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CLERK OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
COUNTY OF TRINITY
BY: STACI WARNER, DEPUTY CLERK

**TRINITY COUNTY GRAND JURY
2010-2011**

**Public Safety/Emergency Services Committee
SDR 2010/2011-001
Final Report**

Trinity County Emergency Services/Public Safety Assessment

**Preserving Effective Emergency Services:
What is a Life Worth?**

June 21, 2011

Jerry Brasuell

**Jerry Brasuell
Foreperson**

**2010-2011 Trinity County Grand Jury
Public Safety/Emergency Services Committee**

**Preserving Effective Emergency Services:
What's a Life Worth?**

Emergency Services/Public Safety Assessment

Summary

In response to observed and reported shortfalls in emergency response within Trinity County (the County), the Trinity County Grand Jury conducted a survey and assessment of response organizations to determine current capabilities, issues, and potential for improvement of service. Disciplines included in the assessment were fire/rescue, law enforcement, ambulance, hospital emergency department, and emergency management.

Background

Trinity County Emergency Services providers have historically been stretched thin within this rural County. Growth and contraction of provider organizations has generally followed local, state and federal financial conditions and priorities given to emergency services at the various levels. Law enforcement has been a recognizable presence since the Gold Rush days in the County, soon followed by volunteer fire companies, at least in Weaverville. Emergency medical services (EMS) likewise came into being with the earliest arrivals of physicians and midwives. Air evacuation is a relatively recent development.

Method of Investigation

A written survey form was developed and sent to all emergency services organizations except for state and federal agencies, which are not in the Grand Jury's purview. Survey distribution included the Trinity County Sheriff's Office, three ambulance services and fourteen fire/rescue organizations. Completed survey instruments were returned by eight fire/rescue organizations, one ambulance service, the County's only hospital, and the Sheriff's office, which completed separate surveys from the law enforcement and emergency management perspectives at the Grand Jury's request.

An interview was conducted September 7, 2010 with the Sheriff and Undersheriff regarding all sheriff, jail, and emergency management issues. A separate interview was conducted March 15, 2011 with the Undersheriff, and was limited to Countywide emergency management issues.

Discussion

Community comment and personal experience and observation led Grand Jurors to believe that emergency services capability at all three levels within the County was being stressed in present economic and population demographic conditions. Responses to the survey confirmed observations and permitted some consolidated conclusions and recommendations to make more effective and

efficient use of assets available. Many survey findings were unsurprising, however the results allowed for analysis that has not, as far as this Grand Jury knows, been undertaken in the past. A synopsis of survey results is the table shown below:

Table 1: Results of Emergency Services/Public Safety Survey Responses 2010-2011

Column A provides each question posed in the survey instrument

Column B provides aggregate responses assessing each participant's own organization

Column C provides aggregate responses assessing the Countywide emergency services system

Responses to each question are shown in descending order from most to least frequent. Where multiple responses to each question received equal scores, the responses are separated by semicolons and the number for each is shown in parentheses, e.g.: Answer A; Answer B (2 each) shows that both Answer A and Answer B received 2 responses to that question.

A. Question	B. Self-assessment for organization	C. Countywide assessment
What are the operational strengths of your organization and discipline in the County as a whole?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of staff, including volunteers (5) 2. Training quality & availability (4) 3. Interagency cooperation including formal agreements (2) 4. Emergency plan in place; Strong leadership; Low turnover; Dedication; Formal fire department structure (1 each) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training quality & availability (6) 2. Number of staff, including volunteers; Equipment; Quality of staff including volunteers (2 each) 3. Familiarity with Countywide system; Self-sufficiency; Collaboration on County plans; Fire Chiefs Association (1 each)
What are the administrative strengths?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Command & governing board relationships (3) 2. Management support; Quality of leadership; Interagency relationships (2 each) 3. Grantwriting; Community support; Experience; Dedication to preserve & enhance services; Knowledge; Keeping up with mandatory reporting (1 each) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interagency relationships; Dedication to preserve & enhance services (2 each) 2. Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES); Fire Chiefs Association (1 each)
What are the operational weaknesses?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inadequate numbers of staff/volunteers (9) 2. Physical facility (firehouses & jail) (5) 3. Inadequate funding; Equipment age & condition (2 each) 4. Low pay of paid staff; Communications & information sharing; Lack of full time OES staff; Lack of dedicated Emergency Operations Center (1 each) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inadequate funding; Inadequate numbers of staff & volunteers (5 each) 2. Equipment age & condition (2) 3. Limited dispatch resources; Communications/radio system challenges (1 each)
What is needed to address those operational weaknesses?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stable external funding sources; Recruitment & retention (4 each) 2. Construction funds/grants (2) 3. Improved radio system/capability; Building networks & community partnerships; New jail; Fulltime dedicated dispatchers; Formation of tax funded departments; Joint procedures/policies/standards (1 each) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stable external funding sources (3) 2. Formation of tax-funded departments (2) 3. Building networks & community partnerships; Fulltime dedicated dispatchers; Joint procedures/policies/standards (1 each)
What are the administrative weaknesses?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shortage of stable funding (4) 2. Depth of trained command staff (2) 3. Personnel shortages; Support for training; Support for required medical testing; Governing board performance (micromanagement) (1 each) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shortage of stable funding (3) 2. Lack of funding for fulltime OES; Auditor's warrant process; County interaction with fire organizations, except for Sheriff and OES; Board of Directors performance (1 each)

