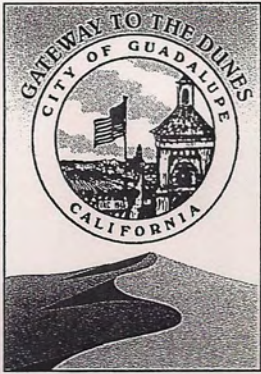


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BY: _____



Fire Department
City of Guadalupe
918 Obispo Street
P.O. Box 908
Guadalupe, CA 93434
Tel (805) 356-3900
Fax (805) 343-0362

September 27, 2011

The Honorable Arthur A. Garcia
Assistant Presiding Judge
Santa Barbara Superior Court
312 East Cook Street
P.O. Box 5369
Santa Maria, CA 93456-5369

Subject: Required response to 2010-11 Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury Report.

Dear Judge Garcia,

This is in response to the Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury Report titled "Improving Our Emergency Alert System In The 21st Century, Paul Revere – Where Are You?"

GENERAL INFORMATION

The City of Guadalupe does not currently have a formal policy or process for disseminating emergency information to the community, news media, or adjacent jurisdictions. The available mechanisms for this type of communications at this time are:

1. Police and Fire personnel traversing the City and using public address systems on our vehicles to notify the public, and going door to door.
2. Through verbal agreements put in place at the time the Sheriff's Department acquired the Reverse 911® System through Federal Homeland Security Grant funds, the City has access to the Reverse 911® System for contacting our residents to notify them of an incident. There is no formal policy on the use of the Reverse 911® System in place, however, the Police Chief and Fire Chief are familiar with how the system works and can activate it if necessary.

3. The Fire Chief maintains an e-mail distribution list with all local media outlets on it to distribute fire department related press releases. This distribution list could be used to notify the media of incidents occurring within the city, or the surrounding areas. This information distribution system is available to provide almost instantaneous information to the local media outlets, who, in turn can broadcast this information to the community. The two main concerns with this mode of information sharing is: One; the City's computer system is out of service for some reason, and Two; the news media outlets on the receiving end must pick up the messages in a timely manner.
4. The City has a Government Access Television Channel through its cable television franchise. Information could potentially be disseminated to the community in real time through the use of the video camera located in the City Council Chambers. The camera is currently used to broadcast City Council meetings live from the Council Chambers. There is currently no policy or procedure in place to activate this resource, but could potentially be activated "On the fly".

RESPONSE TO FINDING 2

The City of Guadalupe has not been directly affected by the recent wildland fires in the south county as referenced in the Grand Jury Report. That being said, the City agrees that it is vital for public safety agencies to communicate with each other to share accurate and timely information about an incident so all of our constituents are kept apprised of the rapidly changing conditions that may affect them directly or indirectly. However, the agency with the primary jurisdiction for an incident (the Incident Commander) must be responsible for gathering the information and disseminating it in a timely manner, as they are ultimately responsible for the accuracy and content of the information being disseminated. It is highly inappropriate for one jurisdiction or agency to disseminate information about another jurisdiction's incident on their own and which has not been approved by the jurisdiction responsible for the incident. This can lead to conflicting and possibly erroneous information being disseminated.

The County is fortunate to have a group known as "EPIC", or Emergency Public Information Communicators" which is a coalition of public information officers from public safety agencies, school districts, private non-profits, public utilities, and news media outlets throughout the county. This group has been in existence since 2004 and meets once per month to share training ideas and discuss inter-discipline issues with the goal of ensuring that the communities we serve receive the most up to date information possible in time of emergency.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 2

The City of Guadalupe is committed to developing a policy and process for communicating with other agencies as part of our update to the County-wide Disaster Mitigation Act 2000 Plan (DMA2K Plan). Due to a lack of identified funding, action on

this item will be limited to available resources until additional funds are identified and acquired. Participation in EPIC may be a viable path to aid in meeting this commitment.

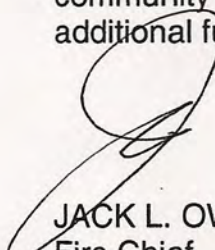
RESPONSE TO FINDING 3

The City of Guadalupe acknowledges that there currently is no single public service agency that has accepted responsibility for educating the public as described in this finding. However, as a result of meetings held to update the County-wide DMA2K Plan over the past year, The County Office of Emergency Services has taken a lead role in coordinating an effort to address this Finding throughout the County. The City of Guadalupe has been an active participant in this new process.

The City of Guadalupe will be using the DMA2K Plan update as an opportunity to examine the options available in the marketplace and develop a plan for a multi-pronged approach to communicating with our community in time of emergency. Currently under consideration are:

1. Developing a solid process for using the Government Access Television channel to communicate with the community.
2. Working with the Sheriff's Department to clarify and solidify our access to the Reverse 911® System and support the improvement of the system as we are able to.
3. Develop the necessary resources to use the Nixle service to disseminate information to our community. Nixle recently changed their operation and now charges a fee for all but the most basic access and funding will need to be identified and acquired to fully utilize this service.
4. Determine the feasibility of operating a low-power AM or FM radio station covering the City to disseminate information to the community. There is currently two systems operating within the County. One operated by the San Marcos Pass Volunteer Fire Department and one operated by the Montecito Fire District. Costs and a potential source of funding have been identified and work will continue on this as time and resources permit.
5. Continued participation in EPIC.
6. Continued participation in the County Office of Emergency Services program to address this Finding.
7. Identify funding and determine the feasibility of installing an electrical power generator for City Hall to enable us to operate during power outages.

The City of Guadalupe is committed to providing the best possible service to our community within the financial parameters available to us, and will continue to seek additional funding from all sources to meet our future need.



JACK L. OWEN, JR.
Fire Chief