

SAN DIEGO REGIONAL FIRE PREVENTION AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TASK FORCE



FINAL REPORT

APRIL 17, 2006

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Fire Chief Jeff Bowman, San Diego Fire-Rescue Department**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In October of 2003 San Diego County and other areas of Southern California experienced the most devastating wildland-urban interface fires in the history of California. Almost 740,000 acres were burned, 246 people were injured, 24 Californians lost their lives including one firefighter, and more than 3600 homes, 36 commercial properties and 1169 outbuildings were destroyed.

In response to the 2003 firestorms, San Diego Mayor Dick Murphy and Chairman of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors, Greg Cox formed the San Diego Regional Fire Prevention and Emergency Preparedness Task Force. The Task Force was comprised of representatives from federal, state and local agencies, and was co-chaired by San Diego County Sheriff Bill Kolender and San Diego Fire-Rescue Chief, Jeff Bowman.

The Task Force was asked to identify what worked well, what did not work, and what could be done to prevent conflagrations and to better respond to wildland fires in the future by answering these questions:

- 1) How can the region be better prepared for emergencies?
- 2) How can the region more efficiently use existing resources?
- 3) What changes are needed to existing codes, regulations and ordinances?

The recommendations of the Task Force were designed to serve as action items that can be implemented and measured for effectiveness. Some recommendations have been initiated at various levels and are permanently employed, while others require further action. Additional recommendations will require the cooperation of federal, state and local agencies, as well as identification of permanent funding sources and community support.

It is essential that we, as a community, learn from this experience and apply the recommendations of the Task Force to all risk hazards, as San Diego County is susceptible to fire, flood, earthquake and terrorism events. With these hazards in mind, the task force has been committed to the effort of improving our ability, as a region, to respond to any disaster that may occur.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MISSION

Mayor Dick Murphy and Supervisor Greg Cox established the San Diego Regional Fire Prevention and Emergency Preparedness Task Force in November 2003. The Task Force was established to provide a forum for representatives of all public safety disciplines to review, discuss and develop proposals for all risk service enhancements in the San Diego region. Fire and law enforcement professionals, federal, state and local representatives and community officials were appointed to the Task Force.

SUMMARY OF TASK FORCE REPORT

The Task Force members were welcomed by Mayor Dick Murphy and County Supervisor Greg Cox in December 2003, and were provided a general overview of Task Force membership, mission and time lines, goals and staff support.

The Task Force established nineteen sub-committees and addressed issues including public education and volunteerism in the community, regional mutual aid agreements, communications systems for emergency responders, and notification of civilians as well as long range necessities of brush management policies, code enforcement and community planning requirements.

Each sub-committee researched their respective topic and supplied background information, technical issues and solutions, research of successful strategies, existing and required resources, and sustainability options.

The final report of the Task Force was completed and submitted to Mayor Murphy and Supervisor Cox on October 7, 2004. The report was then presented to, and approved by the San Diego City Council and the San Diego County Board of Supervisors. The report was also made available to the general public via the official websites of both San Diego City and San Diego County.

Further validation of the report was its inclusion in the California Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission's Legislative Committee on Emergency Services and Homeland Security Report in November 2005.

The Task Force was committed to developing goals and actions that were measurable and could be achieved. Therefore, the Task Force agreed to re-convene a year later to review their progress, and to identify any additional action plan items.

This update is the result of that meeting and represents the final review by the Regional Task Force Co-Chairs. This update is being distributed at this time to inform all participants of the progress made involving the following recommendations since the final report was originally submitted.

1A. EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC 2005 UPDATE

1. ENCOURAGE ALL AGENCIES THAT DEVELOP/PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL OR INFORMATIONAL LITERATURE/PRESENTATIONS TO PROMOTE THE UNIVERSAL MESSAGE OF SELF-RELIANCE IN TIMES OF DISASTER.

ACTION ITEM	a) County OES to develop standardized language for the universal message of self reliance and distribute to all appropriate agencies
STATUS	COMPLETED
<i>Action taken</i>	<i>OES developed a personal preparedness message of: "Preparedness Starts With You!" and has encouraged all agencies to adopt this slogan. County OES has included the "Preparedness Starts With You!" slogan in it's new public education materials.</i>

2. ENCOURAGE THE LOCAL AMERICAN RED CROSS TO HOST A YEARLY DISASTER PREPAREDNESS ACADEMY USING THE ORANGE COUNTY MODEL ARC DISASTER PREPAREDNESS ACADEMY AS A MODEL.

