.
- The statistical information used to develop costs for all the agencies using the system is confusing and does not accurately reflect the County fire portion of the cost.
- The complexities of dispatching law enforcement, fire and emergency medical calls are such that dispatchers are overburdened and subject to burnout due to the knowledge and skill requirements attendant to the different types of dispatching. While acknowledging the role dispatchers play in emergency response and the difficult nature of the job, there are quality issues (such as wrong addresses being dispatched, too little or too much information).
- The system of notification of key personnel of incidents in a timely manner is deficient.
- The current system, by virtue of its location, naturally favors law enforcement needs over those of the Fire Department.

The Santa Barbara County Public Safety Dispatch Center calculates total Dispatch Center workload as the sum of law enforcement calls, fire calls, EMS/ambulance calls, and E911 calls. While it is true that the E911 calls often "transform" into the specific agency calls, their total is added to the workload volume to show the work provided by call takers compared with dedicated console dispatch. As shown in Table 8 below, SBCFD's fire-only share of overall Dispatch Center calls is relatively low at roughly 5% over the past two fiscal years; if doubled to include the work of call takers who initially answered those same fire calls, the fire plus fire-related E911 workload represents 9.9% in both fiscal years.

TABLE 8: SBCFD SHARE OF DISPATCH CENTER CALL VOLUME

	FY 03-04	FY 04-05
SBCFD Calls	9,709	10,211
Total Dispatch Center Calls	196,367	205,793
Percent of Total	4.94%	4.96%
If Including E911 Calls	9.9%	9.9%

According to information provided for this review, the Sheriff's Department allocates 1.33 dispatch consoles to "fire dispatch." As shown in Table 9 below, the costs associated with this console are then broken down and allocated to the various fire agencies, with SBCFD having a 20.59% share. SBCFD's cost allocation is, thus 20.59% of the total costs associated with operation of the Dispatch Center, a total of $802,136. The Fire Department, however, pays $360,000 for Fiscal Year 2005-06.The change from $160,000 to $360,000 was negotiated through the Office of the County Executive.

TABLE 9: SBCFD COST SHARE OF DISPATCH CENTER

Dispatch Consoles			Break-down of Fire Console:	
26.67%	1.33	LEO Freq 1	20.59%	County Fire
20.00%	1.00	LEO Freq 2	3.37%	Carp/Summerland
26.67%	1.33	EMS Console	0.97%	Solvang Fire
0.00%	1.00	Lead Dispatcher	1.14%	Orcutt Fire
26.66%	1.33	Fire Dispatch	0.59%	Guadalupe Fire
100.00%	6	Consoles	26.66%	= 1 Fire Console

One might question why SBCFD's call volume is just 5-10% of total Dispatch Center calls yet it is allocated to pay approximately 21% of Dispatch Center costs. In addition to calls for service, there is a need to

include some fixed cost to cover the availability of dispatching services on a 24 hour a day basis. The Sheriff's Department points out that true dispatching costs ($802,000) are much higher than County Fire is actually paying ($360,000) and cite the fact that AMR, the County's contracted ambulance provider, has essentially the same dispatch allocation as SBCFD (1.33 consoles) and pays in over $970,000 per year versus $360,000 paid by County fire.

Fire Department management has preliminarily investigated alternatives to the combined dispatch with the Sheriff. They include 1) a stand-alone dispatch center for fire operations, 2) combining with San Luis Obispo County fire dispatch, 3) combining with Ventura County fire dispatch, and 4) combining in some fashion with state forestry operations. The ability to combine with any of these operations has not been researched as part of this study.

Based on our observations at the Dispatch Center, there is some validity to the concerns raised by the Fire Department. These concerns are not, however, without solutions if the parties involved demonstrate a willingness to address them. As one employee we met with stated, "If there are issues with the service, why are we not told of the issues so they can be addressed?" As indicated in a subsequent section of this report regarding inter-agency coordination and cooperation, there must be a changing of attitudes with an emphasis on how to provide the best service to the customer rather than isolated departmental opinions.

The Fire Department currently expends $360,000 annually for dispatch services with the Sheriff's Office. Some staff in the Fire Department feels the charge to be excessive for the services rendered. Without addressing the quality of the service at this point in the report, we do not think the department could duplicate emergency dispatch for a like amount in a stand-alone system or in a consolidated system with other counties or the state. Personnel costs alone would far exceed $360,000. A stand-alone system would require at least nine dispatchers to handle call taking and dispatch. A conservative estimate of this cost is approximately $550,000 annually. With a supervisor were added to the mix, the costs would be well above $600,000.

If County fire were to consolidate with other fire agencies in the county currently contracting with the Sheriff, the costs would likely be less than a stand-alone center. Based on calls for service, however, it is doubtful that they would be lower than $360,000. Neither a stand-alone or consolidated dispatch takes into account the AMR dispatching needs. The company has been a big participant in the implementation of the new CAD system. It is unclear how the ambulance services would be handled if fire and its EMS calls were handled by a separate system. With the imminent implementation of the new CAD system, now is not the time to move to alternate systems for dispatch.

Recommendation 2: Assess alternative dispatch options for the Fire Department only at a time when a new system is being evaluated for the combined operations. While there may be benefits to a separate dispatch center for fire and medical emergency, they must be weighed against the magnitude of the deficiencies of the current system and the ability to correct or mitigate those deficiencies. There are a number of issues that need to be evaluated when changing systems. Radio frequencies, antennas, repeaters, etc. are all part of the total system that must be made to fit emergency communication needs. It is possible a separation of activities within the existing center could prove beneficial without having to incur the expenses of a separate system. Making the best of the resources at hand can be facilitated by good communication between departments.

The expanded dispatch operation is "clunky." The use of such a system is standard operating procedure in a fire command system. Incidents requiring multiple resources are handled on a tactical basis with fire personnel making decisions about those needs. The dispatcher only serves to maintain status of equipment and personnel that are the responsibility of the jurisdiction and the particular dispatch center. If the incident command feels more resources are needed, the dispatcher fulfills that need until such time when the need exceeds the local resources. Then it becomes the purview of the expanded dispatch to acquire the additional resources – through mutual aid or regional/state resources centers as the case may dictate. The County Fire expanded dispatch is operating in a manner similar to the manual systems of the 1950s and 60s. It is located in a Fire headquarters conference room. Its radio capabilities (not capacity) are better than that era, but the process of keeping track of resources bears a striking resemblance. Its computer capabilities are severely restricted. Its radio capacity is limited. It relies on call back of emergency personnel supposedly requiring only five to ten minutes to respond or to use administration office staff during normal working hours.

The Santa Barbara County Public Safety Dispatch Center contains a conference/training room with several computers that are web enabled. It is adjacent to the main floor for dispatch operations. The capacity exists in the dispatch system to provide information to this adjacent room that can be updated electronically in conjunction with any data that is being received from service providers from outside the jurisdiction of the County.

Recommendation 3: Move the Fire Department expanded dispatch operation to the Santa Barbara County Public Safety Dispatch Center. This would involve the sworn personnel assigned to staff expanded dispatch going to the Sheriff's dispatch center. Non-sworn administrative personnel would no longer be part of

expanded dispatch. While this can be seen as an inconvenience, neither the distance nor the frequency of events requiring expanded dispatch are such as to cause disruptions that cannot be managed. If there are sufficient personnel in the Santa Barbara County Public Safety Dispatch Center at the time when there is a need for expanded dispatch, they can fulfill part of the staffing need. The Center currently has much greater capacity to handle the needs of expanded dispatch than the conference room at fire headquarters.

This transfer will require the expenditure of funds to make the necessary software ties to the computers now in the conference/training room. It will result in a much more functional operation for the Fire Department. It will also have the advantage of bringing together dispatcher and fire emergency personnel under the same roof, increasing the possibility of greater cooperation during and after an incident.

There have been inter-agency strains over the recording of response times. EMSA is very concerned about response time as a part of quality service in medical emergencies. It desires extremely accurate times in order to assess response procedures to, in turn, be able to develop better times. The Fire Department, while not having any issue with improving response times, does not maintain a record keeping system that utilizes the same time system. Its national reporting system utilizes a different software reporting system than the Dispatch Center.

Recommendation 4: Ensure software systems will provide the necessary linkage for single entry of response times geared to the information that is collected for EMSA purposes. With the new CAD software there will be the ability to develop the interface for the Fire Department's needs for its fire reporting requirements

While the charges made to the Fire Department budget for dispatch services do not appear to be excessive, the methodology of getting to the charge is confusing. A simple description of the methodology is necessary to demonstrate costs of providing the service.

Recommendation 5: Develop a simplified description of charges for all dispatch services for the users of the system. The detail of charges should demonstrate fixed and use costs for each of the jurisdictions paying for services from the Dispatch Center. Until the charges are laid out clearly, there will be continuing concerns for what is being paid for in relation to the value received.

The world of emergency response has changed dramatically over the past 20 years. Both the public and professionals have greater expectations for what will be accomplished. Technology and equipment advances have fueled these expectations. In many respects, the emergency services dispatcher has been the recipient of these expectations. Electronic advancements have been considerable in the equipment that must be operated, monitored, understood, etc. Procedures for addressing incidents have become much more complicated for both the law enforcement and fire/medical emergency sides of the house. Dispatchers must know much more about more things than in decades past. The stress of the training requirements of procedures and equipment coupled with the real life incidents results in the type of turnover that is being experienced by the Santa Barbara County Public Safety Dispatch Center. An example of this is the addition of detailed emergency medical assistance to a 9-1-1 caller following a prescribed protocol. On top of this one must add the potential liabilities for making an error. Discussions with dispatchers indicate that job stress is significant and the need to be proficient in both law enforcement and fire/medical emergency procedures and policies contributes to job fatigue and burnout.

Recommendation 6: Conduct an evaluation of each dispatcher through one-on-one interviews to determine impacts of the job on each individual's perception of his/her ability to properly perform the job. This is not intended to be a personnel performance evaluation. Rather it is a survey of each dispatcher to ascertain how the complexities of doing both law enforcement and fire/emergency medical dispatching are impacting the service provided to the different first responders.

Recommendation 7: Evaluate the benefits of separating law enforcement and fire/medical emergency dispatch duties within the Dispatch Center. While this may increase the costs of providing the services, ensuring that dispatchers are able to handle the requirements of the job without the stress of learning "two" jobs may prove beneficial in the longer run by having more experienced dispatchers. Having dispatchers who are expected to know only the complexities of either law enforcement or fire/medical emergencies could possibly reduce the stresses of the job and result in greater job satisfaction and a lower level of turnover. Changes recently introduced in the Center during the training program for new dispatchers may assist in teaching the complexities of the job without some of the associated stress.

Fire Department personnel feel the emergency notification system for significant events is deficient. There does not appear to be any set policy or procedure for notification of the Fire Chief, Chief Executive Officer, Manager of Emergency Services or members of the Board of Supervisors for incidents occurring in the County. Dispatch has a paging system that it activates for certain events, but it does not meet the needs of some of the users in the County organization.

> **Recommendation 8: Develop an agreed upon protocol for notification of those "need to know" officials in County government regarding emergency response incidents and ensure the software system will be capable of emergency notification.** A comprehensive system that would meet the needs of the County of Santa Barbara should be possible from within the new Tri-Tech CAD. Agreeing on what that notification procedure should be is a matter of the involved parties sitting down and working out the procedures for dispatchers to follow.

Perceptions about service level inequities were examined because it is common for a party that does not control the operation of a program to think that the one that does is getting favored treatment. Management Partners' review of the dispatch function did not entail a detailed review of activities over the course of a long period of time. Our discussions with parties involved with the service did not disclose any significant areas of favoritism toward law enforcement with the possible exception of the notification procedures noted above. Dispatch is handled on a first call in basis with dispatching going to dedicated dispatchers for fire and medical emergencies. In fact, we were told that in the event of dispatcher shortages, the first position to be vacated would be one of the law enforcement positions.

Emergency Response Issues[1]

Fifteen County fire stations are located within Santa Barbara County. As shown in Table 10 below, compared to the other peer fire agencies, Santa Barbara County Fire Department is in the middle of the range in terms of the number of stations per capita (0.04 compared to 0.01 through 0.07). Regarding the number of stations per square mile, Santa Barbara has the same number of station as four other agencies, which is 0.01.