A. Question	B. Self-assessment for organization	C. Countywide assessment
What is needed to address those administrative weaknesses?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased numbers of volunteers; Increased training availability (3 each) 2. Increased funding; Sharing administrative staff among fire organizations; Increased support for volunteers (2 each) 3. Staff development; Paid fire department administrative staff; Establish a County priority for emergency services; Longterm planning for Emergency Medical Services (EMS); Alternate funding for EMS; Creative strategic planning; Funding for fulltime OES; Change fire department governing board culture (1 each) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a County priority for emergency services; County or hospital to support required medical testing & vaccinations; Standardized equipment, such as breathing apparatus; Change fire department governing board culture (1 each)
How stable do you consider your organization and related County systems?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unstable (4) 2. Stable; Stable but threatened (3 each) 3. Very stable (2) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unstable (4) 2. Stable but threatened (1)
What are the greatest challenges to your organization and discipline?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruiting & retention of volunteers and paid emergency services staff (7) 2. Funding (5) 3. Meeting training standards (3) 4. Keeping equipment and operations current (2) 5. Lack of representation on essential issues; State level issues; Inadequate facilities (1 each) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruiting & retention of volunteers and paid emergency services staff (7) 2. Funding (5) 3. Meeting training standards (2) 4. Increased service demands; Lack of representation on issues; Time to meet training demands (1 each)
What opportunities do you see for your organization and discipline?	<p>Increase funding through grants and donations; Local fundraising; Larger departments increasing support for smaller organizations; Future population growth may provide more volunteers; Partner with others for a common voice; Age and experience of leadership & staff; Grant funding for fire water supplies (1 each)</p>	<p>Address undefined response areas; Increase Transient Occupancy Tax to support emergency services; Great progress in emergency preparedness; Continue training and exercise cooperation; Pursue more grants; Motivate volunteer staff; Tremendous opportunities if adequate OES funding and staff are provided; Potential for Trinity County to become a leader in rural emergency services; County Fire Chiefs Association (1 each)</p>
How might the County and other organizations in your discipline support your organization in fulfilling its mission?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consolidation of fire and rescue agencies; Grants (2 each) 2. Help acquire a new firehouse; Standardize fire/rescue policies & procedures; Facilitate formation of tax-funded districts; Increase training opportunities (1 each) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitate formation of tax-funded districts (2) 2. Improve working relationships; Establish a long term commitment to funding EMS; Consider joint Southern Trinity Area Rescue (STAR) and Trinity County Life Support (TCLS) efforts; Fire Chiefs Association support for fire agencies to establish tax bases; Continue work on collaboration with community partners; Relieve radio system burden on small organizations; Dedicated funding for emergency services personnel; County should place public safety as a top priority; Desperately need a new jail (1 each)

A. Question	B. Self-assessment for organization	C. Countywide assessment
What are your top priorities for sustaining and improving service to the public?	1. Adequate funding (8) 2. Training (7) 3. Recruiting & retention (6) 4. Adequate equipment (4) 5. Obtain/improve a firehouse (3) 6. Maintain/enhance response levels (1)	1. Adequate funding; Training; Adequate equipment (3 each) 2. Recruiting & retention (2) 3. Provide dedicated OES staff; Increase Sheriff's Office staff; New jail; Restructure County grants department to emphasize essential public services (1 each)
Responder Organization Ratings on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being highest		
A. Question	B. Self-assessment for organization	C. Countywide assessment
Quality of service provided to the public	10 (4) 8 (4) 9 (1) 7 (1) 5 (1) 4 (1) Average score: 8.1	10 (2) 9 (1) 8 (1) 7 (1) 5 (1) 4 (1) Average score: 7.6
Stability of your organization/discipline	8 (4) 10 (2) 5 (2) 9 (1) 4 (1) 2 (1) Average score: 7.0	8 (2) 5 (1) 4 (1) 3 (1) Average score: 5.6
Stability of workforce/membership	8 (2) 6 (2) 3 (2) 9 (1) 7 (1) 5 (1) 4 (1) 1 (1) Average score: 5.5	3 (2) 9 (1) 5 (1) 4 (1) Average score: 4.8
What else would you like the Grand Jury to understand about these issues?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "We need help all the way around" • "If funded as requested through the DRI (2008 Disaster Recovery Initiative) grant, OES will be in good shape" • "Lack of stability at the state level causes a lack of stability at the County level with funding" • "In order to survive we have fund raisers and respond to all grants pertaining to fire departments" 	