ACTION ITEM	a) County OES to provide written request to the American Red Cross – San Diego/Imperial Counties Chapter that they develop and host a yearly preparedness academy based on the Orange County model.
STATUS	COMPLETED
<i>Action taken</i>	<i>OES requested that the American Red Cross develop and host a yearly preparedness academy based on the Orange County model. OES will collaborate on the development of actions and milestones towards this goal.</i>

1B. REVIEW ALERTING NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES AND PLANS

No 2005 Updates provided

1C. REVIEW INCIDENT INTELLIGENCE COMMUNICATIONS TO INCLUDE EVACUATION PLANS AND PROCEDURES

No 2005 Updates provided

1D. REVIEW AND RECOMMEND TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS 2005 UPDATE

1. ESTABLISH A TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE COMPRISED OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM REGIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AND FIRE AGENCIES, AS WELL AS THE COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES TO DISCUSS AND PRIORITIZE TECHNOLOGICAL NEEDS IN THE SAN DIEGO REGION AND DEVELOP A FUNDING AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY.

ACTION ITEM	a) County OES to coordinate the development of the Regional Emergency Response Technology Committee through the UDC by January 2005.
STATUS	COMPLETED
<i>Action taken</i>	<i>The UAWG and the UDC approved the development of a Regional Homeland Security Technology Partnership and funded it with an initial \$3.4 million in Urban Area Security Initiative Grant funds. A process was developed and approved for regional stakeholders to submit regional program applications for review, prioritization and funding award. The objective of this program is to improve Interoperable Communications, Law Enforcement prevention, detection, and deterrence technology, and acquire other regional technology solutions that will serve as force multipliers for all first responder agencies throughout the County of San Diego.</i> <i>The UAWG and the UDC approved approximately \$700,000 for planning activities and positions associated for the management of the Regional Technology Partnership. This includes the hiring of a consultant to assist with the development of a 5-Year Regional Technology Strategic Plan; a Regional Interoperable Communications Program Coordinator; a Regional Geographical Information Systems Program Coordinator. These resources will be managed through a sub-agreement between the Regional Technology Partnership and San Diego State University.</i>
ACTION ITEM	b) Include the City of San Diego Office of Homeland Security Director in the establishment of this committee as that office is the Urban Area Security Initiative grant administrator and would be responsible to request interoperable Equipment Technical Assistance from the federal government
STATUS	COMPLETED
<i>Action taken</i>	The City of San Diego Homeland Security Director has been included as a member of the committee and is an active participant in preparing and securing grant funding for Interoperable Equipment Technical Assistance.
ACTION ITEM	c) Contact the Regional Communications System Board and identify what role they may have in the committee.
STATUS	COMPLETED
<i>Action taken</i>	<i>As part of the UASI grant requirements the Regional Interoperable Communications Committee has been established. This committee works with the Regional Homeland Security Technology Partnership and will be utilizing the upcoming ICC Program Coordinator position to assist in developing and implementing our regional communications strategic plan.</i>

1E. REVIEW AND IDENTIFY TRAINING NEEDS

No 2005 Updates provided

1F. REVIEW AND RECOMMEND COMMUNICATIONS IMPROVEMENTS

No 2005 Updates provided

1G. CONSIDER PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM IMPACTS DURING DISASTER

No 2005 Updates provided

2A. REGIONALIZE SERVICES TO AVOID DUPLICATION 2005 UPDATE

1. SECURE FUNDING FOR A LAFCO (AND POSSIBLY A SEPARATE CONSULTANT) NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND MODEL REGIONALIZATION PLAN FOR SAN DIEGO COUNTY'S FIRE SERVICE.

ACTION ITEM	a) County Board of Supervisors to allocate the necessary funds.
STATUS	COMPLETED
<i>Action taken</i>	<i>\$50,000 allocated for study.</i>
ACTION ITEM	b) LAFCO and/or consultant to recommend most efficient and cost-effective fire service regionalization model by March 2005.
STATUS	COMPLETED
<i>Action taken</i>	<i>Substantially Similar Proposal completed by San Diego County Fire Chief's Association. Presented to and accepted by LAFCO.</i>

2B. REGIONAL RESOURCE SUBCOMMITTEE

No 2005 Updates provided

2C. REVIEW EXISTING FUNDING PRIORITIES AND SOURCES 2005 UPDATE

1. IDENTIFY, ON A REGIONAL BASIS, SERVICES THAT COULD BE MODELED AFTER THE HIRT PROGRAM AND COST SHARED TO IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF EXPENSIVE OR UNIQUE SERVICE DELIVERY PROGRAMS.