[1] It should be noted that there may be slight variations in the numbers for calls for service/responses in the tables in this section due to reporting differences for agencies, both internal and external to the County. The numbers have not been reconciled in order to maintain the integrity for the reporting agency. The numerical differences do not materially effect the conclusions that have been developed.

TABLE 10: STATIONS PER CAPITA AS COMPARED WITH PEER AGENCIES (1)

Fire Agency	Number of Stations	Population	Stations Per Capita	Square Mileage	Stations Per Sq. Mile
Alameda	19	1,461,030	0.01	738	0.03
Contra Costa	30	1,001,136	0.03	720	0.04
Kern	45	713,807	0.06	8,141	0.01
Marin	6	246,073	0.02	520	0.01
Orange	60	2,957,766	0.02	789	0.08
Sacramento	42	1,330,711	0.03	966	0.04
San Luis Obispo	18	253,118	0.07	3,304	0.01
Santa Barbara	**15**	**403,134**	**0.04**	**2,737**	**0.01**
Santa Clara	16	1,678,421	0.01	1,291	0.01
Ventura	31	791,130	0.04	1,845	0.02

(1) Population numbers reflect 2000 census data for each county

Each station within Santa Barbara County houses staff and apparatus in order to respond to emergencies. To ensure continuous coverage 24/7, staff work one of three shifts—Shift A, B or C. The number of people on each shift varies by station and corresponds to the apparatuses that are housed at each station. Each apparatus has a unique function that enables the department to respond to emergencies. Every station has at least one Type I (structure firefighting) engine used for all emergency responses (e.g., structure fires, vehicle accidents, rescues etc.).[2] An engine is considered to be basic life support (BLS)[3] or advanced life support (ALS) depending on whether there is one firefighter/paramedic on the engine.[4] An ALS engine is different from an ambulance in that an ambulance is minimally staffed by one paramedic and one EMT and the ambulance is responsible for transporting the patient from the scene of the emergency to the most appropriate medical facility based on the base hospital emergency physician destination decision. Ten stations also house Type III **(**brush trucks**)**, which are designed for wild land firefighting purposes. These have shorter wheelbases, are 4-wheel drive and are designed for off-road use. A ladder truck on the other hand is primarily a

[2] Source: USFA and US Census. Population and square mileage are for the county in which the fire agency is located, not necessarily the service area or population of the fire agency.

[3] According to the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), BLS is a primary level of pre -hospital care that includes the recognition of life threatening conditions and the application of simple emergency life-saving procedures, including the use of adjunctive equipment aimed at supporting life compared to ALS, which is a sophisticated level of pre -hospital care that builds on basic life support procedures and includes the use of invasive techniques such as advanced airway management, cardiac monitoring and defibrillation, intravenous therapy, and the administration of specific medications to save the patient's life. Source: International City/County Management Association Center for Performance Measurement, 2005 Fire Services template.

[4] SBCFD categorizes engines as front line, auxiliary and reserve. The auxiliary engines are utilized when front line engines are sent out of county or when a large fire that requires additional engines to be staffed and utilized. The auxiliary engines are also used when the front line engines are in the garage or out of service for maintenance and repairs. The "reserve" engines refer to engines used by Reserve firefighters who are called in to cover any subsequent calls when the primary engine company is out on an extended call or when the Reserve firefighters are called in to directly assist the primary engine company on a call. Appendix 2 includes a breakout of these types of engines. Source: Santa Barbara County Fire Department, August 2005.

rescue and ventilation unit carrying a ladder, hoses, ventilation equipment and the "jaws of life." Stations 11 and 17 (Goleta and UCSB) have ladder trucks due to their proximity to high-rise structures. Table 11 below shows the breakdown of resources by fire station.

TABLE 11: RESOURCES BY FIRE STATION

Station Number	Constant Staffing	ALS Station	CDF Station	Apparatus Per Station	Unique Factors
11 Goleta	6	✓		1 engine, 1 ladder truck	Water rescue, search and rescue
12 Goleta	3			2 engines	
13 Santa Barbara	3			1 engine, 1 brush truck	
14 Goleta	3		✓	1 engine, 1 brush truck	
15 Santa Barbara	3		✓	1 engine, 1 brush truck	
17 UCSB	3			2 engines, 1 ladder truck	Water rescue
18 Gaviota	3			2 engines, 1 brush truck, 1 water tender	Breathing/support
21 Santa Maria	3			2 engines	Aircraft Firefighting
22 Orcutt	4	✓	✓	2 engines, 1 brush truck, 1 water tender	
23 Sisquoc	3		✓	1 engine, 1 brush truck	
24 Los Alamos	3	✓	✓	2 engines, 1 brush truck	Terra torch
31 Buellton	4	✓	✓	1 engine, 1 brush truck	Hazmat trailer
32 Santa Ynez	4	✓	✓	1 engine, 1 brush truck, 1 water tender	Telesquirt
41 New Cuyama	3	✓	✓	2 engines (1 is reserve), 2 ambulances	
51 Lompoc	5	✓	✓	2 engines (1 is reserve), 1 brush truck, 2 ambulances	

Since SBCFD is a "contract county," nine of its stations are considered to be "CDF Gray Book" and SBCFD receives money from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) to staff nine fire engines to protect State Responsibility Areas (SRA) located within Santa Barbara County's borders during the fire season.[5] SBCFD has entered into a contract agreement with the CDF for the period of July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2008 for a total not to exceed cost of $19,401,296 .

The number of stations funded by the CDF depends on the assigned allocation level based on the length of the normal and peak fire seasons as determined by the CDF. As of April 2005, the CDF contract county fire engine coverage was as shown in Table 12 below.

TABLE 12: CDF CONTRACT COUNTIES

County	Number of County Stations	Normal Season CDF Engines	Peak Season CDF Engines
Kern	45	16	26
Los Angeles	158	23	23
Marin	6	5	6
Orange	60	5	5
Santa Barbara	15	9	9
Ventura	31	10	13

According to data from SBCFD, out of the 137 wild land responses in 2004, 87 (63.5%) were on State Responsibility Areas (SRAs) located throughout the County as shown in Table 13 below.

[5] The CDF is responsible for fire protection within State Responsibility Areas (SRA). SRA is found in 56 of California's 58 counties and totals more than 31 million acres. In most cases SRA is protected directly by CDF, however, in Kern, Los Angeles, Marin, Orange, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties, SRA fire protection is provided by the counties under contract with CDF. Known as "Contract Counties," they protect 3.4 million acres of SRA. CDF provides funding to the six counties for fire protection services including wages of suppression crews, lookouts, maintenance of fire fighting facilities, fire prevention assistants, pre-fire management positions, dispatch, special repairs, and administrative services. The department's budget also provides for infrastructure improvements, and expanded fire fighting needs when fires grow beyond initial attack. Source: CDF web page on September 9, 2005 at http://www.fire.ca.gov/php/fire_er_cecontractcount.php.

TABLE 13: WILD LAND RESPONSES ON STATE RESPONSIBILITY AREAS

Station	CDF Gray Book Station	Occurrences (2003-2004)
14	✓	2
15	✓	1
18		8
21		3
22	✓	10
23	✓	9
24	✓	15
31	✓	8
32	✓	11
41	✓	5
51	✓	15

County fire provides service in the unincorporated areas of the County except for Carpinteria/Summerland, Montecito and Orcutt. In addition, County Fire responds to the cities of Goleta and Buellton and provides automatic and/or mutual aid to all other areas of the County**.** For medical emergencies it responds in concert with American Medical Response (AMR) the contracted agency for medical transportation services throughout the County, except for areas of: 1) Cuyama and Vandenberg Village, which are the County's responsibility, and 2) the areas that are the responsibility of Carpinteria/Summerland, Montecito, Orcutt, Santa Barbara, UCSB, Santa Maria, Solvang and Vandenberg AFB Fire Departments.

The calls for service (CFS) for County fire for the six years ending December 31, 2004 are shown in Table 14 below.

TABLE 14: CALLS FOR SERVICE, 1999-2004

Year	Pop.	Stations	Total CFS	EMS Calls	Fire Calls	Haz. Calls	Misc.
1999		15	7,768	4,972	637	311	1,848
2000		15	8,159	5,131	687	344	1,997
2001		15	8,359	4,485	585	1,040	2,416
2002		15	8,735	4,596	461	333	3,345
2003		15	9,423	4,742	465	162	4,054
2004	142,800	15	9,549	5,497	651	527	2,874

The percentage of calls for fire-related emergencies ranged between 4.9% and 8.4% over the six-year period. Medical emergency related calls range between 50.3% and 64% for the same timeframe. The miscellaneous calls, a relatively significant number, include things such as animal rescues, person in distress, water problems and assistance to another governmental agency.

The calls for service for each of the County's 15 stations for 2004 are shown in Table 15.

TABLE 15: CALENDAR 2004 CALLS FOR SERVICE BY STATION

Station	Total	Fire	%	EMS	%	Other	Response < 7 min.[3]
11[1] - Goleta	986	82	8.3	578	58.6	326	67%
12 - Goleta	1,075	43	4.2	468	56.2	564	81%
13 - Santa Barbara	1,372	49	3.6	785	57.2	538	66.3%
14 - Goleta	386	27	7.0	219	56.7	140	76.4%
15 - Santa Barbara	203	10	4.9	110	54.2	83	60.6%
17 - UCSB	760	61	8.0	286	37.6	413	85.3%
18 - Gaviota	163	20	12.3	59	36.2	84	21.5%
21 - Santa Maria	1,108	62	5.6	593	53.5	453	63.6%
22[1] - Orcutt	918	77	8.4	540	58.8	301	69.7%
23 - Sisquoc	127	26	20.5	49	38.6	52	50.4%
24[1] - Los Alamos	174	29	16.7	94	54.0	51	58%
31[1] - Buellton	462	49	10.6	263	56.9	150	67.5%
32[1] - Santa Ynez	795	38	4.8	530	66.7	227	59.9%
41[2] - New Cuyama	181	22	12.2	112	61.9	47	51.4%
51[2] - Lompoc	917	70	7.6	568	61.9	279	62.1%

[1]ALS responders
[2]ALS responders and transporters
[3]Approximate percentage based on Fire Department records

As can be seen from this table, with the exception of three stations, greater than 50% of the calls are for medical emergencies. All of the stations are either ALS or BLS responders. In ten of the fifteen stations, the fire calls do not exceed double-digit percentages of the total calls. A large percentage of calls for all stations fall into the hazardous conditions or miscellaneous category. In some instances, this number approaches 50% of the calls. A map depicting the location of each station depicted as a red inverted V is shown below in Figure 8.

FIGURE 8: MAP OF COUNTY FIRE STATION LOCATIONS

AMR provides ALS and transport services over the entire county with the exception of the UCSB campus/Isla Vista, Cuyama and Vandenberg Village area. (Vandenberg Air Force Base has BLS Fire services and contracts with AMR for paramedic transport services for the base and surrounding area). The company operates 8 24-hour units and 11 peak hour units. AMR operates under a contract with the County which is administered by the Emergency Medical Services Agency of the County's Public Health Department. A map depicting the fixed AMR locations marked with a "G" is shown below in Figure 9:

FIGURE 9: MAP OF AMR AMBULANCE STATION LOCATIONS

The AMR contract establishes goals for response times to calls for medical services at various levels depending on the population levels throughout the County. Table 16 below indicates the call zones for the AMR units, numbers of calls, average response times, and related information for the County fire units associated with the AMR zones.

