

CITY of CARPINTERIA CALIFORNIA



June 7, 2011

RECEIVED

Honorable Arthur A. Garcia
Assistant Presiding Judge
Santa Barbara Superior Court
312 East Cook Street
Post Office Box 5369
Santa Maria, CA 93456

AUG 4 2011

BY: _____

Members of the City Council

Al Clark - Mayor
J. Bradley Stein - Vice Mayor
Joe Armendariz
Gregg Carty
Kathleen Reddington

Reference: Response to Santa Barbara Civil Grand Jury Titled, "**Improving Our Emergency Alert System in the 21st Century**" (Published March 15, 2010 on the Jury Delivered to the City of Carpinteria on March 11th, 2011)

Judge Garcia:

The City of Carpinteria is providing its response to the above referenced Civil Grand Jury Report. A Staff Report with the City's response was originally presented at a City Council meeting on April 25th, 2011. The City Council voted unanimously to approve the Staff Report as presented to the Council.

In accordance with the Grand Jury's direction, responses are provided in accordance with Section 933.05 of the California Penal Code.

Finding 2: During past crises, emergency agencies have not always communicated with each other which may have slowed information being passed to affected residents.

Response: *The City of Carpinteria disagrees with the Finding:*

- ***During recent emergencies, such as wild land fires with urban interface and severe weather (potential flooding) and the Tsunami Advisory, County Office of Emergency Services (OES) has organized daily conference calls with all jurisdictions and agencies to collect data to ensure accurate information is shared between all parties involved in the emergency, and has forwarded that information to the media for distribution to residents.***
 - ***To further increase our ability to communicate effectively with other jurisdictions and agencies, County OES has purchased and trained emergency personnel on WebEOC, a software program designed to provide a communications link to all jurisdictions and agencies during an emergency.***
 - ***In addition, emails and telephone conversations between jurisdictions and agencies occurs regularly. Emergency Coordinators and Managers, Fire District and Law enforcement personnel assess how they can best assist each other and consistently verify that emergency information is accurate prior to distribution to the public.***
 - ***For over three years, NIXLE, a computer-based emergency notification system has been available to residents. NIXLE provides timely information about emergencies. NIXLE is available through County OES, Carpinteria-Summerland Fire Protection District, and Montecito Fire Department. We have been aggressively registering residents for NIXLE at the City of Carpinteria "Don't Panic! Prepare" neighborhood emergency preparedness workshops.***
 - ***In Carpinteria, we use our City web site, the government access Channel 18,***
- 5775 CARPINTERIA AVENUE • CARPINTERIA, CA 93013-2603 (805) 684-5405 • FAX (805) 684-5304
www.carpinteria.ca.us

direct emails and telephone calls to CERT graduates and “Don’t Panic! Prepare” workshop participants to distribute accurate information about an emergency to residents.

- **During our “Don’t Panic! Prepare” neighborhood emergency preparedness workshops we have workshop participants enroll in Reverse 911 emergency notification system. Information on Reverse 911 is available on the Santa Barbara County Sheriff’s Department web site, www.sbsheriff.org.**
- **After each “Don’t Panic! Prepare” emergency preparedness workshop, Neighborhood Emergency Teams (NETs) are being established in neighborhoods to provide additional support for the transfer of accurate emergency information to Carpinteria neighborhoods. In many locations, telephone trees are set up; emergency supplies are being assigned to a community storage area, and Block Captains are selected, and are conducting surveys to better understand what their neighbors need in an emergency.**

Recommendation 2: *The Board of Supervisors and appropriate city jurisdictions require their respective emergency agencies to pass emergency information to adjacent jurisdictions and the Office of Emergency Services without delay.*

Response: *The City of Carpinteria, and all Santa Barbara County jurisdictions and agencies, train staff in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS), which requires emergency information be passed on to the County Office of Emergency Services and other jurisdictions. The distribution of information, request for assistance, and damage reports, are fundamental to the NIMS/SEMS process. The City of Carpinteria will continue to be NIMS and SEMS compliant, and will continue to improve on the transfer of accurate emergency information without unnecessary delays.*

Finding 3: *No single public emergency services agency has accepted the responsibility for educating the public about the actions the public must take to access emergency service communications or what information the public can expect from various emergency alert/information systems.*

Response: *The City of Carpinteria disagrees partially with the Finding: Most jurisdictions in Santa Barbara County are able to provide public education and awareness programs due to the generous funding established by the Aware & Prepare Initiative. The City of Carpinteria agrees that there is no dedicated Santa Barbara County public funding source applied to emergency preparedness public education and awareness programs.*

The City of Carpinteria, in collaboration with Fire, Law, County OES, and with the assistance of the Aware & Prepare Initiative grant, has accepted responsibility for educating residents about the actions the public must take to access emergency service communications and what to expect from various emergency alert/information systems. The Aware & Prepare grant led to the creation of the City of Carpinteria “Don’t Panic! Prepare” emergency preparedness public education and awareness program in English and Spanish. This program offers residents (1) a disaster preparedness survival guide with specific information on emergency services communications, (2) the opportunity to attend an hour and a half emergency preparedness workshop where residents can chose to register for NIXLE, Reverse 911 and learn to navigate the National Weather Service web site, www.weather.gov/losangeles, in order to receive the latest and most accurate weather related emergency information, (3) the Don’t Panic! survival guide and an emergency (starter) kit will be provided to each household, and (4) the opportunity to

participate in a Neighborhood Emergency Team in their community with the specific responsibility of getting accurate emergency information and sharing it with their neighbors.

Currently City Staff and Don't Panic! Prepare Community Advisory Committee members, Fire Protection District personnel, and Santa Barbara Sheriff's Department personnel have completed nineteen neighborhood emergency preparedness workshops, and supplied over a thousand residents with survival guides and assisted residents in registering for NIXLE and Reverse 911 emergency notification systems.

Since 2006, the City of Carpinteria has offered CERT (Carpinteria Community Emergency Response Team) training program twice a year free of charge. In CERT, emergency communications is an important part of the curriculum. With the recent CERT graduation, there are approximately 225 CERT graduates in Carpinteria. CERT graduates will be able to play a leading role in an emergency especially tasked with disseminating accurate emergency information to their respective communities among other responsibilities.

In 2009, the City of Carpinteria piloted a 4-week Spanish language disaster preparedness course. On April 27th, the third LISTOS class will graduate. Carpinteria has 60 LISTOS graduates in our community. One of the most important components of the LISTOS curriculum is how to access accurate emergency information, and how to communicate that information to family and friends. LISTOS class members register for Reverse 911 and NIXLE.

Omitted from this Grand Jury Report was the need to expand Spanish language translation of emergency information for residents.

The City of Carpinteria respects the work of the Civil Grand Jury and appreciates the opportunity to share the comprehensive emergency preparedness activities and incident information interactions it maintains with the County Office of Emergency Services, other jurisdictions and agencies.

Sincerely,


Dave Durringer
City Manager
City of Carpinteria

Encls

Cc: Honorable Joni Gray, Chair, Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors