



**Conceptual Reorganization  
of  
San Diego County  
Fire Services**

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**As requested by the Local Agency Formation Commission  
on November 17, 2006 and January 17, 2007**

**Submitted January 22, 2007**

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# Conceptual Reorganization of San Diego County Fire Services

## I. BACKGROUND

Following the fires of 2003, the San Diego Regional Fire Prevention and Emergency Preparedness Task Force and the Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission both recommended improvements in Fire Operations and Fire Prevention. The Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) Task Force on Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services also recommended improvements in the County Fire Services. Unserved (unfunded) and underserved (under funded) areas of the county were initially identified by the Task Force, as priority areas for intervention followed by a consolidation of Fire Agencies within the unincorporated areas of the county. The area to be considered for fire protection was expanded by LAFCO to include the entire unincorporated area of San Diego County.

In an election held November 2004, the voters in the unincorporated area responded overwhelmingly to support the concept of consolidation of unincorporated fire agencies to enhance fire protection. The San Diego County Board of Supervisors placed this measure on the ballot under the premise that existing funding would be utilized to support the new agency. The new fire organization would be under the leadership of one chief and thus reduce the number of small fire agencies and promote strong leadership in emergency management. Subsequent to the vote, the Board of Supervisors tasked LAFCO to develop fire protection options for the County through consolidation or reorganization of agencies.

### A. Fire Agencies and Funding History

Today 18 cities, 16 fire districts, 5 water districts, 7 CSA's, 7 volunteer fire departments, the federal government and the State of California currently provide fire service within San Diego County. The State, through the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), provides and funds wildland fire protection for state responsibility areas. The Federal Government, through the US Forest Service, provides and funds wildland fire protection on national forest lands. Within the State of California there is no legal mandate for local government to provide fire protection. In the unincorporated areas of the county, communities have formed special districts or volunteer agencies in most areas to provide structural fire protection (See Appendix for LAFCO Phase I Area Fire Stations).

Prior to 1978 and the passage of Proposition 13, as communities grew and developed, the citizens would tax themselves through property taxes for fire protection, schools, roads, law enforcement and other needed services. First, a community would establish a volunteer fire department. As the community grew, the fire department would transition from volunteer, to a paid call or paid reserve, to a career department. Historically, volunteer fire fighters lived and worked within the

same community. This pattern is changing today within our region, as people are living in one community and working in another. Today, career and reserve firefighters often provide personnel for weekday response augmented with volunteer firefighters at night and on weekends. Prior to 1978 Fire Protection budgets were developed according to the level of service that a community desired and property tax rates were adjusted to generate necessary revenue. Districts formed after 1978 have limited property tax revenue.

Proposition 13 has led to the creation of two distinct levels of fire protection within our County. Predominately, the fire agencies with adequate funding are Pre-Proposition 13 Districts and those without adequate funding are Post-Proposition 13 agencies. Post-Proposition 13 agencies have often relied on special taxes or assessments requiring a 2/3 majority for passage to provide minimal fire service funding. Generally, the fire agencies with adequate funding have adequate service levels, as defined by the Insurance Services Office, while the fire agencies without adequate funding do not have adequate service levels. With every new development in an adequately funded fire agency's jurisdiction, service to the whole community improves. The opposite effect occurs with every new development in an under funded fire agency's jurisdiction, as service to the whole community declines.

## **B. Organizations in the Proposal**

### **1. County of San Diego**

The mission of the County of San Diego is to provide the residents of the county with superior County services in terms of excellence, timeliness and value in order to improve the region's quality of life. To achieve its mission the County provides a full range of public services including, but not limited to, police protection, corrections, health, recreation, fleet acquisition and maintenance, public works, purchasing and contracting, land use and tax collection

#### **Current County Contract Fire Services**

The Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU) has an established Fire Enhancement Program, as authorized by the Board of Supervisors. A total of \$8.53 million has been assigned to various rural departments including volunteer fire companies, county service areas and fire protection districts. The existing program has multiple goals to elevate the existing fire service in rural communities. The goals are completed or in progress and include:

- Volunteer fire company (VFC) support through funding, training and grant consideration
- Improve Communications and Command and Control capabilities of rural fire agencies, including activation of Mutual Aid and Automatic Aid
- Improve homeowner insurance opportunities by lowering Insurance Services Office community ratings over time that lowers insurance costs
- Replace an aging fire fleet in rural communities

- Establish fire safe land use projects that provide for appropriate defensible space, eliminate commingling of vegetation, provide water supply, require fire resistive construction and secondary access
- Establish a staffing combination that equates to three persons per engine through a combination of permanent and volunteer/reserve personnel
- Expand the ongoing hazard abatement program with CDF, USFS, BLM and fire protection districts
- Provide Geographic Information Services (GIS) mapping to rural fire agencies

DPLU has ordered fire apparatus anticipated to be delivered between February 2007 and May 2007. Currently the County has ordered 16 pieces of apparatus with 5 additional pieces of apparatus planned for ordering in the spring of 2007. These are being ordered through County Fleet Maintenance and will be titled and maintained by County Fleet Maintenance. Standard apparatus models are used for cost effective maintenance and effective use of apparatus of the same type for all fire stations, where possible. The apparatus will have a basic complement of equipment that will be a standardized issuance for all engines and watertenders. The priorities for identifying apparatus have been based on a "Regional Needs Assessment" voted on by all participants, including volunteer fire companies, fire protection districts and CSA's that are not receiving funding for staffing through a County/CDF agreement. Funding has been consistent for two years to continue to replace an aging fire apparatus fleet used by rural fire agencies.

The County has entered into direct and indirect "Amador" contracts with CDF. Currently, by County Amador Agreement, CDF staffs 10 fire stations during a 5 month "winter period" that keeps CDF stations operational on a 24 hour response basis. CDF personnel operate CDF engines and respond to all emergencies in their area of response. CDF personnel are trained and equipped to respond to structural fires, vehicle fires, hazardous materials responses and emergency medical response, as any other fire agency in the county. CDF maintains an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) minimum level of capability on all apparatus. CDF responds in partnership with adjacent volunteer fire companies with their structural apparatus to eventually attain the best fire insurance rating possible for rural communities in the unincorporated area of San Diego County. An additional feature of the Amador program is that CDF will backfill stations with other engines, if an engine working a response anticipates being committed for more than 45 minutes.

The County program has coordinated funding for additional staffing in specific fire protection districts in the unincorporated areas. A partnership has been created among the County, CDF and certain Districts. The following bullets summarize staffing levels enhanced through the County's program:

- San Diego Rural (FPD) received supplemental funding increasing the fire district's staffing level to two permanent personnel and one volunteer firefighter at two fire stations, rather than one, through CDF contracts.
- Valley Center (FPD) received supplemental funding increasing the district's staffing level to two permanent personnel and one volunteer/reserve firefighter at two fire stations, rather than one career firefighter, through existing CDF contracts.
- Deer Springs (FPD) received supplemental funding increasing the district's staffing level to three permanent personnel from two permanent firefighters at two fire stations through existing CDF contracts.
- Julian-Cuyamaca (FPD) was **offered** and **did not accept substantial** supplemental funding that would change the district's volunteer staffing level to three permanent personnel at one fire station supported by an integrated volunteer fire program at two stations through CDF contracts (pending negotiations).
- Pine Valley (FPD) has been **offered** supplemental funding that would change the district's staffing level to two permanent personnel and one volunteer/reserve firefighter at one fire station, rather than a total reserve and volunteer program, through a CDF contract (pending negotiations).

The DPLU program has assigned funding to volunteer fire companies to assist with operational costs in the most rural or isolated communities in the county. Funding has been used to pay for insurance (liability and workers' compensation), fuel, administrative costs and other fire related costs. The DPLU program provides for two CDF training captains to coordinate a regional approach to fire and emergency medical training. These personnel serve as coordinators to assure training is accomplished, records are maintained and future training needs are identified for each volunteer fire company. The coordinators build upon what training program exists today, rather than converting volunteer programs to only one accepted program.

DPLU has added a total of seven staff positions in addition to the \$8.53 million that has been authorized for rural fire protection. These positions provide for coordination of contracts, negotiations for new contracts, payment of bills, grant writing (application and support), purchasing of fire apparatus and equipment, training oversight and GIS mapping support of volunteer fire companies and member fire protection districts. DPLU personnel remain responsible to review single building plan checks, grading plans, sprinkler plans and fire protection plans. Additionally, staff members review discretionary projects for new development in the unincorporated area both inside and outside of fire districts. DPLU staff also provides code enforcement responsibility for weed abatement in the unserved areas; CSA's and specified fire districts. Another related vegetation management program managed by DPLU is the Fire Safety and Fuels Reduction Program responsible to remove dead, dying and diseased trees in over 200,000 acres of mountainous areas in San Diego County.

Another function of the DPLU Fire Program personnel is to be able to perform "Damage Assessment" for all emergencies in the unincorporated area of San Diego County. This type of assessment includes damage for fire, flood, earthquake or other disaster affecting the County. Personnel also serve as a liaison to the fire agencies through the Area Fire and Rescue Coordinator for major fire events.

## **2. California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF)**

CDF is a modern, full service fire protection and emergency management agency that provides comprehensive fire protection. CDF is a wildland fire department organized under California Law to be responsible to suppress fires on lands where the State of California bears the cost for suppression efforts. This land is known as State Responsibility Area (SRA) and comprises approximately 1.4 million acres in San Diego County. CDF's mission, as directed and authorized by the State Legislature and statutes, is to provide contractual emergency service to local government throughout California, when requested. CDF provides more than 140 emergency services contracts with cities, special districts and counties in California. Service levels vary from prevention personnel, to dispatch only, to winter and full service fire protection agreements that include paramedic service. These services are mutually beneficial and provide for the level of service that each agency desires and can afford. Two major contract options are available to local government agencies, as established by the Public Resources Code (PRC) Sections 4142 and 4144.

PRC 4142 Agreements, sometimes referred to as "Schedule A" agreements, are the mechanism that allows CDF to provide routine structural fire protection and rescue service by contract on an annual basis. CDF employees drive local government apparatus and are usually stationed in local government facilities. Local governments agree to a specific level of service regarding personnel per engine, stations to be staffed, Emergency Medical Service (EMS) level, operating expenses including fleet replacement and administration/organizational structure. Under this contractual relationship, the first contract is generally required to be for three or more years. The length of this first contract allows CDF to recoup costs of hiring and training personnel entering state service as new hires or as "blanketed-in" or absorbed into state civil service. Safety employees must be CDF employees. "Non-safety" employees may work for CDF, but they may actually be local government employees. Currently, CDF will only enter into a full service fire protection agreement, if there will be **two** or more permanent CDF fire personnel on an engine. CDF no longer allows a station engine to be staffed by one permanent CDF fire employee supplemented by volunteers or reserve firefighters.

A PRC 4144 contract, also called the "Amador Agreement", is a contractual relationship that allows CDF to provide fulltime structural fire protection and life safety services during the winter months of the calendar year. This option exists

because not all CDF fire stations are staffed for emergency dispatch on a 24 hour basis during the winter. Generally, CDF wildland engines and personnel are utilized at existing CDF facilities. However, local government apparatus and local government facilities (if near a CDF Station) may be staffed for emergency response 24 hours/day during the contractual period. CDF prefers to have Amador staffing on structural or brush engines to be similar to the 3 person staffing per engine required during the "fire season". Costs are shared between CDF and the local government with assigned CDF permanent personnel base salaries paid by the State. The local government pays for non-permanent or "seasonal" employee salaries and benefits plus planned and unplanned overtime for the permanent employees. Six personnel are usually assigned to an Amador Engine to meet staffing commitments. The Amador Agreement is designed to allow local government to take advantage of existing CDF resources and maintain a higher level of fire protection on a year-round basis.

CDF is responsible for all employee personnel matters including workers' compensation in either of the contracting options listed above (PRC 4142 or PRC 4144). CDF management through the unit chief and other chief officers are contractors providing service to a local government. The chief or a designee reports to the elected or appointed body of the local government agency. Operational funding matters and staffing levels are addressed at public meetings of the public body responsible for fire protection in a designated community. CDF does not have the ability to negotiate salaries or benefits with a district, as salaries and benefits are negotiated or assigned at the state level through CDF and other State departments. Due to its statewide service boundary, CDF is able to take advantage of economy of scale savings and share this savings with local agencies.

CDF employees are experienced and receive professional training in all types of fire suppression (structural, vehicle, wildland). They are trained to the Emergency Medical Technician or Paramedic level and trained and possess experience in Hazardous Materials incidents and many other specialized emergency responses. CDF may work with or supervise volunteer or reserve firefighters. However, all fulltime permanent safety personnel must be State employees to avoid two different payment scales for the same service by employees.

CDF San Diego has 18 fire stations, 4 Conservation Camps, 1 Air Attack Base, 33 fire engines and 4 bulldozers in the State funded unit. CDF has 21 fire stations, 32 engines, 5 Watertenders, 4 rescue vehicles and 2 ambulances within the Schedule A contract program for local fire protection and EMS. CDF serves as the Office of Emergency Services Area Fire and Rescue Coordinator by election, to facilitate response to emergencies in San Diego and throughout the State of California under the Mutual Aid System. The CDF Emergency Command Center is co-located with the Cleveland National Forest for dispatching services in San Diego, Riverside and Orange Counties. Dispatchers

are cross-trained to assist with dispatching needs of either agency, as large or multiple events occur. CDF is one of the largest fire departments in the county and the state.

## **II. IDENTIFIED FIRE PROTECTION PROBLEMS IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY**

### **A. Fire Code Applications Enforced to Different Levels**

Over the past 80 years more than 16,000 homes have been destroyed by wildland/urban interface fires in the State of California. Unfortunately, San Diego County accounts for over 20 percent of this total statewide loss.<sup>1</sup> Of this overall countywide destruction, the unincorporated area of the county accounts for the greatest percentage. History has shown that defensible space, enhanced building construction, proper access, and an adequate water supply substantially reduces the number of structures destroyed by wildland fires. Even though the 17 county fire districts and the County of San Diego have adopted more stringent requirements for building in the wildland/urban interface, these codes are not uniformly enforced.<sup>2</sup>

### **B. Land Use and Commingling of Vegetation**

As the population of our state and region continues to increase, the demand for housing continues to increase. This need for housing is pushing more and more development into wildland/urban interface areas. Competing interests of habitat preservation and land development have also inadvertently increased the wildland/urban interface fire problem. Developers, striving to increase their return on investments and County regulations, are setting aside open space areas within developments rather than purchasing open space offsite. This is leading to the commingling of vegetation and dwellings, thereby increasing the difficulty of structural protection during a wildland fire. At the same time, commingled habitat oftentimes does not create the most desirable habitat for all species.

### **C. Fire and EMS History**

The fire service was founded to combat catastrophic events that impacted the lives of our citizens. Initially, fire service agencies only responded to fires with a priority of protecting insured properties. Today, the fire service has evolved into a full service emergency delivery concept. Studies have shown that more than 80 percent of all responses are to emergency incidents other than fires. Emergency medical responses have become the greatest service demand upon fire agencies. Medical emergencies cannot be mitigated through more stringent codes. Direct intervention by a trained individual needs to occur within a given period of time to obtain the

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<sup>1</sup> San Diego Regional Fire Prevention And Emergency Preparedness Task Force, Oct. 2004

<sup>2</sup> *ibid* p.53

greatest lives saved rate. Not all personnel are trained to the same EMS level of training and there is **no assurance** that **medical first responders can always** be available to **respond** in rural areas **immediately**.

#### **D. Topography and Fuels (Vegetation)**

The alignment of many or most major drainages (mountains and valleys) in San Diego County is Northeast to Southwest. This arrangement is supportive to Santa Ana winds and increases the wind velocity, while channeling the wind from the high-pressure areas to low-pressure areas. When a fire occurs under Santa Ana Wind conditions, fires have the potential of entering and burning into communities for long distances causing extensive damage.

The vegetative fuel in San Diego varies from grass to brush and timber. During drought periods, like those recently experienced, the brush and timber is stressed, becomes more volatile or susceptible to burning and often dies. The stressed timber becomes weak and susceptible to bark beetle infestation. Stands of dead trees become predominant and the fire threat is increased significantly. In many areas, the brush responds to drought like timber, creating vast acreage of dead brush with little habitat value. In many cases these areas of dead, dying or diseased fuels have not had a fire occurrence in over fifty (50) years. This abundance of dead vegetation can be a precursor to fires like the recent Cedar, Paradise and Pines Fires. Once rains return or become excessive, the grass crop grows rapidly through several growth cycles, creating excessive flashy vegetative fuels capable of transmitting the spread of fire in an extremely rapid manner.

#### **Weed Abatement (Fuel Modification) Inconsistencies**

San Diego County fire agencies are charged with the responsibility to educate property owners and residents of the need to provide adequate fuel modification around improvements. The fuel modification, when done correctly, provides defensible space for firefighters to work from and for improvements to withstand most fires without intensive fire service intervention. Fire agencies enforce weed abatement to different degrees for a variety of reasons. Some agencies hire companies for notification and eventual forced abatement, while other jurisdictions provide only minimal inspection programs and perhaps minimal or no forced abatement.

#### **E. Communications or Command and Control of Resources**

During the Cedar Fire, incompatible communication systems and technology often made it impossible for fire personnel to communicate with each other on the incident. Communications utilizing 700 and 800 MHZ systems had more difficulty than other systems in areas with mountainous terrain. Changes to these newer technologies with more difficult communications issues, were driven by the need for enhanced communication by fire and law agencies, coupled with the projected

elimination of some VHF bands traditionally used by emergency response agencies. The Substantially Similar Proposal prepared by the County Fire Chiefs' Association and Fire Districts' Association stated that reorganization into a regional agency should improve functionality and the coordination of fire service delivery countywide. A regional agency therefore should provide for better Command and Control of resources.