The interviews with the 2010 Sheriff and the Undersheriff reinforced the findings of the survey. In addition, they provided these insights:

- Trinity County's emergency services are extremely reliant on federal, state, and private grants to maintain operations. The future of some of these grants is uncertain.
- A significant reduction in this grant funding stream would seriously jeopardize the integrity of public safety and emergency services throughout the County.
- Some sources, such as the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) are likely to be stable, as emergency management is popular with various governors.
- Other grant sources for emergency services are available, and some EMS and fire/rescue organizations have pursued them on their own or collaboratively through the Fire Chiefs

Association. The County has been ineffective in pursuing all available grant sources and administering the resulting projects.

- The County is fairly well prepared for such a rural jurisdiction. “The level of commitment among Trinity County’s volunteers is unseen anywhere else. We couldn’t do it without it”. The Kettenpom incident in March 2011 illustrated this point: “Volunteers were there to do whatever was needed—much of it with equipment from the Homeland Security Grant Program”.
- Weaverville, Hayfork, and Lewiston are better off because they have established formal districts and are tax funded.
- Training requirements are the same whether firefighters and EMS personnel are volunteers or fulltime, paid responders.
- In the Ninety-Nine Fire volunteers saved six lives and were awarded four medals of valor; Volunteers saved the town of Lewiston.

When asked whether emergency services grant funds are spent effectively, the Public Safety/Emergency Services Committee was advised that:

- “The funding is okay—the problem is what we do with it”.
- EMPG funding has been supplanted every year. Supplantation is described as using grant funds for uses other than their agreed purposes, as a substitute for other funds. This practice jeopardizes future receipt of grant funds from the state and federal governments. The County could be required to repay awarded grant funds as far back as three project years. Current year funding under the EMPG program is approximately \$160,000.
- Sheriff funding is heavily reliant on Vehicle License Fee funding. With this funding uncertain at the time of this report, law enforcement is extremely vulnerable. \$700,000 could disappear from this source alone.

Findings and Recommendations

Finding 1:

All three branches of emergency services (Law Enforcement, Medical Services, and Fire Protection) report financial shortfalls in being able to fund a desired level of service. Funding issues were consistently among the top challenges and needs reported. Other top needs, such as increased training and volunteer recruiting and retention are tied to funding. This finding is consistent with this Grand Jury’s findings in report FAR 2010/2011-002 “Grants Department Imperils County Finances”.

Recommendation 1:

Effective grant application writers and project administrators should be identified, shared, and utilized to seek such funding as may be available. Information, equipment, and skills should be shared through organizations such as the Trinity County Fire Chiefs Association.

Finding 2:

Methods identified for generating revenues include: establishing special districts where they don’t currently exist in order to generate tax funding for their departments; increasing the Transient Occupancy Tax with funds dedicated to public safety/emergency services; and working more collaboratively with multiple departments, the Fire Chiefs Association, and the County to identify, pursue, and administer grant projects.

Recommendation 2:

Formation of special districts and related tax or fee assessments should be considered.

Finding 3:

Cost saving methods identified in the investigation include: consolidation of departments and asking larger, more capable organizations to provide administrative support to their smaller counterparts. It is clear that merely cutting costs will not maintain stable emergency services—out of necessity, Trinity County’s response organizations have become adept at saving funds where they can. Increased revenues are essential. This finding is consistent with this Grand Jury’s findings in report FAR 2010/2011-002 “Grants Department Imperils County Finances”.

Recommendation 3:

Organizations and County leadership should collaborate to conduct strategic planning, identify potential sources of stable revenue, and formulate strategies for maintaining adequate levels of emergency services.

Finding 4:

Fire and EMS organizations both report difficulty in recruiting and retaining adequate numbers of qualified personnel. This is particularly true in organizations relying on volunteers but also relevant in paid forces due to apparently low pay scale and irregular and long shifts, typical of 24/7 emergency service requirements.

Recommendation 4a:

Continue ongoing recruiting effort at community service events.

Recommendation 4b:

Response organizations should make relevant community appearances in uniform so community will recognize those affiliated with various public safety organizations.

Recommendation 4c:

Make personnel needs known through newspapers, sign boards, and visits to schools, churches, and civic organization meetings.

Recommendation 4d:

Make facilities as “people friendly” as possible for participants and schedule regular training and social events.

Recommendation 4e:

Organizations and the County should explore collaborations to identify specific needs and solutions.

Finding 5:

Training requirements are continually changing to reflect improvements in technology, evolving regulations, and mission vision both from on high and within the individual organization. This is complicated by turnover in personnel who are often volunteers with wide-ranging skills and motivated primarily by a desire to render service to their communities.

Recommendation 5a:

Continue to support those providing training today, such as Trinity County Life Support, the Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services, the County Fire Chiefs Association, and larger fire-rescue organizations.

Recommendation 5b:

Continue to utilize outside trainers such as CalFIRE, and engage retired professionals in appropriate fields.

Recommendation 5c:

Set up training on a regular and frequent basis.

Recommendation 5d:

Cross-train with allied services such as Fire/EMS.

Recommendation 5e:

Identify, develop, and maximize the utilization of trainers within the County.

Recommendation 5f:

Establish training goals and recognize qualifications achieved.

Recommendation 5g:

Consider collaborative development of a training needs assessment and a longterm training strategy and plan.

Recommendation 5h:

Explore training that might be offered to other counties to generate revenues for hosting organizations.

Finding 6:

The overall state of emergency equipment in the County is not acceptable. While some departments have received new vehicles and equipment through grants in recent years, those are far outnumbered by outdated examples. This creates a risk to public safety, especially during large incidents such as major wildfires.

Recommendation 6a:

Emergency service providers should periodically perform an objective assessment of their equipment.

Recommendation 6b:

Fire departments and medical transporters should establish and fund reserve accounts for major equipment replacement.

Recommendation 6c:

Used equipment should continue to be pursued and passed down as long as there is practical and economical service life left in it.

Recommendation 6d:

Collaborative long term planning for equipment needs and procurement methods should be considered.

Finding 7:

Emergency Management grant funds are being supplanted in violation of grant terms. This jeopardizes future grant funding and makes the County vulnerable to demands for repayment, including past project years.

Recommendation 7a:

The County should immediately discontinue the practice of improperly supplanting grant funds.

Recommendation 7b:

The County should implement a policy addressing the practice for the future.

Recommendation 7c:

The county should develop and implement a plan to correct the grant balances previously supplanted.

Finding 8:

Parts of the County fall outside of formal response boundaries for structure fire, rescue, and medical emergency response. This can complicate dispatch, response, and command authority decisions.

Recommendation 8:

Fire Departments, through their respective governing boards, in cooperation with the Trinity County Fire Chiefs Association, should assess their response areas in relation to adjacent departments to collectively identify and map formal response areas throughout the County.

Finding 9:

Trinity County government's priority for public safety and emergency services has been unclear in recent years. While it is recognized that all communities, disciplines, organizations, and services must share the burden of a poor economy, a clearly articulated priority and strategy for these essential services could help all concerned in strategic planning.

Recommendation 9:

County government should clearly state its priority for public safety and emergency services, including funding, allocation of resources, and both material and non-material support.

Finding 10:

The Trinity County Fire Chiefs Association and many of the member fire/rescue and EMS organizations are to be applauded for their willingness to share surplus equipment and seek out avenues for obtaining additional equipment.

Recommendation 10:

None

Responses Required

In accordance with California Penal Code 933.05, a response is required as indicated below:

<u>Respondent</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Board of Supervisors	#1, 2, 3, 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 4e, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 5f, 5g, 5h, 6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 7a, 7b, 7c, 8, 9	90 Days
County Administrative Officer	#1, 2, 3, 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 4e, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 5f, 5g, 5h, 6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 7a, 7b, 7c, 8, 9	60 Days
Sheriff/Director of Emergency Services	#1, 2, 3, 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 4e, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 5f, 5g, 5h, 6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 7a, 7b, 7c, 8	60 Days

The governing bodies indicated above should be aware that comment or response of the governing body must be conducted subject to the notice, agenda, and open meeting requirements of the Brown Act.



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF
TRINITY COUNTY

101 Memorial Drive, P.O. Box 1228
Weaverville, CA 96093
(530) 623-2611

BRUCE HANEY, Sheriff/Coroner
KEN LANGSTON, Undersheriff

March 14, 2012

*Reviewed
3/28/12
JLH*

James P. Woodward, Presiding Judge
P.O. Box 1258
11 Court Street
Weaverville, CA. 96093

Dear Judge Woodward,

The following Responses are to the Findings and Recommendations addressed in the 2010/2011 Trinity County Grand Jury Report, "Trinity County Emergency Services/Public Safety Assessment".

Finding 1:

All three branches of emergency services (Law Enforcement, Medical Services, and Fire Protection) report financial shortfalls in being able to fund a desired level of service. Funding issues were consistently among the top challenges and needs reported. Other top needs, such as increased training and volunteer recruiting and retention are tied to funding. This finding is consistent with the Grand Jury's findings in report FAR 2010/2011 – 002 "Grants Department Imperils County Finances."

Recommendation 1:

Effective grant application writers and project administrators should be identified, shared, and utilized to seek such funding as may be available. Information, equipment, and skills should be shared through organizations such as the Trinity County Fire Chiefs Association.

Response 1:

The Trinity County Sheriff's Office/Office of Emergency Services has in the past and continues to seek out grant funding for emergency services, including Law Enforcement, Fire, and Medical Services. Grant funding received through the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) is divided between these entities. Additionally, an OES representative regularly meets/confers with the Trinity County Fire Chiefs Association.