ACTION ITEM	a) County Fire Chiefs Association to discuss and identify potential Joint Powers Authority (JPA) programs and forward to the UDC by January 2005.
STATUS	COMPLETED
<i>Action taken</i>	<i>The UAWG and the UDC approved \$1.3 million in grant funding to purchase 6 Multi-Casualty Response Vehicles and 3 Mass Decontamination Response Vehicles. These apparatus will be operated and maintained by participating fire departments throughout the county in a cooperative effort to improve services on a regional basis. The apparatus have been ordered, MOU's are being drafted and the program should be implemented by March 2006. Regional equipment that can be applied to All Hazard/All Risk regional activities will be an ongoing priority.</i>
ACTION ITEM	b) Reorganize the UDC to include the San Diego County Fire Chiefs Association, Police Chiefs and County Sheriffs' Association, federal, military, Transportation Security Agency, maritime security, and border security. The UDC would be responsible to develop groups to address prevention, mitigation, response and recovery activities and their subcomponents of planning, equipping, training and exercising across all disciplines and hazards.
STATUS	COMPLETED
<i>Action taken</i>	<i>The UDC established the Operations Committee to allow other regional response and resource stakeholders participate in the identification and discussion of issues and in the development of recommendations for improved coordination of resources throughout the county. The Operations Committee meets quarterly.</i> <i>The UDC and the UAWG have approved training grant distributions for all 19 jurisdictions within the County to address Weapons of Mass Destruction training for 10 first responder disciplines. Once that objective is completed, training for Incident Command and disaster management will be initiated.</i>
ACTION ITEM	c) Place this as a discussion item on the UDC agenda by March 2005
STATUS	COMPLETED
<i>Action taken</i>	<i>This item is scheduled for review on the UDC agenda.</i>

2D. REVIEW OF SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

No 2005 Updates provided

2E. CONSIDER ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEER RESOURCES 2005 UPDATE

1. SDIVOAD CONTINUES TO EXPAND ITS MEMBERSHIP TO INCLUDE VOLUNTEERS FROM COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE, LAW ENFORCEMENT, FIRE SERVICES, AND OTHER RELEVANT AGENCIES.

ACTION ITEM	a) Volunteer recruitment is a never ending, ongoing process for both organizations and individuals. Volunteer San Diego is the lead agency in this process.
STATUS	COMPLETED
<i>Action taken</i>	Volunteer San Diego, directed by Wanda Bailey has been named overall coordination for the spontaneous volunteers that arrive at a critical incident to provide their assistance. After Volunteer San Diego registers the volunteers, they may be used to support the efforts of the American Red Cross.

2. SDIVOAD'S FORMAL OPERATIONAL PLAN NEEDS TO BE REFLECTED IN THE REVISED SAN DIEGO COUNTY OPERATIONAL AREA EMERGENCY PLAN, AND VICE VERSA.

ACTION ITEM	a) SDIVOAD's Planning Committee is currently working on the plan, which will be complete by Labor Day 2004.
STATUS	COMPLETED
<i>Action taken</i>	SDIVOAD is part of the San Diego County's Operational Plan. The plan follows the "SEMS" model that uses the Incident Command System.
ACTION ITEM	b) The SDIVOAD Response Plan will be included in the San Diego County Operational Area Emergency Plan pending County approval.
STATUS	COMPLETED
<i>Action taken</i>	SDIVOAD has been added to the County Operational Area Emergency Plan.

3. THE SAN DIEGO/IMPERIAL COUNTIES CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS MUST DEVELOP ITS DISASTER OPERATIONS CENTER FURTHER, SO THAT VOLUNTEER AGENCIES CAN COMMUNICATE QUICKLY AND EASILY WITH THE COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (EOC).

