



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

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

Department Name: CEO
Department No.: 012
For Agenda Of: October 16, 2018
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Time: 60 min
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department: Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer
Director(s): Matt Pontes, Assistant CEO
Terri Nisich, Assistant CEO
Contact Info: Robert Lewin, Director, Office of Emergency Management, 681-5526
SUBJECT: Thomas Fire and 1/9 Debris Flow After-Action Report and Improvement Plan

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: N/A

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Receive the “Thomas Fire and 1/9 Debris Flow After-Action Report and Improvement Plan” from Hagerty Consulting, Inc. (Attachment A), identifying areas of strength and considerations for improvement based on the lessons learned associated with the County’s response to the Thomas Fire of December 2017 and the ensuing 1/9 Debris Flow of January 9, 2018; and,
- b) Determine that these activities are exempt from California Environmental Quality Act review per CEQA Guideline Section 15061(b) (3), since it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activities may have a significant effect on the environment.

Summary Text:

This item is on the agenda to provide the Board with a presentation of the “Thomas Fire and 1/9 Debris Flow After-Action Report and Improvement Plan” (AAR). The AAR is required by the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) when a State Proclamation and Federal Declaration exist. The format for this AAR is consistent with the requirements of the State based on templates provided by Cal OES. This AAR was prepared by a contracted consultant, Hagerty Consulting, Inc., with collaboration and input from various local, county, and state agencies, and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners. Hagerty Consulting is an emergency management consulting firm that helps clients prepare for and recover from disasters. Established in 2001, Hagerty’s work includes some of the nation’s largest recovery and preparedness projects in more than 30 states, including 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, and Hurricane Sandy.

The intent of the report is to identify areas of strength in the County's response to the disasters, and primary considerations the County can make to improve future response. The focus of this report is specific to the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and its response and capabilities, and how the EOC engaged with other agencies and the public during the response phase of the disasters. The report covers the period from December 4, 2017 when the Thomas Fire began in Ventura County and goes until the response phase of the emergency when it was transitioning to the recovery phase on January 31, 2018. As of the date of this report, recovery operations continue and coincide with the planning for winter storms which may cause additional debris flows and the need for community evacuations below the Thomas Fire burn area. The local, State, and Federal Emergency has not been terminated.

Background:

The purpose of the Thomas Fire and 1/9 Debris Flow After-Action Report and Improvement Plan is to identify lessons learned, strengths, and considerations for improvement associated with the County's response to the Thomas Fire, which began on December 4, 2017 and reached the border of the County on December 9, 2017, and the associated debris flow that occurred on January 9, 2018. The AAR acknowledges that the findings and recommendations for consideration presented in the document will require participation and engagement from local, State, and Federal partners, as well as NGOs, in order to ensure the revised plans, policies, and procedures address the needs of stakeholders from across the County.

While recovery operations associated with the 1/9 Debris Flow are still ongoing, the AAR primarily focuses on response operations occurring from December 4, 2017 to approximately January 31, 2018 and activities occurring within the EOC. Additional findings, strengths, and considerations associated with field-based response operations and long-term recovery may be identified by the County and associated stakeholders. Those findings are outside of the scope of the AAR.

The primary strengths recognized in the AAR specific to the response operation within the EOC include the following which are summarized on pages 11-12 of the AAR

- Robust information sharing through the County Joint Information Center (JIC);
- Provision of relevant and timely mapping products public and operational use;
- Use of a call center to support public safety and increase situational awareness;
- Timely planning executed to support contingency operations as the incident evolved;
- Use of volunteers to support response operations;
- Implementation of County-wide Behavioral Wellness response; and
- Execution of a robust Public Health response.

The primary considerations offered to the County in this report specific to improving response and recovery are as follows which are summarized on pages 12-13 and discussed in Appendix A of the report:

- Formalize and socialize evacuation planning;
- Continue to refine and enhance emergency public information and warning;
- Increase collaboration with local government partners;
- Enhance the County’s ability to respond to a sustained EOC activation; and
- Increase the County’s capability to recover from a major disaster.

Next Steps

Appendix A is the Improvement Plan which includes areas for potential modifications and recommended timelines. All items recommended for “Immediate (Prior to Winter Storm Season of 2018-19)” action are occurring now and will be completed by December 2018.

The County will utilize the AAR to provide informed feedback to ongoing plan updates, build local capabilities, and to help provide local training and education opportunities. The recovery efforts for the disaster continues and staff from many agencies are fully engaged in planning and preparation for future community evacuations and debris flows which may occur.

Staff will report back to the Board within six months on the status of efforts toward achieving the items identified in Appendix A of the AAR Including potential resource requests that are necessary to achieve the identified improvements.

Performance Measure:

N/A

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts: Budgeted: N/A

Fiscal Analysis:

There are no fiscal or facilities impacts to accepting this report and reviewing the recommendations. Item required to achieve considered improvements will be brought through the budgeting processes.

Staffing Impacts:

Legal Positions:
0

FTEs:
0

Special Instructions:

None

Attachments:

- A. Thomas Fire 1/9 Debris Flow After Action Report and Improvement Plan

Authored by:

Robert Lewin, Director, Office of Emergency Management