Finding 2:

Methods identified for generating revenues include: establishing special districts where they don't currently exist in order to generate tax funding for their departments; increasing the Transient Occupancy Tax with funds dedicated to public safety/emergency services; and working more collaboratively with multiple departments, the Fire Chiefs Association, and the County to identify, pursue, and administer grant projects.

Recommendation 2:

Formation of special districts and related tax or fee assessments should be considered.

Response 2:

The Transient Occupancy Tax in Trinity County is half that of what is assessed in many other jurisdictions. An increase in this rate with a portion of those funds dedicated to emergency services could be used to enhance the capability of OES organizations.

Finding 3:

Cost saving methods identified in the investigation include; consolidation of departments and asking larger, more capable organizations to provide support to their smaller counterparts. It is clear that merely cutting costs will not maintain stable emergency services – out of necessity, Trinity County's response organizations have become adept at saving funds where they can. Increased revenues are essential. This find is consistent with the Grand Jury's findings in report FAR 2010/2011 – 002 "Grant Department Imperils County Finances".

Recommendation 3:

Organizations and County leadership should collaborate to conduct strategic planning, identify potential sources of stable revenue, and formulate strategies for maintaining adequate levels of emergency services.

Response 3:

Organizations and County officials currently meet on a regular basis at the Disaster Council, Fire Chiefs Association, and County Communications meeting to discuss, plan, and formulate strategies for emergency services.

Finding 4:

Fire and EMS organizations both report difficulty in recruiting and retaining adequate numbers of qualified personnel. This is particularly true in organizations relying on volunteers but also relevant in paid forces due to apparently low pay scale and irregular and long shifts, typical of 24/7 emergency service requirements.

Recommendation 4a:

Continue ongoing recruiting efforts at community service events.

Response 4a:

The Trinity County Sheriff's Office maintains continuous recruiting for essential positions within the organization.

Recommendation 4b:

Response organizations should make every community appearances in uniform so community will recognize those affiliated with various public safety organizations.

Response 4b:

Trinity County Sheriff's Office personnel routinely appear in uniform at community functions throughout the County.

Recommendation 4c:

Make personnel needs known through newspapers, sign boards, and visits to schools, churches, and civic organization meeting.

Response 4c:

As previously mentioned Trinity County Sheriff's Office personnel routinely appear at community functions throughout the County. The purpose of many of these meeting is not only to hear from the public as to their concerns, but to inform the public of the current status and needs of the organization as well.

Recommendation 4d:

Make facilities as "people friendly" as possible for participants and schedule regular training and social events.

Response 4d:

The Trinity Sheriff's Office is open to the public and our staff interacts with community members on a daily basis. The Sheriff's Office prides itself on providing "friendly" and "professional" customer service.

Recommendation 4e:

Organizations and the County should explore collaborations to identify specific needs and solutions.

Response 4e:

As previously mentioned, emergency service organizations and County officials currently meet on a regular basis at the Disaster Council, Fire Chiefs Association, and County Communications meeting to discuss, plan, and formulate strategies for emergency services.

Finding 5:

Training requirements are continually changing to reflect improvements in technology, evolving regulations, and mission vision both from on high and within the individual organization. This is complicated by turnover in personnel who are often volunteers with wide-ranging skills and motivated primarily by a desire to render service to their communities.

Recommendation 5a:

Continue to support those providing training today, such as Trinity County Life Support, the Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services, the County Fire Chiefs Association, and larger fire-rescue organizations.

Response 5a:

The Trinity County Sheriff's Office/Office of Emergency Services continues to facilitate and support training efforts to all emergency services organizations within the County.

Recommendation 5b:

Continue to utilize outside trainers such as Cal Fire, and engage retired professionals in appropriate fields.

Response 5b:

The Trinity County Sheriff's Office/Office of Emergency Services has utilized trainers from other emergency service organizations and will continue to do so in the future.

Recommendation 5c:

Set up training on a regular and frequent basis.

Response 5c:

The Trinity County Sheriff's Office/Office of Emergency Services has formulated a five year training plan that is revised on a regular basis to meet current training needs.

Recommendation 5d:

Cross-train with allied services such as Fire/EMS.

Response 5d:

The Trinity County Sheriff's Office/Office of Emergency Services periodically engages in exercises/training with allied emergency service organizations in an effort to enhance our level of service to the community.

Recommendation 5e:

Identify, develop, and maximize the utilization of trainers within the County.

Response 5e:

The Trinity County Sheriff's Office/Office of Emergency Services has identified and utilized trainers locally, regionally, statewide, and nationally depending on the level of expertise required for a particular subject matter.

Recommendation 5f:

Establish training goals and recognize qualifications achieved.

Response 5f:

The Trinity County Sheriff's Office/Office of Emergency Services has established training goals and recognizes accomplishments of all personnel within the organization.