TABLE 16: AMR CALL ZONES, WORKLOAD, AND AVERAGE RESPONSE TIMES

EMS Zone	Location	Type	No. of Calls	AMR Avg	FD Station No.	Level	Avg (Fire EMS Only)
46	Goleta	Semi-Rural	31	8:11	11	ALS	5:11
47	Goleta - North	Semi-Rural	30				
47A	Goleta - North	Semi-Rural	7				
53	Goleta	Urban	321				
55	Goleta	Urban	816	5:36	12	BLS	5:01
17	West Camino Cielo	Rural	15	6:36	13	BLS	6:27
19	Paradise Road	Rural	50				
56W	Santa Barbara	Urban	154				
57	Hope Ranch	Urban	255				
57W	Hope Ranch	Urban	49				
54	Goleta	Urban	227	6:02	14	BLS	5:50
48	Gibralter	Semi-Rural	13	8:23	15	BLS	6:07

EMS Zone	Location	Type	No. of Calls	AMR Avg	FD Station No.	Level	Avg (Fire EMS Only)
18	Refugio	Rural	57	17:39	18	BLS	14:24
18A	Refugio	Rural	16				
22	Santa Maria - West	Semi-Rural	21	7:29	21	BLS	7:14
22A	Santa Maria - West	Semi-Rural	66				
29	Santa Maria - South	Urban	302				
30	Santa Maria - South	Urban	272	5:43	22	ALS	6:27
31	Orcutt	Urban	251				
32	Orcutt	Urban	294				
33	Lake Marie	Semi-Rural	92				
33A	Lake Marie	Semi-Rural	24				
34	Los Alamos	Rural	30	12:28	24	BLS	6:49
12	West Hwy 246	Rural	2	9:14	31	BLS	6:38
12W	West Hwy 246	Rural	25				
14	West Buellton	Rural	55				
41	Buellton	Semi-Rural	162				
15	Los Olivos	Rural	93	11:07	32	ALS	8:41
43	Santa Ynez	Semi-Rural	331				
44	Ballard	Semi-Rural	49				
		TOTAL	**4,110**				

The data above was provided directly from the Sheriff's dispatch CAD system for a period of time in 2004 when numbers and times were accurately recorded for both AMR and County Fire. The EMS Zone is the zone number used by CAD to dispatch ambulances. The zone type is based upon 2000 Census data and each zone has contractual response times. Urban response is required within 7:59, semi-rural within 14:59 and rural within 29:59.

The information contained in this table indicates average response times for AMR ranging between 5:36 for an urban area to 17:39 for a designated rural area. The important thing to note is that by EMSA performance standards for AMR, these times are within the acceptable timeframes. This table shows that County fire emergency units have generally an equal or slightly better time for response in AMR's zones. However, most of the responding fire units are BLS units and do not have capabilities beyond EMT standards for patient treatment and none have transport capabilities.

There are two geographic areas of the county not served by AMR – Vandenberg Village and a large area surrounding New Cuyama. During the last contract negotiations between AMR and the County, AMR offered

to assume responsibility for both areas. AMR was prepared to locate units to replace SBCFD units in the areas. Management Partners was told the offer by AMR was for both or none in terms of accepting the emergency medical responsibilities. The discussions resulted in maintaining the status quo as SBCFD wished to retain the Vandenberg Village site for departmental training purposes. Medical emergency transport from the New Cuyama location is either by ground or helicopter depending on the severity of the incident. If ground transport is the choice, two members of the fire station transport the patient to Santa Maria. This action leaves Station 41 with a single firefighter available to respond to an emergency. This level of staffing for virtually any emergency call is unacceptable. In these circumstances, Station 23 (Sisquoc) is immediately moved up to cover the Cuyama Valley. This distance is seen as excessive in terms of providing proper coverage when firefighters are used to transport.

> **Recommendation 9: Initiate new negotiations with AMR for coverage in the Vandenberg Village and New Cuyama station areas.** SBCFD has a sufficient number of remaining stations with ALS capability to serve as training units for paramedics without undertaking the exposure in the New Cuyama area. The proposed action will require agreement by AMR to reopen these discussions.

As part of the review of responses throughout the County, an attempt was made to get data on calls for service from each of the separate fire agencies, by responding station. Only partial information was received. Table 17 below provides information regarding calls for services on a calendar year basis for all fire agencies for the six-year period beginning 1999 through 2004.

TABLE 17: COUNTY FIRE CALLS FOR SERVICE BY ALL FIRE AGENCIES, 1999-2004

Fire Agency	Year	Est. Population	# Fire Stations	Total Calls	% Change	EMS Calls	Fire Calls	Haz. Cond.	Misc. Calls
Carp./Summerland FPD	1999	x	2	1,331	x	574	74	165	518
	2000	x	2	1,295	-2.7%	843	162	102	188
	2001	x	2	1,341	3.6%	822	66	236	217
	2002	x	2	1,353	0.9%	816	71	199	267
	2003	x	2	1,451	7.2%	887	76	198	290
	2004	21,000	2	1,341	-7.6%	830	64	69	378
Guadalupe City	1999	x	2	226	x	192	33	0	1
	2000	x	2	230	1.8%	152	41	3	34
	2001	x	2	323	40.4%	207	43	7	66
	2002	x	2	294	-9.0%	207	35	3	49
	2003	x	2	308	4.8%	235	20	18	35
	2004	6,275	2	307	-0.3%	211	33	22	41
Lompoc City	1999	x	2	1,851	x	1,157	158	30	506

Fire Agency	Year	Est. Population	# Fire Stations	Total Calls	% Change	EMS Calls	Fire Calls	Haz. Cond.	Misc. Calls
	2000	x	2	2,032	9.8%	1,192	169	31	640
	2001	x	2	2,153	6.0%	1,503	170	65	415
	2002	x	2	2,290	6.4%	1,582	226	63	419
	2003	x	2	2,493	8.9%	1,686	194	87	526
	2004	41,850	2	2,828	13.4%	2,007	161	115	545
Montecito FPD	1999	x	2	914	x	343	28	0	543
	2000	x	2	933	2.1%	447	14	0	472
	2001	x	2	1,045	12.0%	498	55	64	428
	2002	x	2	1,003	-4.0%	509	67	46	381
	2003	x	2	1,218	21.4%	576	73	91	478
	2004	9,500	2	1,145	-6.0%	598	63	63	421
Orcutt FPD	1999	x	1	453	x	291	71	1	90
	2000	x	1	474	4.6%	320	71	8	75
	2001	x	1	424	-10.5%	282	68	4	70
	2002	x	1	322	-24.1%	207	35	23	57
	2003	x	1	278	-13.7%	177	33	11	57
	2004	4,725	1	261	-6.1%	154	59	5	43
Santa Barbara City	1999	x	8	5,993	x	3,408	231	622	1,732
	2000	x	8	5,878	-1.9%	3,331	237	583	1,727
	2001	x	8	5,981	1.8%	3,808	232	472	1,469
	2002	x	8	7,313	22.3%	4,068	629	668	1,948
	2003	x	8	6,680	-8.7%	4,281	273	498	1,628
	2004	93,000	8	6,933	3.8%	4,458	329	488	1,658
Santa Barbara County	1999	x	15	7,768	x	4,972	637	311	1,848
	2000	x	15	8,159	5.0%	5,131	687	344	1,997
	2001	x	15	8,526	4.5%	4,485	585	1,040	2,416
	2002	x	15	8,735	2.5%	4,596	461	333	3,345
	2003	x	15	9,423	7.9%	4,742	465	162	4,054
	2004	142,800	15	9,549	1.3%	5,497	651	527	2,874
Santa Maria City	1999	x	3	4,199	x	2,708	267	335	889
	2000	x	3	4,577	9.0%	3,191	347	159	880
	2001	x	3	4,894	6.9%	3,443	307	177	967
	2002	x	3	5,468	11.7%	4,057	336	151	924
	2003	x	3	5,659	3.5%	4,231	345	178	905
	2004	85,325	3	6,232	10.1%	4,553	351	178	1,150
Solvang City	1999	x	1	282	x	206	28	8	40
	2000	x	1	340	20.6%	219	40	17	64
	2001	x	1	336	-1.2%	239	28	18	51
	2002	x	1	348	3.6%	229	39	9	71
	2003	x	1	378	8.6%	259	36	38	45
	2004	5,450	1	388	2.6%	274	41	27	46
Vandenburg AFB	1999	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	2000	x	6	1,160	x	490	61	109	500
	2001	x	6	881	-24.1%	412	47	126	296

Fire Agency	Year	Est. Population	# Fire Stations	Total Calls	% Change	EMS Calls	Fire Calls	Haz. Cond.	Misc. Calls
	2002	x	6	1,690	91.8%	561	88	327	714
	2003	x	6	4,310	155.0%	1,149	826	1,433	902
Pop. not included in totals	2004	*16,970*	6	3,639	-15.6%	948	710	1,312	669
TOTAL	1999	x	36	23,017	x	13,851	1,527	1,472	6,167
	2000	x	42	25,288	9.9%	15,623	1,733	1,524	6,408
	2001	x	42	25,737	1.8%	15,699	1,601	2,209	6,395
	2002	x	42	28,566	11.0%	16,832	1,987	1,822	8,175
	2003	x	42	32,198	12.7%	18,223	2,341	2,714	8,920
	2004	410,300	42	32,623	1.3%	19,530	2,462	2,806	7,825

As with the figures presented in Table 14 relating to County fire, most calls for service are for emergency medical purposes. On a countywide basis, medical calls for the six-year period ranged between 56.6% and 61.8%. These calls represent approximately a 10 to 1 ratio over fire calls. Hazardous conditions and miscellaneous needs outnumber fire calls approximately 5 to 1. While not to downplay the need for trained, on-call personnel for fires, it would appear that prevention activities (e.g., brush clearing, fire trails, sprinklers, etc.) by County fire and other fire departments in the county have had an impact on the number of fire incidents.

A map of all the fire stations in the County is shown in Figure 10 below. Stations not operated by the County are depicted by a green inverted V.

FIGURE 10: MAP OF ALL FIRE STATIONS IN COUNTY

As urbanization of areas previously part of the County Fire District grows, duplicated or overlapped services must be examined. As well, the growth in CFS for medical purposes brings into question who can best perform the service. Historically, stations are built and staffed based on very logical needs at the time of establishment. In many cases, particularly for urbanized areas, stations are placed where land is made available. Station location does not always follow a reasoned path of thinking with regard to the management of risks. Once a station is established, it is very costly to relocate based on best projections of needs of those to be served. Locating based on projections of needs is best accomplished by ambulance services who have self-contained units to address medical needs of their customers. In the case of Santa Barbara County, medical units from AMR are in service based on study of needs by time of day and demographics of the population being served.

In an attempt to maximize the resources available throughout the County, Management Partners developed a map of all fire stations and AMR locations. The resulting map is shown below in Figure 12.

FIGURE 11: MAP OF COUNTY-WIDE FIRE AND AMR STATION LOCATIONS

The circles shown on the map are drawn at a two-mile radius for each location. The gray circles represent all fire stations in the county except County ALS stations. The red circles represent County ALS stations. As with previous maps, County stations are depicted by a red inverted V and other jurisdictions by a green inverted V. The blue circles are for AMR

locations[6]. These circles demonstrate the potential overlap of services without taking into account jurisdiction issues/concerns. The map does not take into account two new stations already planned for northeast and northwest sections of Santa Maria. A third new station is anticipated for the southwestern portion of the community as build-out occurs. This type of analysis clearly shows that there could be improved service through a coordinated use of the resources.

There is also the possibility that efficiencies could be realized if agencies were willing to share resources. While a system of mutual aid among fire agencies and some automatic dual response from two different fire agencies currently exists, it is possible that even greater levels of service could be achieved through an automatic assignment of the most appropriate resources across the county to emergency incidents – as contrasted to dual resources being assigned from two agencies. The best examples of where this could be enhanced are the cities of Santa Barbara and Santa Maria. Coordinated use of resources does not mean giving up of administrative control of those resources by any agency. Well-organized emergency response personnel would mean better service for the public at large.

> **Recommendation 10: Implement a project to provide and receive automatic response to fire calls across jurisdictional lines.** Initiate discussions with all fire agencies in the county to develop automatic response to fire calls based on the station location closest to the incident. This would eliminate two separate agencies responding to the same call for service. A number of issues must be reviewed when matching resources to incidents. While not a specific requirement of an automatic response program, it would be highly advisable to have common channels of communication among responding agencies. Even more advantageous would be the use of a single dispatch operation, allowing for better coordination of resources for multiple alarms and second incidents. If fire agencies could agree on a single dispatch, an evaluation of the separation of law enforcement from fire/medical responses within the Dispatch Center would be in order. It is possible there could be an economy of scale with a consolidation of these dispatching duties such that all agencies would participate in the benefits.

During visits to County fire stations, a problem with location maps was observed. The maps that are used to direct emergency personnel to incidents are not maintained in a current status. In one instance Management Partners was told that the station was using a Thomas Guide as the means of determining the location of incidents due to the

[6] The eight AMR circles are fixed locations and do not necessarily represent the origin of response for the units assigned to the location. In addition, the 11 peak hour units are not shown on this map. Thus coverage by AMR exceeds that shown on the map.

outdated maps provided by the County. With the upgrade of the dispatch equipment (Tri Tech installation currently underway) there is the potential for utilization of electronic data transmission to the fire apparatus to assist in directing personnel to incident locations. That module of the system will not, however, be part of the current upgrade. The County of Santa Barbara Public Works Department is finishing a GIS project that will provide and ESRI base map of the county using centerline data. This map will provide the base for the new Tri-Tech CAD.