ACTION ITEM	a) SDIVOAD's presence in the San Diego/Imperial Counties Chapter of the American Red Cross' Disaster Operations Center must be established, with communications capability to the San Diego County Emergency Operations Center.
STATUS	COMPLETED
<i>Action taken</i>	SDIVOAD is represented by the American Red Cross' chair in the County's EOC.
ACTION ITEM	b) Pending county approval, SDIVOAD will be established in the San Diego County Emergency Operations Center.
STATUS	COMPLETED
<i>Action taken</i>	SDIVOAD is represented by the American Red Cross and the Sheriffs Volunteer Services Coordinator chair in the County's EOC.

4. INFOLINE OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY MUST CONTINUE TO DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN ITS DISASTER RELATED ROLES, WHICH INCLUDES PHONE SERVICE, RESOURCE DATABASE MANAGEMENT, AND ITS WEBSITE, AS IT MOVES TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION OF 2-1-1.

ACTION ITEM	a) INFOLINE expects California PUC designation as the 2-1-1 providers in San Diego County.
STATUS	COMPLETED
<i>Action taken</i>	The 2-1-1 services have been activated and accepted by FCC in the San Diego County area. The San Diego Police Department has drafted a “Plan of Cooperation’ (MOU) between 2-1-1 San Diego and the San Diego Police Department.
ACTION ITEM	b) INFOLINE expects initial implementation of 2-1-1 services by summer 2005.
STATUS	COMPLETED
<i>Action taken</i>	The 2-1-1 system is operational 7/24 and can request additional volunteers in the event of a large disaster. SDPD Communications and SDPD Crisis Intervention agree to use the 2-1-1 system. In the event of a large disaster the Police Department will activate the CAPS system with the additional option of having 2-1-1 calls automatically forwarded to CAPS. Calls may also be sent back to the 2-1-1 phone center for additional assistance.
ACTION ITEM	c) SDIVOAD has recognized INFOLINE/2-1-1 as the principal communication agency for disasters in San Diego County.
STATUS	COMPLETED
<i>Action taken</i>	CAPS operates out of PDHQ with up to 25 volunteer operators. CAPS is facilitated by Crisis Intervention (Volunteer Services). Callers are also referred to the web site “211 SanDiego.org” for additional services.

2F. AUTOMATIC AND MUTUAL AID 2005 UPDATE

1. MOBILIZE ONE UNIFIED **FIELD** COMMAND CENTER VERY QUICKLY IF EARLY CONDITIONS POINT TO RAPID INCIDENT ESCALATION AFFECTING MULTIPLE AGENCIES AND EXTENSIVE UTILIZATION OF THE MUTUAL AID SYSTEM. INTEGRATE LAW ENFORCEMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS INTO A UNIFIED INCIDENT COMMAND.

ACTION ITEM	a) County OES to plan annual exercises that focus on a unified multi-disciplinary command.
STATUS	COMPLETED
<i>Action taken</i>	<i>Annual exercises scheduled.</i>

2. DEVELOP LOCAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAMS SIMILAR TO WHAT THE STATE AND FEMA NOW HAVE. ESTABLISH NORTH AND SOUTH REGIONAL LOCAL TEAMS TO ASSIST INCIDENT COMMANDERS WITH COMMAND FUNCTIONS SUCH AS INFORMATION DISSEMINATION, LOGISTICS, PLANNING, SAFETY, PROCUREMENT, ETC.

ACTION ITEM	a) San Diego County Fire Chiefs Operations Committee to coordinate and implement local Incident Management Teams by April 2005.
STATUS	COMPLETED
<i>Action taken</i>	<i>San Diego City has established such a team. County Operations Committee recommendation is for Incident Commanders to request out-of-zone response to fill specific needed overhead positions.</i>

2G. REVIEW EXISTING MILITARY/CIVILIAN INTERFACE

No 2005 Updates provided

3A. REVIEW INCONSISTENCIES, CHANGES TO AND ENFORCEMENT OF COUNTYWIDE BUILDING/FIRE CODES

No 2005 Updates provided

3B. REVIEW AND RECOMMEND CHANGES TO ENFORCEMENT OF COUNTYWIDE URBAN INTERFACE WITH BRUSH MANAGEMENT CODES

No 2005 Updates provided

3C. REVIEW AND RECOMMEND CHANGES TO OPEN SPACE BRUSH MANAGEMENT POLICIES

No 2005 Updates provided

3D. SAN DIEGO OPERATIONAL AREA EMERGENCY PLAN

No 2005 Updates provided