Recommendation 5g:

Explore training that might be offered to other counties to generate revenues for hosting organizations.

Response 5g:

The Trinity County Sheriff's Office/Office of Emergency Services has offered training to outside agencies in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

Finding 6:

The overall state of emergency equipment in the County is not acceptable. While some departments have received new vehicles and equipment through grants in recent years, those are far outnumbered by outdated examples. This creates a risk to public safety, especially during large incidents such as major wildfires.

Recommendation 6a:

Emergency services providers should periodically perform an objective assessment of their equipment.

Response 6a:

Emergency service organizations within the County currently perform periodic assessments of equipment. Although some equipment is in need of replacement, obtaining funding for new vehicles/equipment is a constant challenge.

Recommendation 6b:

Fire departments and medical transporters should establish and fund reserve accounts for major equipment replacement.

Response 6b:

Emergency service organizations are continually seeking or attempting to establish funding sources for major equipment purchases. However, as previously stated identifying and obtaining additional funding is a constant challenge.

Recommendation 6c:

Used equipment should continue to be pursued and passed down as long as there is practical and economical service life left in it.

Response 6c:

The Trinity County Sheriff's Office/Office of Emergency Services has acquired serviceable used equipment in the past and will continue to do so as the opportunity presents itself.

Recommendation 6d:

Collaborative long-term planning for equipment needs and procurement methods should be considered.

Response 6d:

As previously stated the Trinity County Sheriff's Office/Office of Emergency Services currently meets with emergency service organizations to discuss, plan, and formulate strategies for emergency services. As part of this collaborative effort, organizations discuss, plan, and arrange for the procurement of equipment and/or supplies.

Finding 7:

Emergency Management grant funds are being supplanted in violation of grant terms. This jeopardizes future grant funding and makes the County vulnerable to demands for repayment, including past project years.

Recommendation 7a:

The County should immediately discontinue the practice of improperly supplanting grant funding.

Response 7a:

The Trinity County Sheriff's Office/Office of Emergency Services administers numerous grants within the organization. Supplanting grant funds not only jeopardizes individual grants, but could jeopardize all grants funds awarded to the organization. It has been the practice of the Trinity County Sheriff's Office/Office of Emergency Services to expend funds in accordance to grant guidelines.

Recommendation 7b:

The County should implement a policy addressing the practice for the future.

Response 7b:

As previously stated the Trinity County Sheriff's Office/Office of Emergency Services expends grant funds in accordance to grant guidelines and will continue to do so in the future.

Recommendation 7c:

The County should develop and implement a plan to correct the grant balances previously supplanted.

Response 7c:

The Trinity County Sheriff's Office/Office of Emergency Services has not been involved in the practice of supplanting grant funds, nor will the Office supplant grant funds in the future. As previously stated the Trinity County Sheriff's Office/Office of Emergency Services expends grant funds in accordance to grant guidelines and will continue to do so in the future.

Finding 8:

Parts of the County fall outside of formal response boundaries for structure fire, rescue, and medical emergency response. This can complicate dispatch, response, and command authority decisions.

Recommendation 8:

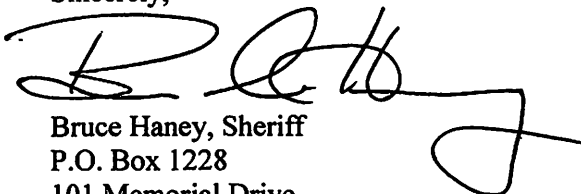
Fire Departments, through their respective governing boards, in cooperation with the Trinity County Fire Chiefs Association, should assess their response areas in relation to adjacent departments to collectively identify and map formal response areas throughout the County.

Response 8:

The Trinity County Sheriff's Office/Office of Emergency Services has worked with the Fire Chiefs Association to map and establish formal response areas. Current maps are on file in the Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center for reference when dispatching fire units.

The Responses conveyed in this report are the result of a thorough review of the Grand Jury's Findings and Recommendations. These Responses reflect the current status of conditions and/or operations in the Trinity County Sheriff's Office/Office of Emergency Services. It is our goal to continue providing the citizens of Trinity County with professional and effective emergency services. We will continue to strive to make Trinity County a safe place to live, work, and visit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Haney', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Bruce Haney, Sheriff
P.O. Box 1228
101 Memorial Drive
Weaverville, CA. 96093
(530) 623-3740

RECEIVED

APR 17 2012

TRINITY COUNTY
SUPERIOR COURT



TRINITY COUNTY

Board of Supervisors

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

TO: The Honorable James Woodward,
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court

FROM: Trinity County Board of Supervisors
Anton R. Jaegel

SUBJECT: Response to Recommendations of 2010-11
Grand Jury Public Safety/Emergency Services Committee
Final Report SDR 2010/2011-001
Trinity County Emergency Services/Public Safety Assessment

DATE: April 3, 2012

*Reviewed -
4/17/12*

The Grand Jury Public Safety/Emergency Services Committee has requested a written response to their final report on the "Trinity County Emergency Services/Public Safety Assessment: SDR 2010/2011-001"

The Board of Supervisors' response is as follows:

Finding 1:

All three branches of emergency services (Law Enforcement, Medical Services, and Fire Protection) report financial shortfalls in being able to fund a desired level of service. Funding issues were consistently among the top challenges and needs reported. Other top needs, such as increased training and volunteer recruiting and retention are tied to funding. This finding is consistent with the Grand Jury's finding in report FAR 2010/2011-002 "Grants Department Imperils County Finances".