> **Recommendation 11: Provide each fire station with updated maps of its geographic area(s) of responsibility.** Until an electronic means of locating incidents is available, each station needs to have good quality maps of their areas of responsibility for response. In the long term, automatic vehicle locators (AVL) should be installed in the responding equipment to further enhance the response of field personnel.

Probably the most significant risk management issue identified during this study is the level of response that is available at Station 17 on the University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB) campus. There is one engine with three personnel assigned to respond to a fire incident at this location. There is also a medical emergency responder housed in the same location that is the responsibility of the university. Two high-rise structures of nine stories that serve as dormitories for students are not equipped with sprinklers. If a fire were to break out in either of these structures, County fire would have to wait for the arrival of a second engine before being able to mount any aggressive suppression action. In addition, there are two story dormitories that do not have sprinklers in the rooms or hallways.

> **Recommendation 12: Implement a project to facilitate installation of sprinklers by UCSB in all facilities with high concentrations of people and the greatest risk of fire incidents.** Of particular concern are the high-rise and two story dormitories creating a significant liability for the university and, possibly, the County.

The other UC campuses were surveyed regarding their relationship with the local fire agencies in terms of station maintenance and fees for service. With the exception of Davis and Santa Cruz, which have their own fire departments, in most cases fire and medical response is provided at no cost by the fire department of the city where the campus is located. Overall, the UC campuses do not provide stations or pay for station maintenance to the local fire agency. Following this pattern, the City of Goleta would be the likely candidate to provide service to the UCSB campus. However, since Goleta does not have a fire department, this responsibility falls to Santa Barbara County Fire Department. Table 18 below provides a comparison of the University of California system for fire services.

TABLE 18: COMPARISON OF UC SYSTEM SUPPORT FOR FIRE PROTECTION

Campus	Responding Agency	Calls Types/Volume	Fees	Station Support
Berkeley	City of Berkeley	Fire and medical (wild land fires suppressed by City of Oakland, Alameda County and CDF)	No fees. Paramedic contract between Lawrence National Laboratory and Alameda County	No
Davis	Campus Fire Department-one station; formal automatic aid agreements with City of Davis and Counties (Yolo and Solano)			
Irvine	Orange County Fire Authority	Fire and medical, on campus about 40-50 times per month mostly for medical or false alarms	No	No
Los Angeles				
Merced	N/A- campus opened fall 2005			
Riverside	City of Riverside	Fire and medical	No	No
San Diego	City of San Diego (San Diego Fire and Rescue Department)	Fire and medical calls, about 134 fire calls a year	Hazmat costs may be recovered, but no fire and medical response fees	No
San Francisco	(City and County) San Francisco Fire Department			No
Santa Barbara	County of Santa Barbara		No	Provides building/station, funds 2 UCSB ambulances
Santa Cruz	Campus Fire Department- one station			

Since 1955, Davis has utilized a student resident firefighter program to ensure staffing levels. Between 8 and 18 Student Resident Firefighters are selected from a large applicant pool every two years after undergoing a rigorous physical abilities test, an intensive interview process, and a firefighting academy. Once selected, the Student Resident Firefighters become working members of the UC Davis Fire Department, required to staff one 24-hour shift, three 14-hour shifts, and two training sessions per month in exchange for housing at Station 34. Additional compensation is provided when the students respond to emergency calls while not on duty.

The contract between the university and the County was signed in 1973. At that time the population of the college was approximately 9,000. Today it houses nearly 30,000 and represents a totally different set of demands for emergency services both in terms of population and facilities. More construction of facilities on campus can logically be anticipated in the next few years, a factor that will increase the population and, very likely, the complexities of emergency response due to the types and uses of new facilities.

This issue is complicated by the fact that Station 17 serves as part of a multiple alarm response for the Isla Vista neighborhood. The Fire Department has suggested modifying the staffing at the UCSB station through an elimination of the medical rescue unit funded by the University and replacing these positions with a fourth County paramedic to be funded by the university. While the fourth position would provide the capability of achieving the "two in two out" rule for firefighter safety, this staffing still does not provide sufficient personnel to address any fire emergency in the high-rise dormitory structures. The addition of a fourth position in the station does not address the real issue facing the County or the University. It is even questionable if having two four-person engines in the University station would be able to address a significant fire event in either of the nine story structures. Multiple alarms would be necessary to address any significant structure fire. The time required to assemble sufficient resources to combat a fire event would be substantial. Current circumstances are such that County liability for a life-threatening incident must be brought into question. In addition, it would not be in the best interests of the University to reduce the emergency medical response capability that currently exists given the population that is served by the University's medical unit.

> **Recommendation 13: Identify alternative methods of providing fire emergency services on the UCSB campus.** The use of resident firefighters is an option that should be explored. Funding from the university for a totally revamped emergency service operation is another option to be considered by all parties. Currently the university provides only the station; substantially more funding would be required to properly staff for fire emergencies. If the station were eliminated, there would

continue to be issues relating to emergency service coverage for Isla Vista.

Recommendation 14: Evaluate the County's contract with UCSB for possible reversion of the responsibility for fire response to the university. Under current circumstances, the County's Fire Department cannot properly respond to a fire incident in the university's high-rise dormitories. The County should not have responsibility for the results of its actions if such a fire were to occur. If the university is not going to modify the structures to provide necessary protection, the County should not be in the position of assuming any liability.

Departmental Coordination Issues

The work of the Fire Department is highly dependent on the services provided by other agencies of the County. The Sheriff's Office provides the backbone for dispatching of emergency personnel for fires, medical emergencies, hazardous material incidents, accidents and a variety of other services. The Public Health Department oversees the delivery of quality medical service provided by the Fire Department's paramedics and EMT's through the Emergency Medical Services Agency (EMSA). The General Services Department is responsible for the replacement and maintenance of the fire facilities and vehicles. Each of these agencies is key to the delivery of quality service by the Fire Department.

During our review of departmental operations, there was evidence of conflict in certain areas. In some instances, the conflict was about the amount of funding available to complete desired tasks, e.g., facility upgrades. In others there was evidence of disagreement with the way that the support service is delivered to the Fire Department, e.g., expanded dispatch operations. In still others, there is disagreement with policy oversight of emergency operations, e.g., paramedic field procedures.

There is a feeling within the Fire Department that in the past it has not received service commensurate with the amount of money that is being paid for particular services. The issues regarding dispatch have been presented in an earlier section of this report. They relate to the cost of the day-to-day service and the recent decision to modify the Computer Aided Dispatch system. Interviews with personnel from the Fire Department and Sheriff's Office confirm there are "rough edges" to the relationship. Many of these concerns have been discussed in the dispatch section of this report.

The issues with the General Services Department are similar in that the department feels the annual expenditure charged through the internal service fund (ISF) for vehicles is not realized in the upkeep or upgrade of vehicles. Facilities are not part of an ISF and are budgeted in both GSA

and SBCFD budgets without a good accountability for completion. These issues are described in the section of this report regarding facility and vehicle replacement and maintenance.

In the past communication between EMSA and SBCFD has been strained to the point that avoidance has often been the rule. State statutes place the authority for medical policies, protocols, practices in public agencies within the purview of the County's Health Department. The County hires a Medical Director for the purpose**s** of overseeing emergency room doctors and delivery of quality medical service by field personnel. While not required by the Health and Safety Code, it is standard practice throughout the State of California for county EMSAs to require the individual providers to retain Medical Directors to provide the necessary direction on medical protocols, procedures, training to the personnel actually delivering services in the field – in this case, paramedics. A single Medical Director in the County to oversee all the paramedics – both public and private – is not feasible. In addition, using a single Medical Director removes the check and balance aspect considered to be crucial in pre-emergency room procedures.

The requirements for service delivery by paramedics are outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between EMSA and the Fire Department. In part that MOU calls for the Fire Department to:

- ✓ Have an EMSA approved continuous quality improvement plan, including a quarterly report demonstrating activities, problem areas and solutions;
- ✓ Provide special training to department personnel and provide clinical leadership in maintaining current and extensive knowledge of developments in equipment and procedures;
- ✓ Cause EMSA policies to be properly implemented in the field; when questions arise related to clinical performance, satisfy the EMSA Medical Director.

During interviews with Fire Department personnel at all levels, opinions were expressed that the EMSA reviews of medical emergency incidents often go beyond medical practices and standards and infringe upon the basic operating practices of the department, i.e., the department is being controlled under the guise of medical standards for practices that are not subject to medical oversight. Examples given by firefighters include EMSA questioning of fire personnel's decisions about which apparatus is sent to certain incidents and questions about on-scene command authority. Fire Department and EMSA management are aware of this issue and are working together to address the issues raised by field personnel.

The results of breakdowns between units include problem avoidance, attempts to circumvent existing conditions, and frayed nerves of representatives of the involved agencies. During our time in the subject agencies we observed behavior contrary to that necessary for the operation of quality emergency response services. The business of the

County in providing the best possible emergency services is being overshadowed by turf battles and individuals not letting go of events that happened in the past. It should be noted that since this study began, there has been positive movement by the respective department heads to work collaboratively to resolve these issues.

Recommendation 15: Schedule facilitated problem-solving sessions between departments with the purpose of developing on-going solutions to operational issues and provide periodic reports of progress to the CEO. These sessions should be conducted by a skilled professional trained in achieving consensus among parties with conflicting points of view. Because the issues do not have commonality, separate sessions will be necessary between the Fire Department and the Sheriff's Office, EMSA, and General Services. Follow-up sessions should be scheduled as necessary to ensure that agreed upon solutions and courses of action are having the desired effect.

Recommendation 16: Establish a regular meeting of the Medical Directors of EMSA and Fire Department to ensure clarity of policies and practices for paramedics in the field. When appropriate, changes in standards, protocols and procedures should be written and transmitted to paramedics, with training provided as necessary. In addition to medical care issues, any other problems perceived to exist relating to activities by the fire units in the field should be discussed and resolved.

Recommendation 17: Evaluate the current Medical Director assignment in the Fire Department to determine if a change should be made. The hierarchy for decision-making must be understood to be EMSA and then the Fire Department. If the problem solving process recommended previously does not resolve the differences of opinion between the EMSA and Fire Department Medical Directors, a change of personnel should be considered.

Facility and Vehicle Issues

Ten of the County's fifteen fire stations were built in the 1970s or earlier. This means that about 67% of the stations are at least 35 years old. As one might expect with aging stations, their conditions range from fair to poor. During visits to each of the stations, a number of deficiencies were found to exist. The primary focus on station needs relate to sleeping quarters, segregation of male and female employees, equipment storage,

general storage, locker and shower facilities, and proper apparatus floor storage and ventilation.

While the County has made efforts in prior years to improve the conditions of some stations, as noted in Table 19 below, much work remains to be completed. On a recent site visit in August 2005, only three stations were considered to have adequate living arrangements for firefighters.

The condition rating was based on the overall impression of the station (appearance and safety conditions) as well as specific conditions related to staffing capacity, vehicle capacity, storage capacity, kitchen capacity, office space, female/male accommodations, bathroom quality, parking availability, and maintenance of facilities and grounds.

