

**FILED**

**JUN 19 2006**

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF TRINITY  
BY: DONNA REGNANI, DEPUTY CLERK *DR*

**TRINITY COUNTY GRAND JURY  
2005-2006**

**SPECIAL DISTRICTS COMMITTEE  
FINAL REPORT**

**REVIEW OF  
VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS**

**This Report was Approved  
On June 6, 2006**

**2005-2006 TRINITY COUNTY GRAND JURY  
SPECIAL DISTRICTS COMMITTEE  
FINAL REPORT**

**VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS**

**PURPOSE:**

The Trinity County Grand Jury is charged each year to perform a review of Government operations. The Special Districts committee chose the Volunteer Fire Departments.

**METHOD:**

The committee conducted interviews of several Volunteer Fire Departments, and the Weaverville Fire Department, in respect to the running of the departments and what if any Emergency Disaster plans they have and what is in effect now.

**FINDING #1:**

Most Volunteer Fire Departments are having trouble keeping personnel, mostly due to the Ramero Bill ( SB 1207) of 2002 which requires many hours of training, the same training that paid Fire Fighter have to go through. The amount of hours required for training is more than most volunteers can afford to take time off work to attend.

**RECOMMENDATION #1:**

Band together with other Rural California Volunteer Fire Departments to revise the Ramero Bill, so that Volunteer Fire Departments are exempt from the same training that Paid Fire Departments have to under go.

**FINDING #2:**

Ramero Bill is to make everyone safe, Safety for Fire Fighters. Volunteers have to know what their training covers, and stay with in their training scope.

**RECOMMENDATION #2:**

Volunteers that are older and those who do not have the training to do jobs around the fire stations to free up the ones who have the training to respond to emergencies. For example, cleaning, yard work, inventory and office work.

**FINDING #3:**

Since Hurricane "Trina" all the Fire Departments are working on Emergency Disaster plans. All agree communication is the biggest problem. Some satellite phones are in place in Trinity County, mostly in local community schools. Our mountainous terrain is the number one problem with reception.

**RECOMMENDATION #3:**

Find funding, grants etc for more satellite phones, and to place relay towers where needed to boost the reception of the phones.

**FINDING #4:**

A new 911 address system has been implemented in Trinity County. New residence numbers have been issued.

**RECOMMENDATION #4:**

Each community locates and record where people who are fragile, and would need assistance in case of an emergency and a plan to evacuate these people if needed. Encourage all residences to have their house number visible in case of an emergency.

**FINDING #5:**

Remote telephones will not work if the electricity is out.

**RECOMMENDATION #4:**

All household have at least one of the older phones that plug into a phone jack, to be used if there is an emergency, and the electricity is out.

**FINDING #5:**

If a disaster happened in Trinity County, because houses are sometime far apart, communities are miles apart, communication would be difficult.

**RECOMMENDATION #5:**

Each community should have a designated command center, the local school for example, where everyone can get information and instructions for evacuation if needed.

**RESPONSES REQUIRED:**

All of the recommendations listed above are directed to the Board of Supervisors or their designated staff. Under Penal Code 933.50, the following entities are required to respond to the listed findings within the time period indicated:

<b><u>Entity</u></b>	<b><u>Finding</u></b>	<b><u>Recommendation</u></b>	<b><u>Respond in</u></b>
Trinity County Board of Supervisors	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	90 days



RECEIVED  
AUG 22 2006  
COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE

# TRINITY COUNTY

Board of Supervisors  
P.O. BOX 1613, WEAVERVILLE, CALIFORNIA 96093  
PHONE (530) 623-1217 FAX (530) 623-8365

*William E. Chambers*

TO: The Honorable Anthony C. Edwards  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court

FROM: William E. Chambers, Trinity County Supervisor District One

CC: Kelly Frost, Deputy Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: Response to Recommendations of 2005-06  
Grand Jury Environmental & Development Committee Final Report  
On Review of Volunteer Fire Departments

DATE August 22, 2006

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The Grand Jury Environmental and Development Committee has requested a written response to their final report on the Review Of Volunteer Fire Departments. In my capacity as Chairman, and on behalf of the Trinity County Board of Supervisors, my response is as follows:

**Finding #1:** *Most Volunteer Fire Departments are having trouble keeping personnel, mostly due to the Romero Bill (SB 1207) of 2002 which requires many hours of training, the same training that paid Fire Fighters have to go through. The amount of hours required for training is more than most volunteers can afford to take time off work to attend.*

**Response:** I agree with this finding.

**Recommendation #1** *Band together with other Rural California Volunteer Fire Departments to revise the Romero Bill, so that Volunteer Fire Departments are exempt from the same training that Paid Fire Departments have to under go.*

**Response:** Has been implemented to the extent that the Board of Supervisors has supported this recommendation by sending letters of support to various legislators.

**Finding #2:** *Romero Bill is to make everyone safe, Safety for Fire Fighters. Volunteers have to know what their training covers, and stay with in their training scope.*

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WILLIAM CHAMBERS  
DISTRICT 1

JEFF MORRIS  
DISTRICT 2

ROGER JAEGEL  
DISTRICT 3

HOWARD FREEMAN  
DISTRICT 4

WENDY REISS  
DISTRICT 5

**Response:** I agree in part with the finding. A large portion of the Romero Bill appears to be politically driven by large paid departments and is not practical for small rural volunteer fire departments. I do agree that **all** volunteers need to know what training is required and to stay within their scope of training.

**Recommendation #2:** *Volunteers that are older and those who do not have the training to do jobs around the fire stations to free up the ones who have the training to respond to emergencies. For example, cleaning, yard work, inventory and office work.*

**Response:** It is not within the Board's jurisdiction implement this recommendation.

**Finding #3:** *Since Hurricane "Trina" all the Fire Departments are working on Emergency Disaster plans. All agree communications is the biggest problem. Some satellite phones are in place in Trinity County, mostly in local community schools. Our mountainous terrain is the number one problem with reception.*

**Response:** I agree with the finding.

**Recommendation #3:** *Find funding, grants etc for more satellite phones, and to place relay towers where needed to boost the reception of the phones.*

**Response:** Has been implemented to the extent possible. The Board of Supervisors has committed Title III Funds to upgrade the current emergency communications system. An initial needs survey has been completed and a Request For Proposals for initial work is being released shortly.

**Finding #4:** *A new 911 address system has been implemented in Trinity County. New residence numbers have been issued.*

**Response:** I agree with this finding.

**Recommendation #4:** *Each community locates and record where people who are fragile, and would need assistance in case of emergency and a plan to evacuate these people if needed. Encourage all residences to have their house number visible in case of an emergency.*

**Response:** Will be implemented to the extent that the Board of Supervisors can encourage posting of house numbers and assist communities in creating and documenting emergency plans.

**Finding #5:** *Remote telephones will not work if the electricity is out.*

**Response:** I agree with this finding.

**Recommendation #5:** *All households have at least one of the older phones that plug into a phone jack, to be used if there is an emergency, and the electricity is out.*

**Response:** Will be implemented to the extent that the Board of Supervisors can encourage residents to be prepared for power outages.

**Finding #6:** *If a disaster happened in Trinity County, because houses are sometime far apart, communities are miles apart, communication would be difficult.*

**Response:** I agree with this finding.

**Recommendation #6:** *Each Community should have a designated command center, the local school for example, where everyone can get information and instructions for evacuation if needed.*

**Response:** Requires further analysis. The County believes this recommendation would be best implemented by the individual communities with the assistance of the Fire Safe Council and County if requested.

WEC:wt