Response: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the finding.

Recommendation 1:

Effective grant applications writers and project administrators should be identified, shared and utilized to seek such funding as may be available. Information, equipment and skills should be shared through organizations such as the Trinity County Fire Chiefs Association.

JUDY PFLUEGER
DISTRICT 1

JUDY MORRIS
DISTRICT 2

ROGER JAEGLER
DISTRICT 3

DEBRA CHAPMAN
DISTRICT 4

WENDY OTTO
DISTRICT 5

Response: Needs further analysis: When county funds and staffing levels stabilize to the degree that effective grant writers and project managers within the County structure can be identified, the information will certainly be shared with the Trinity County Fire Chiefs Association.

Finding 2:

Methods identified for generating revenues include: establishing special districts where they don't currently exist in order to generate tax funding for their departments; increasing the Transient Occupancy Tax with the funds dedicated to public safety/emergency services; and working more collaboratively with multiple departments, the Fire Chiefs Association and the County to identify, pursue and administer grant projects.

Response: The Board of Supervisors agrees in part with the finding. Public Safety/Emergency Services are in need of additional revenues, and working collaboratively toward a goal for the common good is to be encouraged. However, the establishment of special districts with a tax generating component is not within the jurisdiction of the BOS. The increasing of the Transient Occupancy Tax has been attempted by the BOS several times since 2000 and has consistently & overwhelmingly failed at the ballot.

Recommendation 2:

Formation of special districts and related tax or fee assessments should be considered.

Response: Implementation of the recommendation is not within the jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors.

Finding 3:

Fire and EMS organizations both report difficulty in recruiting and retaining adequate numbers of qualified personnel. This is particularly true in organizations relying on volunteers but also relevant in paid forces due to apparently low pay scale and irregular and long shifts, typical of 24/7 emergency service requirements.

Response: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the finding

Recommendation 4a: Continue on-going recruiting effort at community service events.

Response: While the Board of Supervisors agrees with the recommendation, it should be noted that implementation of the recommendation is not within the jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors.

Recommendation 4b: Response organizations should make relevant community appearances in uniform so community will recognize those affiliated with various public safety organizations.

Response: The Board of Supervisors disagrees with part of the recommendation. Emergency service providers who are not County employees do appear at community events in uniform, and should be encouraged to continue to do so. It should be noted that implementation of the recommendation for the volunteer and non-County employee organization is not within the jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors. However, a portion of emergency service work is performed through the Sheriff's Department, and to require appearances in uniform may lead to overtime pay, which creates a financial burden on the department.

Recommendation 4c: Make personnel needs known through newspapers, sign boards, and visits to schools, churches and civic organizations.

Response: While the Board of Supervisors agrees with the recommendation, it should be noted that implementation of the recommendation is not within the jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors.

Recommendation 4d: Make facilities as "people friendly" as possible for participants and schedule regular training and social events.

Response: The Board of Supervisors disagrees with part of the recommendation. County owned and staffed emergency services facilities are not the best place to hold "social functions", as a liability situation may occur. Scheduling regular training within County owned facilities will require further analysis to determine if the facilities meet the criteria necessary for the trainings. It should be noted that implementation of the recommendation for the volunteer and non-County organizations is not within the jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors.

Recommendation 4e: Organizations and the County should explore collaborations to identify specific needs and solutions.

Response: The recommendation will be implemented when county funds and staffing levels stabilize to the point that a contact person can be appointed to interact with the organizations throughout the County.

Finding 5: Training requirements are continually changing to reflect improvements in technology, evolving regulations and mission vision both from on high and within the individual organizations. This is complicated by turnover in personnel who are often volunteers with wide-ranging skills and motivated primarily by a desire to render services to their communities.

Recommendation 5a: Continue to support those providing training today, such as Trinity County Life Support, the Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services; the County Fire Chief's Association and larger fire-rescue organizations.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented.



Recommendation 5b: Continue to utilize outside trainers such as CalFIRE and engage retired professionals in appropriate fields.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented.

Recommendation 5c: Set up training on a regular and frequent basis.

Response: Implementation of the recommendation is not within the jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors.

Recommendation 5d: Cross-train with allied services such as Fire/EMS

Response: Implementation of the recommendation is not within the jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors.