TABLE 19: SUMMARY OF FIRE STATION CONDITION

Station/ Location	Date Occupied	Renovations What & When	Rating	Major Issues/ Repairs Needed
11- Goleta	1967	Dormitory-2001; Kitchen-2003; Dayroom-2003	Poor	Bathrooms in dire need of repair/ remodeling; security gate and cleanup
12-Goleta	1997		Fair	
13-Santa Barbara	1958	Dormitory-2001; Dayroom-2001	Adequate	
14-Goleta	1970	Dormitory-2001; Kitchen-2000; Flooring-2001	Fair	Additional bathroom; more defined living room
15-Santa Barbara	1970	Dormitory-1995; Dayroom-2001	Best	Lighting from dorms to station/bay would be beneficial
17- UCSB (UCSB Station occupied in 1968 with SBCFD assuming occupation in 1973)	1973		Marginal	More space and remodeling needed
18-Gaviota	1989		Fair	
21-Santa Maria (Station owned by Santa Maria Public Airport District.)	1970		Poor	Bathrooms remodeled; separation of beds/sleeping quarters; bay doors do not work properly nor equipment fit within bay; overall molds, leaks and asbestos throughout

Station/ Location	Date Occupied	Renovations What & When	Rating	Major Issues/ Repairs Needed
22- Orcutt	1981	Kitchen-2004; Dormitory-1996	Marginal	Cosmetic repairs of building/ landscaping, including more parking
23-Sisquoc (Date the mobile home, former Station 18 occupied in 1987, that was relocated from the Gaviota area to the current location.)	1990		Marginal	Rotten floors; molds
24-Los Alamos	1958	Kitchen/ Dormitory-1996	Worst	Need to rebuild- leaking bathrooms, cramped quarters, rat and bird infested attic/bay
31-Buellton	1965	Kitchen/ Dormitory-2001/02	Adequate	
32- Santa Ynez	1990		Fair	
41- New Cuyama	1952	Modular Dormitory/Bathroom-2003; Ambulance Bay-2003	Poor	Possible rebuild- too small for storage, people and equipment; 911 phone in front; rat-infested shed for weight room
51- Lompoc	1964	New facility 2006-07	Fair	Outdated, not hazardous

The Fire Department is cognizant of the conditions of its stations. According to the County of Santa Barbara's FY 2005-2010 Capital Improvement Program, many of the stations in need of repair have already been identified as shown in Table 20 below.

TABLE 20: COUNTY CIP STATION PROJECTS

Station	Project Dates	Problem	Cost	Funding
11	7/1/05-6/30/06	Remodel, including bathroom	$245,000	District
13	On hold	Expansion/remodel	$148,000	None
14	On hold	Expansion/remodel	$376,000	None
21	On hold	Expansion/remodel	$153,000	None
23	On hold	Expansion	$100,000	None
24	On hold	Rebuild	$2,357,000	None
51	7/1/05-6/30/06	Rebuild	$3,300,000	General Fund

The Department should continue to work toward addressing these deficiencies and use the following recommendations as a guide. However, before stations are renovated or relocated, serious discussions with other agencies, including American Medical Response regarding potential service consolidation should take place prior to any decision-making about expenditures to improve station conditions.

> **Recommendation 18: Develop a master station facility plan and prioritize all projects across the department.** As the list is developed, the possibility of relocating stations should be considered. Many stations have suffered from years of neglect and from cosmetic "band aid" solutions at best. Both a master station facility plan and funding should be established that (1) prioritizes renovations at the stations and (2) puts money aside for the complete renovation/relocation of stations. Based on Management Partners' review, stations in need of rebuilding and possible relocation include (in order of importance): Station 24, 21, 41, 11, 17 and 22. The department should work in conjunction with General Services and its 20 Year Master Facility Plan once the work on the Plan is initiated. Funding will have to be identified and placed in either the General Services internal services fund or a capital project fund (specifically designated for this purpose). As the department receives unanticipated revenues, such as higher than expected property tax and supplementals, this revenue should be placed into a fund designated specifically for capital expenditures rather than for operations.

While many stations had unique issues, there were also several common characteristics among most of the stations that need addressing. For example, a lack of ventilation coupled with the use of the bay for storage and exercising means that staff is exposed to toxic fumes that are emitted from turnouts and the vehicles, as well as extreme heat when exercising.

> **Recommendation 19: Invest in exhaust/ventilation systems (such as the Nedameyer system) for every station.** Currently only Station 14 is equipped with such a system, which has an estimated cost of $20,000 per station. This type of system attaches a hose to the exhaust of an engine or brush truck, preventing the emissions from being released into the bay. Since staff spent a great deal of time in the bay, the exhaust/ventilation system would create a healthier environment for staff. This situation is compounded by the use of the bay as an exercise room. Since most stations do not have room within the living quarters, the bay houses the "gym." Therefore, "working out" involves inhaling fumes from the exhaust of the apparatuses (or moving the apparatuses outside of the bay

without starting them). Anything else in the bay, such as turnouts, is also exposed to exhaust fumes.

Recommendation 20: Provide lockers for turnouts in stations, ideally in a separate space that is located near the bay, to prevent exposure to/from off-gases. Since storage space within the station is limited, turnouts and other gear (like a duffle bag containing personal items for out-of-county incidents) are often stored within the apparatus bay (sometimes in sealed lockers, but often not). As a result, turnouts and other gear are exposed to the exhaust from the apparatuses within the bay. When the items are worn, personnel are exposed to the fumes. Moreover, when staff exercises within the bay, they are exposed to the turnouts, which also emit gases (residual gases and other toxics from responding to a fire).

Most medical supplies are housed within the bay due to the need to have supplies close to the appropriate apparatus for restocking as well as limited storage capacity within the station. Given the tight space of most apparatus bays and the sensitive nature of some medical supplies, efforts to create adequate storage should be explored.

Recommendation 21: Provide adequate storage for medical supplies in stations, including a locked box that is ideally located near, but not in, the bay. Ideally, a paramedic room that is equipped with a sink, a working space and storage should be created and located adjacent to the bay.

As noted in recommendations 19 and 20, locating the exercise room within the bay as currently configured creates a situation where the health of staff may be compromised. Yet, it is imperative that personnel stay in shape to prevent injuries while responding to incidents.

Recommendation 22: Renovate current station facilities, where possible, so that the exercise room is located within the living quarters. Where possible, stations should be renovated to house the exercise room within the station quarters. Another strategy is the use of a modular building to house the exercise room. If a modular unit is used, several conditions would need to be met. These include ensuring that the building is an ideal temperature, the alarm is audible in the building, and that the structure is free from rodents, etc.

Recommendation 23: Complete long-term planning regarding apparatus procurement to facilitate facility planning in conjunction with efforts underway by General Services. While the department has made great efforts to replace and/or upgrade its apparatuses over the

years, better linkages between the apparatuses and the conditions of the bays are needed. For example, engines should fit within a station's bay and still allow ample room to walk past the engine without hitting one's head. Proposed replacements should take into account the need for additional room per person as more protective gear and equipment is procured. Ambulances should allow adequate storage and working space so that patients are not exposed to a paramedic's gear and vice versa to avoid violation of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).

The inability to clearly hear the dispatched call being transmitted to the station is an area of concern. Each station has unique aspects related to its location that contributes to the ambient sounds, such as proximity to busy highways, location within a residential development, location at the airport, etc. In addition, stations generate their own noise as apparatuses are routinely checked and washed, specific training drills are conducted and other station-specific activities like repairing hoses are occurring. One common feature throughout most of the stations is the poor quality of the sound system. Most of the systems are outdated and composed of consumer level "Radio Shack" speakers at best. Moreover, the sound system does not operate throughout the station so the dispatched call cannot be heard in certain areas.

Recommendation 24: Conduct a customized sound test at each station and upgrade each sound system accordingly. Given the vital nature of the alarm to be clearly audible, customized sound tests need to occur at the stations with modifications following based on need. Although many firefighters complained about the inaudible nature of the alarm, they ironically, had no trouble hearing other sounds in their sleeping quarters.

Advancements in technology have been made in terms of phased or gradual lighting (even colored lighting) and audible tones that are proven to be more conducive to alerting firefighting staff about a dispatched call/alarm. Yet, just like the sound systems, the current alarm system is outdated and places undue stress on the stations' inhabitants. In some stations, the "tone out" alarm (alarm that notifies the station of an incident) is jarring and unduly places stress on the body when awakened in such a manner.

Recommendation 25: Develop an implementation plan to identify and recommend new technology in stations to alert personnel following initial alarm activation.

Several stations have configured dormitories and bathrooms to accommodate a diverse workforce. These changes include individual rooms as sleeping quarters, multiple bathroom facilities and a sign on the bathroom door indicating "in use" and by which sex. Yet, there are still

stations that have not made changes to the layout to accommodate different genders. For instance, one station simply has a large room with the beds lined up in a row without a curtain around the bed. Hence, there is no privacy in this room. Another station has a bathroom for everyone on duty to use. One captain at this station voluntarily gives up his quarters, which has its own bathroom, to the female on duty to prevent any discomfort by the people on that shift.

> **Recommendation 26: Install pull curtains next to each bed and sliding "vacant/in use" signs at each bathroom location, where applicable.** This is recommended as an intermediate step for the stations that have not been remodeled until Recommendations 18 and 27 can be accomplished.
>
> **Recommendation 27: Schedule remodels of station bathrooms and separate sleeping quarters into individual rooms as budgets allow for the remaining stations not yet remodeled.** These actions should be coordinated with the overall station upgrades contained in Recommendation 18.

In addition to addressing the specific problems that need to be repaired at individual stations, there are some other common features among the stations that could be incorporated to improve operations and staff safety and comfort. In addition to the lack of storage within the bay (for turnouts and supplies), the stations also lack storage for personal items, household supplies, etc.

Many stations do not have a well-defined reception area, which may lead to privacy and HIPAA violations. Additionally, the office areas contain vintage military desks and chairs, which are not ergonomic and take up a great deal of space. There is usually only one computer per station, which may be burdensome for staff given reporting requirements and any departmental training via CD.

Many stations fulfill other duties besides responding to emergencies. These include sewing/repairing old turnouts, repairing hoses, repairing and assembling air canisters and breathing apparatuses, supplying foam and scheduling to ensure necessary staffing levels. The areas (often a corner of a room or a shed) where these services are performed are generally too small, too hot, too dilapidated or not conveniently located for the task at hand.

Some of the stations are located across from busy highways or agriculture fields and lack noise/wind barriers that contribute to staff and equipment's exposure to dust, pesticide and noise.

A few stations only had one refrigerator instead of two or three. Since there are three shifts, stations with one refrigerator must have it cleaned

out by the end of the shift to make room for the next shift's items. This may be a minor inconvenience on most days, but it seems like a burden on days when the crew returns from an emergency, has to prepare the apparatuses and equipment for another emergency, complete paperwork related to the incident, and then has to empty the refrigerator and make the bed.

Like refrigerators, in stations that only have one bed in a room, the staff on duty must change the sheets before the next shift rotation starts.

Recommendation 28: Allocate money specifically for the purchase of station lockers and other storage options; new office equipment, including computers and peripherals; noise/wind barriers; and additional refrigerators and beds for stations that have the space for these items.

Recommendation 29: Move or remodel the work areas within stations carrying out specific departmental functions like apparatus repair. As part of the overall station assessments, proper space should be allocated for those unique assignments carried out by individual station crews. If appropriate, modular structures could be installed to meet the needs. For example, Station 23 in Sisquoc repairs breathing apparatuses' tanks in a small room between the kitchen and office space. It would make more sense to move this function to a modular building where there is ample space to work and where it is easier for an engine company to pick-up the gear (like a "drive thru"). Station 24 in Los Alamos, which needs to be rebuilt due to its deteriorating and potentially unsafe conditions, does not have adequate office space given its function for the daily staffing for the North County and paramedic staffing for the entire County.

Recommendation 30: Design new facilities that incorporate ideal working space configurations and ample storage capacity. This should be coordinated with the prioritization of upgrades in Recommendation 19.

Station maintenance issues center on the relationship between the Fire Department and General Services. There appears to be miscommunication and misunderstanding between these two departments regarding which department should ultimately be responsible for funding and fixing stations. According to General Services, there is no internal service fund in place for facility maintenance. General Services is given a set annual budget for county-wide facilities maintenance and tries to allocate the money to department projects on a priority basis (safety hazards first, etc.). General Services notes that this maintenance budget is insufficient for true County needs and is often cut during periods of budget difficulty. They also point out that

the County does not have any long-range plan for replacement of its facilities and associated systems in place. There has apparently been some discussion about the potential establishment of an internal service fund for facilities maintenance but this has not yet come to fruition.

There is concern by some staff in General Services that the Fire Department plays "both sides of the fence" regarding its facilities. On one hand, the department claims its buildings are its property by virtue of its special district status. On the other hand, the department expects the County General Fund (i.e., General Services) to pay for repairs and maintenance. Indeed, no one interviewed for this project was 100% sure of the ownership of the Fire Department buildings (District? County?). In the past when General Services refused a request for service due to its own budgetary constraints, the Fire Department used its own funding to make the repairs. In another instance, fire requested funds for a specific project and when General Services agreed to perform the work, fire said the project was no longer necessary and the funds would be used for another purpose. The result is a lack of trust by General Services toward the Fire Department and skepticism for requests for service.

