



CITY OF SANTA MARIA
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July 6, 2006

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

**RE: RESPONSE TO THE SANTA BARBARA COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT
ON EMERGENCY SHELTERING, EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONSE,
EMERGENCY PUBLIC INFORMATION, EMERGENCY OPERATIONS
CENTER**

The purpose of this letter is to transmit the City of Santa Maria's formal response to the above subject report dated May 11, 2006. According to Penal Code Section 933, the City Manager has 60 days to reply to the Grand Jury Report and this letter is intended to satisfy that reporting requirement.

The Grand Jury Report made two findings and two recommendations regarding Emergency Sheltering, Emergency Medical Response, Emergency Public Information, Emergency Operations Center. The following is the City's formal response to the finding:

**RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION REGARDING
EMERGENCY SHELTERING, EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONSE, EMERGENCY
PUBLIC INFORMATION, EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER**

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

CITY RESPONSE: The respondent agrees with the finding.

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

CITY RESPONSE: The respondent agrees with the finding.

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

CITY RESPONSE: The recommendation will not be implemented because the City has concerns regarding the overall effectiveness and benefits of a Reverse 911 Emergency Notification System. The City intends to continue to monitor the use of these systems in other populated areas of the State as well as evaluate the results of appropriate field testing in other communities prior to making a decision regarding any significant expenditure for such a system. The City has been working with local media to develop an acceptable Emergency Notification System through television and radio outlets that would ultimately provide relevant information to the Public in both English and Spanish in case of an emergency. Once this system is functional and operational, the benefits of this new system will be evaluated to determine if a Reverse 911 Emergency Notification System should still be pursued.

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

CITY RESPONSE: The recommendation has been implemented as the City currently provides support to the EPIC by committing a Fire Battalion Chief to attend and participate in the scheduled EPIC meetings. The EPIC currently falls under the umbrella of the Santa Barbara County Chapter of the American Red Cross. The City believes that County Office of Emergency Services (OES) should provide more oversight for the EPIC in order to provide better coordination and consistency between government agencies, the private sector, and all other interested participants as it pertains to emergency public information.

The City of Santa Maria welcomes this opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury Report.



TIM S. NESS
City Manager

c: Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury Foreman