Recommendation 5e: Identify, develop and maximize the utilization of trainers within the County.

Response: Implementation of the recommendation is not within the jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors.



Recommendation 5f: Establish training goals and recognize qualifications achieved

Response: Implementation of the recommendation is not within the jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors.

Recommendation 5g: Consider collaborative development of a training needs assessment and a long-term training strategy and plan

Response: Implementation of the recommendation is not within the jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors.

Recommendation 5h: Explore training that might be offered to other counties to generate revenues for hosting organizations.

Response: Implementation of the recommendation is not within the jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors.

Finding 6: The overall state of emergency equipment in the County is not acceptable. While some departments have received new vehicles and equipment through grants in recent years, those are far outnumbered by outdated examples. This creates a risk to public safety, especially during large incidents such as major wildfires.



Response: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the finding.



Recommendation 6a: Emergency service providers should periodically perform an objective assessment of their equipment.

Response: Implementation of the recommendation is not within the jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors


Recommendation 6b: Fire departments and medical transporters should establish and fund reserves for major equipment replacement.

Response: Implementation of the recommendation is not within the jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors

Recommendation 6c: Used equipment should continue to be pursued and passed down as long as there is practical and economical service life left in it.

Response: Implementation of the recommendation is not within the jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors

Recommendation 6d: Collaborative long term planning for equipment needs and procurement methods should be considered.



Response: Will be implemented, as time, staffing and funding issues are resolved.

Finding 7: Emergency Management grant funds are being supplanted in violation of grant terms. This jeopardizes future grant funding and makes the County vulnerable to demands for repayment, including past project years.

Response: The Board of Supervisors disagrees with the finding. The Sheriff's Department, as the overseer and recipient of Emergency Management Grant funds, is responsible to manage those funds properly in accordance with the terms of the grant. This report shows no evidence of grant funds being supplanted. No interviews were conducted with the Auditors office or the County Administrative offices regarding the allegation of supplanting funds.

Recommendation 7a: The County should immediately discontinue the practice of improperly supplanting grant funds.

Response: Requires further analysis. A discussion between the Administrative office, the Auditors office and the Sheriff's Department regarding the allegation of grant funds being supplanted needs to occur to better understand why and where that allegation originated. This should be done before the end of the 2011-12 fiscal year.



Recommendation 7b: The County should implement a policy addressing the practice for the future.

Response: Requires further analysis. Grant funding & expenditures are specific to each grant. Having a policy regarding the use of the grant funds to provide clear direction and expectations to the County departments may be necessary if it is determined that supplanting is an issue. This should be done before the end of the 2011-12 fiscal year.

Recommendation 7c: The County should develop and implement a plan to correct the grant balances previously supplanted.

Response: Requires further analysis. A discussion between the Administrative office, the Auditors office and the Sheriff's Department regarding the allegation of grant funds being supplanted needs to occur to better understand why and where that allegation came from. A review of the Sheriff's Department, involving both general fund and grant funding sources needs to be performed to determine where funds are being spent and if that expense is allowable. This should be done before the end of the 2011-12 fiscal year. Following the conclusion of the financial review, the Board of Supervisors will be in a better informed position to discuss whether or not a corrective plan is needed.

Finding 8: Parts of the County fall outside of formal response boundaries for structure, fire, rescue and medical emergency response. This can complicate dispatch, response, and command authority decisions.

Response: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the finding.

Recommendation 8: Fire Departments, through their respective governing boards, in cooperation with the Trinity County Fire Chief's Association, should assess their response areas in relation to adjacent departments to collectively identify and map formal response areas throughout the County.

Response: Implementation of the recommendation is not within the jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors

Finding 9: Trinity County government's priority for public safety and emergency services has been unclear in recent years. While it is recognized that all communities, disciplines, organizations, organizations and services must share the burden of a poor economy, a clearly articulated priority and strategy for these essential services could help all concerned in strategic planning.

Response: The Board of Supervisors disagrees in part. The County has funded public safety to the degree that the budget can bear. This demonstrates a commitment and priority to public safety. Unfortunately, the funding that public safety would like to receive and the reality of what is available are not the same. Trinity County does not have a history of funding emergency services beyond public safety and an annual allocation to the ambulance services. The Board recognizes the value in having a clearly articulated priority and strategy for public safety.

Recommendation 9: County government should clearly state its priority for public safety and emergency services, including funding, allocation of resources, and both material and non-material support.

Response: Needs further analysis. Priority, funding, allocation of resources, materials and non-material support will take time to determine where each of these items falls within the County structure. An analysis of funding and allocation of resources may very well mean the closure of County offices completely, in order to fund to what public safety and emergency services deem appropriate. However, without a complete and thorough analysis, which would include impacts not only to public safety and emergency services, but also to the County structure as a whole, the Board cannot make a determination on the feasibility of implementing the recommendation. The analysis should be done by the close of fiscal year 2012-13.