Last year the Chief Executive Officer acknowledged the poor condition of fire facilities by recommending and allocating an additional $400,000 in the Fire Department's budget to make specific repairs (upon request from the Fire Department). As a result, General Services expressed concern about why the funding was not allocated to General Services to make the repairs.

There is, in short, a lack of clarity organizationally about the provision of facilities maintenance; what is centralized and what is not? Who is responsible for what initiatives? While the County should encourage employees (such as firefighters) to use initiative in making repairs themselves when possible and lowering County costs, there are other considerations as well. General Services feels the County must deal with the associated permit, liability, and worker's compensation issues in such circumstances, at least for sizeable projects such as building additions.

One of the complaints General Services finds most frustrating (similar to those of the Sheriff regarding dispatch issues) is that there are frequent third-hand reports of the Fire Department's dissatisfaction with its services but little or no direct communication in that regard. There is also concern that many of the complaints are about issues that occurred years, if not decades, ago.

The Fire Department claims that General Services' maintenance service is costly and slow. Employees believe that in the time it takes to schedule someone from GSA to first drive out to a remote fire station location to measure and size up the issue (which could be quite minor) and then reschedule a visit to come back to do the actual work, the same work could be easily (and less expensively) accomplished by station personnel themselves.

Recommendation 31: Reiterate the County's position regarding Fire Department facility ownership and maintenance. Stations are County owned regardless of how the creation and maintenance of the station was funded (i.e., General Fund or District) and should be managed by General Services. A meeting with all interested parties should be held to clarify who owns facilities and who is responsible for funding and providing various levels of maintenance. All parties should be on record to abide by the policies which result from the meeting. While outside the scope of this review, Management Partners recommends the County explore the creation of an ISF for facility maintenance.

Recommendation 32: Implement a petty cash account of $500 at each station and Cal cards at local retailers that will allow each station the flexibility to purchase items necessary for routine operations and unanticipated minor repairs. This would allow a station captain to save time and money by fixing a problem immediately instead of waiting for approval from fire headquarters and then waiting for GSA to procure and deliver the items needed for repair.

Similarly, responsibility of vehicle purchasing and maintenance is also a contested topic among the Fire Department and General Services. According to some staff in General Services, the County has an internal service fund for the purchase and maintenance of County vehicles (including fire apparatus). General Services uses a computerized system with refined cost tracking to track and allocate costs to departments. Basically, a department pays into the system an amount sufficient to replace that vehicle at the end of its predicted life. However, if at that time the department chooses to upgrade the vehicle (e.g., from a sedan to a sport utility vehicle), the department may not have paid in the full amount for the purchase and would be responsible for funding the difference at time of purchase thus creating a deficit in the fund for future purchases.

One issue of concern on the part of General Services is that the Fire Department does not appear to have any standard specifications for its vehicles. Although the Fire Department has an internal committee to prepare specifications for purchases, these vary over time and General Services questions the necessity of some upgrades and outfitting. If there were discussions of changes to specifications with General Services before final decisions were made, the ability to properly maintain the vehicles would be significantly enhanced.

Recommendation 33: Ensure updated standard specifications for Fire Department vehicles/equipment by type are reviewed with General Services. Every three years the Fire Department internal committee should create standard specifications for each type of

vehicle/equipment (pumper, ladder truck, etc.) to reduce confusion and assist in the ordering of equipment by General Services. A representative from General Services should be part of this committee. Before any contacts are made with vendors of fire specific equipment, e.g., pumpers, General Services should be consulted regarding changes being considered for new vehicles.

Fire personnel complain about the slowness and cost of the County's fleet maintenance operation. They believe that vehicles are out of service too long, that the drive to and from the centralized garage takes too long, and that repair costs are excessive. They have some concern that the mechanics doing the work are not specifically trained to repair fire apparatus and feel that an in-house maintenance operation in the Fire Department would be beneficial.

In contrast, General Services personnel state that public safety vehicles are always given top priority and kept out of service for minimum periods of time. There is a six-month schedule for preventive maintenance on all vehicles and virtually all repair work is done in-house except for major engine rebuilds or the like. Mechanics who work on fire apparatus are certified to do so and the capacity of a centralized shop means personnel can be shifted to ensure that public safety vehicles are repaired in a timely fashion.

Given the vast physical distances between fire facilities in the County, we tend to agree with fire personnel that service levels might be improved if such distances did not have to be traveled to get to a centralized shop. However, an in-house repair shop within the Fire Department is not the answer. Some centralization is cost-effective and can be accomplished with a hybrid system using components of both.

Recommendation 34: Establish a roving mechanic position to provide preventative maintenance. This best practice is working well in neighboring Ventura County. By having a mechanic come to the station, the County will reduce the amount of time the apparatus is out of service. The vehicle maintenance internal service fund should be used to provide this service.

Departmental Staffing

Consistently, staffing levels were mentioned as a concern by all members of the Fire Department. The Chief has focused on getting additional firefighters in the stations. A major concern for operational staff is minimum staffing levels and backfill. At present, the minimum staffing standard in the department is a three-person crew. When one of these three firefighters is gone for whatever reason (leave, training, etc.) the department must staff this position either by providing a regularly

scheduled body to "backfill" the position or by having another employee work overtime. In interviews several personnel suggested the hiring of a "backfill pool;" employees whose sole job is to rotate around the department on a daily basis to backfill such openings. This is common practice in many public safety organizations and the question becomes, "Is it less expensive to fund these full-time loaded positions or to pay the overtime for backfill through the year?"

According to the County's Budget Director, the County approved several positions some years ago for the very purpose of creating a pool of backfill staff and seven such positions remain. However, during interviews, fire staff repeatedly stated that there was no backfill available. A more detailed analysis should be done to make a determination as to the best means of providing backfill coverage for fire personnel. Before increasing backfill positions, an assessment of daily staffing vacancies requiring overtime (over and above the current seven backfill positions) should be conducted.

> **Recommendation 35: Analyze the financial implications of creating a larger backfill pool of full-time employees and/or continuing the use of overtime to provide backfill relief.** Any analysis must determine the regularity of the need for backfilling. The lack of a regular need beyond the currently authorized backfill positions must be carefully weighed against the costs to fill the vacancies with overtime personnel. This analysis should also look carefully at the need for backfill positions to enable personnel to obtain necessary training without having to incur overtime costs. The historical information regarding available overtime usage does not lend itself to a good analysis. At least two years of data is needed to complete such a review and make appropriate recommendations.

As field staffing levels have increased slightly in the Fire Department, the internal administrative staff to support them has not. The result is strained management and internal support services. As administrative personnel are drawn into incidents and asked to respond in emergencies, the department skeleton is reduced to "bare bones."

One concern is the lack of financial or other incentive for line staff to move into administration. In fact, many believe there is a disincentive due to the required change from a 56-hour workweek schedule on the floor versus a 5/8 traditional 40-hour workweek in administration. Many firefighters are not interested in performing administrative work and doing so is no longer an apparent requirement for promotion within the department. While the department requests personnel to make a two-year commitment to administrative positions, this is not strictly enforced. The result is a lack of candidates for administrative posts and a disincentive to perform this work.

Recommendation 36: Reinstate a formal policy that performing administrative duties is a requirement for internal promotion. Many fire departments require personnel to perform administrative duties in order to be promoted. This not only increases the pool of administrative candidates for important and necessary departmental positions but also broadens the organizational perspective of future department leaders.

During interviews with line personnel, a need for a third battalion chief to cover the "central county" geographic area was expressed. At present there is a battalion chief for the northern portion of the County and another for the southern portion. Some staff members are concerned about the geographic spread of the northern area (which is quite large), and the density of the more urban, southern area with more fire stations. At present there is an 8/7 station split between the two battalion chiefs. While not an overwhelming span of control, some believe decreasing the number of stations would be an improvement. Having a third battalion chief would improve availability of incident commanders as well as reduce the span of control within the department (though some do not feel the current span is unwieldy). However, our analysis reveals that staffing needs are much greater in the administrative and support areas noted elsewhere in this report and having a third battalion chief is not a priority at this time.

The Fire Department's Hazardous Materials Unit, which was transferred into the Fire Department from County Environmental Health in the late 1990s, is also perceived by some Fire staff to be understaffed. This is notable because, according to staff, the unit could be self-supporting, with additional staffing costs recovered through user fees and charges. The Hazardous Materials staff is experiencing increasing demands and the unit already handles eleven different programs. The Leaking Underground Fuel Tank (LUFT) program with a complement of four staff currently oversees approximately 600 active cleanups. The Site Mitigation Unit (SMU) reviews files for local development sites for contamination on behalf of local planning agencies. A relatively new program, the County is already performing some 700-800 reviews per year. The Site Mitigation Unit 2 – Oil Fields Restoration Program (SMU2) to oversee mitigation of abandoned oil well sites has a staff of one person overseeing 350 sites; the unit is hiring additional help and anticipates 1,000 oil field cleanups in the Santa Maria area alone. With the increased sites and workload demands, it is possible that additional staff is needed to accomplish the required tasks. Management Partners did not complete a detailed analysis of workload and schedules as part of the scope for this review and is, therefore, not in a position to determine the appropriate staffing levels.

Recommendation 37: Conduct an in-depth workload and scheduling analysis of the Hazardous Materials Unit to ascertain appropriate staffing. The CEO's budget unit should work with SBCFD to complete a detailed review of the unit's workload. If any increased staffing is merited, fees should be adjusted to fully cover the costs of the program.

The training unit within the Support Services Division is also understaffed and should be augmented by at least one additional full-time equivalent employee (FTE) in order to provide and maintain a quality training program for the department. A recommendation to this end is found later in this report.

There is a general view that clerical support throughout the department is thin. Managers sometimes spend time performing basic clerical tasks themselves due to lack of support. The division chief over the Operations Division is the only division chief within the department lacking direct clerical support. The chief's executive secretary provides backup assistance and support for this division chief. It is possible that additional support staff is necessary. However other procedures to promote efficiency should be put in place and evaluated before additional staff is hired.

The Fiscal Services Division with eight FTEs is regarded by other Fire Department staff as being one of the few areas in the department to have added staff in recent years. According to the Fiscal Manager, however, the last position was added three years ago and the previous one nine years ago. The Fiscal Services Division is responsible for all billing, accounts payable, accounts receivable, purchasing, grant accounting, budgeting, monitoring, reporting, forecasting, strategic planning and other fiscal services. A growing workload concern for fiscal services is the increase in grants and grant accounting, particularly Homeland Security Act grants for the Office of Emergency Services. The department's Hazardous Materials Unit funds 1.5 positions within fiscal services for collection work but unit personnel feel the recovery rate could and should be improved to fund additional staff for the unit. Several personnel interviewed questioned the efficiency of the department's ambulance billing and collections processes and suggest they should be contracted to a private provider.

Recommendation 38: Determine if the Fire Department's billing and collections operations would be provided more efficiently by a private contractor. A detailed analysis of current billing and collections operations must be performed ~~to~~ before comparison with a private contractor will be possible.

A consistent complaint of Fire Department staff is that the department's internal financial processes are inefficient and time consuming. The Fire Department is one of two departments in the County to require

employees to submit handwritten timesheets (rather than submitting them electronically). The system for review and sign-off of timesheets is redundant and time consuming requiring three persons to review and approve the timesheet before it is sent to the County Auditor for processing.

> **Recommendation 39: Install electronic payroll capabilities for all personnel in the Fire Department.** The remainder of the County operates with electronic submission of payroll data. Each captain on shift should be held responsible for the accuracy of the submissions for his/her station. Battalion chiefs should, in turn, ensure that accuracy is made a part of overall evaluations of personnel under their command. In the interim, a review of timesheets by the shift captain is sufficient. The installation of the electronic payroll should be coordinated with the Auditor-Controller and CEO to ensure all hardware, software and process requirements are in place so timecards can be submitted at each fire station and administrative offices.

The purchasing process, likewise, is considered inefficient and time consuming. Staff members report that it can take "months" to get supplies. A major concern by line staff is what they consider to be undue levels of scrutiny and oversight of the purchasing process. As noted in recommendation 32 in the previous section of this report, much of the concern can be alleviated by providing sufficient petty cash authority and the issuance of Cal Cards to station captains.

Fire personnel also must recognize that the County has significant and important rules and regulations regarding fiscal and purchasing policies that are put into place to safeguard the County and which must be followed. Regardless, the fact remains that internal financial processes are impacting operations and fiscal approval authority (and accountability) should rest with the Captain or Battalion Chief in charge of an individual budget.

> **Recommendation 40: Clarify the role of Fiscal Services in approving financial transactions.** The Fiscal Services Unit should not be required to approve or reject all purchases made in accordance with County policies. The authority for financial control rests with the operational managers who should each be held accountable for working within their designated budgets.
>
> **Recommendation 41: Set specific improvement goals for internal fiscal processes.** Performance measures such as "each timesheet is reviewed by no more than two people" and "every Form 19 is processed within X days" should be used to improve internal processes. The department should move toward automation of many of

these activities to reduce the need to constantly grow a centralized financial operation and operational managers should be held accountable for training and educating their staff on appropriate financial coding and processing.

Recommendation 42: Determine the availability of administrative positions for general support functions once roles for Financial Services personnel have been clarified. By redesigning procedures and placing more accountability on supervisors in line functions, support staff may find sufficient time to address headquarters administrative needs.

Training

The department's Support Services Division Chief supervises three units including the Training/EMS Unit. The unit is supervised by a fire battalion chief who oversees four FTEs. The unit provides training for all 254 department FTEs (both safety and civilian) as well as coordinates the department's EMS operations. The Training Unit reports being in the process of updating training requirements for staff.

The Training Section is comprised of a captain and a department assistant. The captain coordinates all department training except EMS training. This includes initial entry academy training for new recruits, ongoing recruit evaluations, promotional exams, and ongoing training needs for staff, among other duties.

The unit's EMS coordinator is a civilian nurse who oversees and coordinates all EMS training including a two-year training module and ALS/BLS certifications. All firefighters have EMT-D certification and approximately 46 firefighters are licensed paramedics. The EMS coordinator oversees EMS drug policies, serves as the liaison with the County Public Health Department and ensures compliance with its protocols, provides quality assurance for the EMS program, and investigates complaints among other duties.

The department assistant tracks employee training, prepares and disseminates informational materials to staff, and provides other general clerical support to both the captain and EMS captain and coordinator.

Consistently staff stated that as the department has grown, training has suffered. Most staff members agree (and Training Unit personnel concur) that in most areas, Fire Department personnel receive little more than the bare minimum training required. Training Unit personnel state that meeting even this level is becoming increasingly difficult and admit they are falling behind and starting to slip in meeting training requirements. The focus is almost solely on mandated safety trainings and certifications.

This occurs to the detriment of general supervisory and other general employment training, which is a low priority.

An added problem described during interviews is what is considered to be an inordinate amount of time expended on issues raised by EMSA and investigations of actions by Fire Department personnel. We were told that often several days might be spent reviewing single issues, thus reducing the time available to address ongoing departmental training needs. A recommendation in response to real or perceived issues about EMSA questioning is addressed in the section of this report regarding inter-departmental coordination.

Training Unit personnel report barely being able to keep up with ever-increasing levels of training, most of which is mandated by state or federal government. Specific required mandated classes now include confined space, HIPAA, hazmat, blood/air-borne pathogens, mandated reporter, defibrillator, workplace violence, sexual harassment, trench operations, and more. Training Unit personnel state that it takes six to twelve months just to accomplish the mandatory training required for staff each year, only to start all over for the next year. The recruit academy by itself is a twelve-week process and the Training Unit depends on captains with specific certifications to serve as trainers. As a result, academy training must be scheduled in accordance with these captains' schedules. The Fire Department has joined forces with the City of Santa Barbara and Carpinteria Fire Departments to provide joint academies.

The quality of training has also suffered, according to line personnel. In the past Training Unit personnel would have a trainer or themselves go to "the floor" at stations to present live training to station personnel. In order to manage overtime and increase efficiency in delivering training to remote stations, the Training Unit has opted instead to send out interactive CD-ROM computer training courses to the stations and all personnel are required to go through (and document completion of) the computer courses. While this approach meets training requirements, personnel do not feel this training is of the quality that is necessary nor desired for a high quality public safety organization.

Given the significant increase in mandated training over time and the size of the department, training unit staffing of four FTEs (not including the battalion chief) is low. The department should increase its training staffing by an additional FTE.

> **Recommendation 43: Add a full-time civilian position to assist the captain in coordinating department training.** As soon as financial resources are available, this recommendation should be implemented. This position should be equivalent in duties to the captain but not a sworn safety position. Maintaining a civilian position will provide for continuity in the delivery of training over time. Funding for this position will have to be made available from either new

revenues or transfers from other functions in the department.

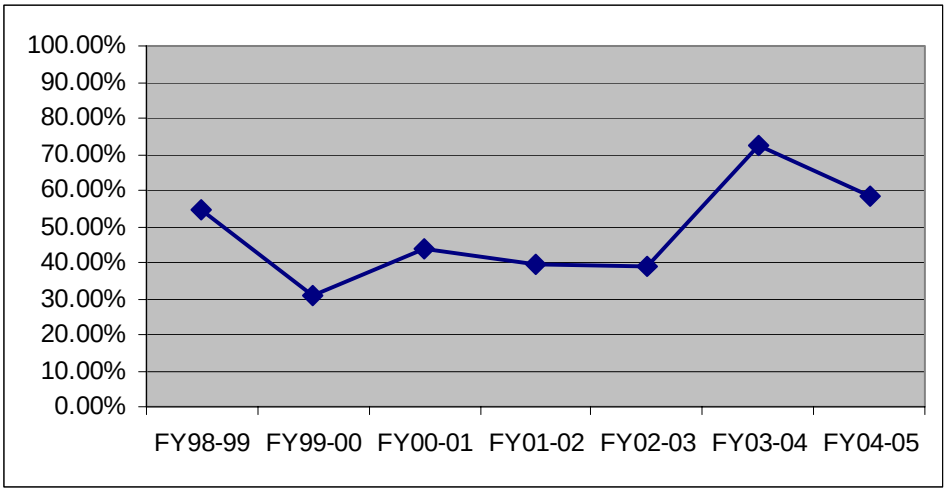
Recommendation 44: Assess alternative methods to provide training. Some staff members have suggested it would be more cost-effective to bring trainers to Santa Barbara for a few days to provide onsite training rather than sending County Fire personnel out of county to attend training. Given the attractive local environment, many trainers would probably enjoy such an opportunity. Another alternative is videoconferencing, which could be set up so that all fire stations could be linked simultaneously to a single training session. The Training Unit should utilize some new methods and analyze the results for future use.

Department personnel expressed frustration that there is no training facility or classroom available in which they can gather people and hold training sessions, nor a physical training tower. At present the department "begs" the use of the City of Santa Barbara's training tower. They view this negatively not only for the operational impacts on training but also believe it shows that training is not given the import it is due in the County organization. The geographic dispersion of the department's stations further complicates the ability to gather people together. To train personnel, Training Unit staff use one of two approaches. They can schedule a minimum number of staff each day for training, resulting in the need for 21 calendar days to complete one training cycle for the department or the alternative is to use overtime to maintain minimum staffing levels when personnel attend training sessions. The Training Unit has also begun encouraging personnel to volunteer their own personal time in order to attend training sessions beyond those mandated.

Recommendation 45: Reconsider the placement for a training facility in the County's long-range capital budgeting plan. Given the magnitude and importance of training for the County Fire Department, the County should provide adequate facilities. A training classroom, potentially combined with a new County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), would be a valuable asset in ensuring well-trained and capable emergency response. As the County reviews its long-term plan for capital projects, this facility should be reconsidered in terms of priority.

Fire personnel report that it is too difficult to take the time away to attend training given other responsibilities and note that training budgets are not always expended. As Table 21 shows, a review of department budget data shows that the department has under- spent an average of 48.5% in the training and travel category over the past seven fiscal years.

TABLE 21: PERCENT OF ADOPTED TRAINING & TRAVEL (LI 7732) BUDGET ACTUALLY SPENT



According to the Finance Manager, this was at times the result of the department receiving more grants for training to offset regular training expenditures.

Office of Emergency Services Issues

Approximately ten years ago the County's Office of Emergency Services (OES) was organizationally shifted from the CEO's Office to the Fire Department. The OES Manager supervises a staff of six personnel (two oil/gas/nuclear planners, two all risk planners, one terrorism planner and one secretary/clerical position). This unit is responsible for preparing the County for disasters and providing a coordinated response in times of emergency. The OES Manager administratively reports directly to the Deputy Fire Chief and to the County Executive Office, as necessary. The Deputy Chief provides day-to-day supervision. The OES serves the County as a whole, including the eight cities within the County and there is a considerable amount of inter-agency coordination, particularly since the OES is responsible for overseeing and coordinating numerous Homeland Security Act and other grants, as well as being responsible for emergency planning and training for the entire countywide organization. Essentially OES applies for and receives the grant money and then must coordinate with other County agencies to determine allocations and "dole out" the money to all parties.

The mandates from state and federal agencies to continually update the County's planning for emergency events and train personnel for a variety of potential events requires considerable coordination with both public and private agencies providing emergency services. It is generally accepted that Standard Emergency Management System (SEMS), National Integrated Management System (NIMS) and Hazard Mitigation Plan and training exercises are well developed.

The OES role in coordinating such grants has grown over time and the Office currently supervises about ten Homeland Security Grants now with increasing associated responsibilities and interaction with federal and state oversight agencies, as well as local agencies. This work also impacts the Fiscal Services Division within the Fire Department as it is responsible for grant accounting.

In general, the OES Manager reports that he is satisfied with the level of respect and response given to his office. He expressed concern that when emergencies occur, staff members find it difficult to juggle emergency response work that is absolutely a priority with pre-existing grant deadlines or other non-urgent work that still must occur. He also stated that he has not always been notified by County dispatch or others when significant events occurred.

While planning and training for emergency events is generally seen to be adequate, departments report some concern that County OES is not a well functioning unit and has some managerial and personality issues that reduce its effectiveness. Others question the office's ability to plan and communicate well and note the lack of OES participation in statewide events and training. While most agree that if OES is to be located within a County department it best fits within the Fire Department, some feel that it should be a standalone office located directly under the County Executive Officer to provide the authority and respect needed. The organization for emergency response dictated by both state and federal agencies follows the outline of SEMS/NIMS. This model is essentially the Incident Command System (ICS) organization used by all fire departments. As long as the CEO establishes strong support for the OES functions within the Fire Department and acknowledges that support with all County agencies, the OES function is best placed in the Fire Department. During any major incident, the CEO will be part of the Emergency Operations Center and oversee the management of the event utilizing the support of the OES Manager.

> **Recommendation 46: Clarify countywide position responsibilities during emergencies and natural disasters and the relationship of the Office of Emergency Services Manager to all positions involved in these events.** While the formal manuals may outline responsibilities, there is a need to more aggressively establish accountability and responsibility. Administrative directives regarding responsibilities may have to be developed to ensure roles are properly followed.

The County does not have a separate Emergency Operations Center (EOC) but utilizes a multi-use modular trailer that is not, itself, disaster proof. In addition, the trailer must be manually activated prior to being able to begin the work of managing emergencies. This can result in undesirable time delays during what could be crucial periods of time. The County has recognized this deficiency and placed a facility in its long-

range CIP. Given the notoriety of emergency preparedness due to recent disasters, the Board of Supervisors should review the priority placed on this outstanding need.

Recommendation 47: Reconsider the priority for a dedicated Office of Emergency Services Center that is linked to County dispatch and information technology and ready to go online in minutes. Ideally this facility might be shared with a new Fire Department training facility and conference/meeting room.

CONCLUSION

Despite what would seem to be a substantially increasing tax base for the Santa Barbara County Fire District, those increases have not provided revenues to keep pace with the operational costs of the Fire Department. The department cannot maintain the existing level of services with out an ever-increasing amount of support from sources outside the district's property tax allocation. Under the very best of circumstances (high revenues and low expenses and inclusion of Prop 172 funding) the Fire District could maintain its current level of services with a General Fund subsidy of $4.9 million in the current budget down to an approximate $900,000 subsidy in 2010. The high range of possible revenue sources outside district property taxes required to maintain current services is estimated to be over $20 million by the year 2010. A more realistic prediction is approximately $5 million. The options are a voter-approved measure designed for fire services or additional funding from Proposition 172 sales tax revenues.

There are no significant savings that are available to the Fire Department in the current mode of operation. As with most public services – and particularly with emergency response services – the savings must come from reductions in personnel. This could only happen in the Fire Department with the elimination of stations, a very difficult decision to make. The County's fire stations were located, for the most part, many years ago. As the urban areas have grown up around many of those stations, the possibility for consolidation with other agencies has also grown. There are areas of redundancy in the more populated areas requiring serious review without the usual defense mechanisms and protection of self-interests. Serious discussions with other agencies, including American Medical Response could result in savings for all participating in talks regarding efficient delivery of emergency services. Such discussions should take place prior to any decision-making about expenditures to improve station conditions. The discussions should also include considerations for consolidation of dispatching for the standard fire department/emergency medical calls for service as part of the elimination of redundancy and better response to community needs.

The operating conditions for almost all fire stations are seen to be less than acceptable. The needs of all fifteen stations require careful documentation and then the development of a prioritized list of improvements by the General Services Agency addressing those needs. A funding source for these improvements must be identified.

The Fire Department relies on others for support services that will allow for effective delivery of its emergency services. With the adoption of a more team-oriented approach among all the players in County department operations, more effective service can result. A concerted effort in this regard with the Emergency Medical Services Agency, General Services Agency and Sheriff's Dispatch Center can deliver this result. In addition, the County, in general, must establish a problem solving approach to some very serious issues regarding major risks being assumed for emergency services at the University of California. The potential for a serious incident on the campus requires that the County evaluate its role in providing better response capabilities than is currently available.

This report contains 47 recommendations to address and/or improve a variety of issues facing the Santa Barbara Fire Department. When looked at in total the list may be daunting, it is certainly manageable if priorities for implementation are established. The biggest issues will be, understandably, centered on the availability of funds.

The information contained in this report could not have been developed and presented without the excellent cooperation of staff from a number of agencies. Management Partners found all we worked with to be very dedicated and willing to share information, problems and suggestions for change. This base of employees bodes well for bringing about needed changes in service delivery.

ATTACHMENT A: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Direct staff to return with a more in-depth analysis of revenue enhancements and expenditure reductions for the SBCFD, which could begin to help offset departmental revenue expenditure gap in the coming fiscal years.

Recommendation 2: Assess alternative dispatch options for the Fire Department only at a time when a new system is being evaluated for the combined operations.

Recommendation 3: Move the Fire Department expanded dispatch operation to the Santa Barbara County Public Safety Dispatch Center.

Recommendation 4: Ensure software systems will provide the necessary linkage for single entry of response times geared to the information that is collected for EMSA purposes.

Recommendation 5: Develop a simplified description of charges for all dispatch services for the users of the system.

Recommendation 6: Conduct an evaluation of each dispatcher through one-on-one interviews to determine impacts of the job on each individual's perception of his/her ability to properly perform the job.

Recommendation 7: Evaluate the benefits of separating law enforcement and fire/medical emergency dispatch duties.

Recommendation 8: Develop an agreed upon protocol for notification of those "need to know" officials in County government regarding emergency response incidents and ensure the software system will be capable of emergency notification.

Recommendation 9: Initiate new negotiations with AMR for coverage in the Vandenberg Village and New Cuyama station areas.

Recommendation 10: Implement a project to provide and receive automatic response to fire calls across jurisdictional lines.

Recommendation 11: Provide each fire station with updated maps of its geographic area(s) of responsibility.

Recommendation 12: Implement a project to facilitate installation of sprinklers by UCSB in all facilities with high concentrations of people and the greatest risk of fire incidents.

Recommendation 13: Identify alternative methods of providing fire emergency services on the UCSB campus.

Recommendation 14: Evaluate the County's contract with UCSB for possible reversion of the responsibility for fire response to the university.

Recommendation 15: Schedule facilitated problem-solving sessions between departments with the purpose of developing on-going solutions to operational issues and provide periodic reports of progress to the CEO.

Recommendation 16: Establish a regular meeting of the Medical Directors of EMSA and Fire Department to ensure clarity of policies and practices for paramedics in the field.

Recommendation 17: Evaluate the current Medical Director assignment in the Fire Department to determine if a change should be made.

Recommendation 18: Develop a master station facility plan and prioritize all projects across the department.

Recommendation 19: Invest in exhaust/ventilation systems (such as the Nedameyer system) for every station.

Recommendation 20: Provide lockers for turnouts in stations, ideally in a separate space that is located near the bay, to prevent exposure to/from off-gases.

Recommendation 21: Provide adequate storage for medical supplies in stations, including a "locked box" that is ideally located near, but not in, the bay.

Recommendation 22: Renovate current station facilities, where possible, so that the exercise room is located within the living quarters.

Recommendation 23: Complete long-term planning regarding apparatus procurement to facilitate facility planning in conjunction with efforts underway by General Services.

Recommendation 24: Conduct a customized sound test at each station and upgrade each sound system accordingly.

Recommendation 25: Develop an implementation plan to identify and recommend new technology in stations to alert personnel following initial alarm activation.

Recommendation 26: Install pull curtains next to each bed and sliding "vacant/in use" signs at each bathroom location, where applicable.

Recommendation 27: Schedule remodels of station bathrooms and separate sleeping quarters into individual rooms as budgets allow for the remaining stations not yet remodeled.

Recommendation 28: Allocate money specifically for the purchase of station lockers and other storage options; new office equipment, including computers and peripherals; noise/wind barriers; and additional refrigerators and beds for stations that have the space for these items.

Recommendation 29: Move or remodel the work areas within stations carrying out specifically assigned departmental functions like apparatus repair.

Recommendation 30: Design new facilities that incorporate ideal working space configurations and ample storage capacity.

Recommendation 31: Reiterate the County's position regarding Fire Department facility ownership and maintenance.

Recommendation 32: Implement a petty cash account of $500 at each station and Cal cards at local retailers that will allow each station the flexibility to purchase items necessary for routine operations and unanticipated minor repairs.

Recommendation 33: Ensure updated standard specifications for Fire Department vehicles/equipment by type are reviewed with General Services.

Recommendation 34: Establish a roving mechanic position to provide preventative maintenance.

Recommendation 35: Analyze the financial implications of creating a backfill pool of full-time employees and/or continuing the use of overtime to provide backfill relief.

Recommendation 36: Reinstate a formal policy that performing administrative duties is a requirement for internal promotion.

Recommendation 37: Conduct an in depth workload and scheduling analysis of the Hazardous Materials Unit to ascertain appropriate staffing.

Recommendation 38: Determine if the Fire Department's billing and collections operations would be provided more efficiently by a private contractor.

Recommendation 39: Install electronic payroll capabilities for all personnel in the Department.

Recommendation 40: Clarify the role of Fiscal Services in approving financial transactions.

Recommendation 41: Set specific improvement goals for internal fiscal processes.

Recommendation 42: Determine the availability of administrative positions for general support functions once roles for Financial Services personnel have been clarified.

Recommendation 43: Add a full-time civilian position to assist the captain in coordinating department training.

Recommendation 44: Assess alternative methods to provide training.

Recommendation 45: Reconsider the placement for a training facility in the County's long-range capital budgeting plan.

Recommendation 46: Clarify countywide position responsibilities during emergencies and natural disasters and the relationship of the Office of Emergency Services Manager to all positions involved in these events.

Recommendation 47: Reconsider the priority for a dedicated Office of Emergency Services Center that is linked to County dispatch and information technology and ready to go online in minutes.

ATTACHMENT B: COMPARISON OF COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS - SANTA BARBARA COUNTY AND PEERS

County Location of Peer Fire Agencies	Alameda	Contra Costa	Kern	Los Angeles	Orange	Marin	Sacramento	San Luis Obispo	Santa Barbara	Santa Clara	Ventura	Average
Select County Demographics												
Population (2003)	1,461,030	1,001,136	713,807	9,871,506	2,957,766	246,073	1,330,711	253,118	403,134	1,678,421	791,130	1,882,530
Population over 65 yrs old (2000)	10%	11%	9%	10%	10%	14%	11%	15%	13%	10%	10%	11%
Area-Square miles	738	720	8,141	4,061	789	520	966	3,304	2,737	1,291	1,845	2,283
Population density (2003)	1,980	1,390	88	2,431	3,749	473	1,378	77	147	1,300	429	825
Coastal (as defined by NACO)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	
Mean travel time to work in minutes (2000)	30.8	34.4	23.2	29.4	27.2	32.3	25.4	21.1	19.3	26.1	25.4	27
University of California Campus	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	
Median household income (1999)	$55,946	$63,675	$35,446	$42,189	$58,820	$71,306	$43,816	$42,428	$46,677	$74,335	$59,666	$54,028
Per capita money income (1999)	$26,680	$30,615	$15,760	$20,683	$25,826	$44,962	$21,142	$21,894	$23,059	$32,795	$24,600	$26,183
County Seat of Government	Oakland	Martinez	Bakersfield	Los Angeles	Santa Ana	San Rafael	Sacramento	San Luis Obispo	Santa Barbara	San Jose	Ventura	
Housing Inventory												
Median value of owner-occupied housing units (2000)	$303,100	$267,800	$93,300	$209,300	$270,000	$514,600	$144,200	$230,000	$293,000	$446,400	$248,700	$274,582
Owner-occupied units valued at $1 million or more (2000)	2%	2%	0%	3%	2%	13%	0%	0%	6%	9%	1%	3%
Total housing units (2000)	540,183	354,577	231,564	3,270,909	969,484	104,990	492,506	102,275	142,901	579,329	251,712	640,039
Units in Structures												
1 unit detached	54%	65%	68%	49%	51%	61%	63%	65%	58%	56%	64%	59%
1 unit attached	7%	9%	4%	7%	13%	8%	7%	6%	7%	9%	11%	8%
2 units	4%	2%	3%	3%	2%	4%	2%	3%	4%	2%	2%	3%
3 or 4 units	7%	5%	6%	6%	7%	5%	5%	5%	6%	6%	5%	6%
5 to 9 units	6%	5%	3%	8%	6%	6%	5%	3%	7%	6%	4%	5%
10 to 19 units	5%	3%	2%	8%	5%	6%	4%	2%	5%	5%	4%	4%
20 or more units	15%	9%	5%	17%	13%	9%	11%	5%	8%	13%	6%	10%
mobile homes	1%	2%	10%	2%	3%	2%	3%	10%	6%	3%	5%	4%
boat, RV, van, etc	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%

ATTACHMENT B: COMPARISON OF COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS - SANTA BARBARA COUNTY AND PEERS (CONTINUED)

County Location of Peer Fire Agencies	Alameda	Contra Costa	Kern	Los Angeles	Orange	Marin	Sacramento	San Luis Obispo	Santa Barbara	Santa Clara	Ventura	Average
Percent of housing units in multi-unit structures (2000)	38%	24%	19%		33%	29%	27%	19%	29%	32%	21%	27%
Median number of rooms (2000)	4.8	5.5	5.0	4.2	5.0	5.3	5.1	5.0	4.9	5.0	5.5	5.0
Occupants per room/occupied housing units												
1 or less	88%	92%	85%	77%	84%	95%	91%	94%	87%	86%	88%	88%
1.01 to 1.50	5%	4%	7%	8%	6%	2%	5%	3%	5%	6%	5%	5%
1.51 or more	7%	4%	8%	15%	10%	3%	4%	3%	8%	8%	7%	7%
Year structure built												
2000 to March 2000	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	0%	1%	2%	2%	2%
1995 to 1998	4%	5%	7%	2%	5%	3%	5%	0%	3%	5%	5%	4%
1990 to 1994	4%	8%	10%	4%	7%	4%	9%	0%	5%	5%	6%	6%
1980 to 1989	12%	19%	21%	12%	17%	10%	20%	0%	17%	13%	20%	15%
1970 to 1979	16%	21%	20%	16%	28%	20%	23%	0%	21%	25%	27%	20%
1960 to 1969	17%	17%	14%	18%	23%	23%	15%	0%	25%	23%	23%	18%
1940 to 1959	26%	23%	21%	35%	16%	27%	20%	0%	19%	22%	14%	20%
1939 or earlier	20%	5%	5%	13%	3%	13%	6%	0%	9%	5%	4%	7%