### **III. IDENTIFIED SOLUTIONS**

#### **A. Fire Code Applications**

##### **New Development to be DPLU responsibility for fire review**

All new development should be coordinated and evaluated within the Department of Planning and Land Use for fire protection purposes. This change would enhance code application and provide greater consistency and efficiency. This concept supports the County effort to improve code consistency within the county. The urban/wildland building features of the fire code have been adopted within the County Building Code. By having plan reviewers, building inspectors and fire prevention staff all reviewing to the same standards, confusion is minimized within the development community. **This process has begun upon request in several fire protection districts and occurs in CSA's and volunteer fire company communities.** This solution addresses the San Diego Regional Fire Prevention and Emergency Preparedness Task Force conclusion in October of 2004 that fire codes were not uniformly enforced throughout the unincorporated area of San Diego County.

#### **B. Land Use and Commingling of Vegetation**

DPLU will continue to evaluate discretionary projects and individual building sites to a maximum degree. DPLU has taken the initial steps internally to work with project developers to provide safe development with minimal or mitigated fire impacts, while habitat is improved to a maximum degree. Coordination with environmental planners will continue and Fire Protection Plans will continue to be required and improved in accordance with Article 86A of the California Building Code. Flame lengths will be calculated based upon models and observed fire behavior. Approved consultants shall prepare Fire Protection Plans for discretionary projects for submittal to DPLU staff. Fuel modification shall be required to protect homes through defensible or survivable space that is supported by construction factors required by code or ordinance. This approach will minimize and in many cases eliminate future commingling of habitat and development and addresses another concern raised after the 2003 fires.

### **C. Fire and EMS Service Delivery**

The County through action under Communications or Command and Control of Resources should enhance and reduce the medical emergency response times in an effort to save lives. The System would have a backbone of career fulltime personnel supported and augmented by volunteers and reserve staff. Fulltime personnel, supplemented by volunteer, reserve and paid-call firefighters, will respond to fires and medical emergencies, where this practice has not been fully initiated or has been less effective in the past. The County's contract fire agency, CDF and most of the volunteer fire companies have set a Firefighter I Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) level of training, as a goal for all employees. Fire and EMS training will be provided or coordinated for the volunteer personnel by permanent fulltime fire staff. An enhanced, better coordinated, assured and more timely response for fire and EMS incidents will be established through an expanded County administered fire program. This action addresses a common concern expressed after the 2003 "Fire Siege" stressing stronger fire service coordination and leadership.

### **D. Topography and Fuels (Vegetation)**

The County will aggressively pursue inspection and forced abatement with fire agencies or areas that have no such program. The County Combustible Vegetation and Other Flammable Materials Ordinance #9633 has become the basis for this joint enforcement action. Local fire agencies today, lacking a basic weed abatement code or the ability to conduct forced abatement of hazards, may through adoption by reference and approval by the Board of Supervisors, create such inspection and abatement capabilities. Inspections of property shall be the obligation of the appropriate fire agency, while County Code Enforcement personnel shall manage forced abatement. Such partnerships have been in place in County Local Responsibility Areas like Campo, Boulevard, Ramona, DeLuz, Julian, Valley Center and Palomar Mountain. The County shall work closely with CDF, USFS and BLM to assure compliance with State Law and County Ordinance requiring fuel modification and clearance for 100 feet from structures or property lines.

The topography in San Diego remains unchangeable; however, fuels will be treated, where feasible, through prescriptive burning, mechanical treatment or other acceptable means. This action will require extreme coordination with the wildland fire and wildlife agencies to be effective, legal and cost efficient. This methodology applied to fuels management tackles another issue raised after the 2003 fires.

### **E. Communications Command and Control of Resources**

#### **1. Radio Systems**

In 1995, the Regional Communications System (RCS) was created with alternate funding from County Service Area (CSA) 135. A major goal of the RCS is to

provide effective and reliable radio communications for routine intra-agency operations, as well as inter-agency communications throughout the region during mutual aid and disaster operations. The RCS is providing this service over a UHF 800 MHz frequency based system. The East Loop of the RCS is in the process of being enhanced, moving toward the same operational benefits as the western portion of the system utilized by most cities and fire protection districts.

In addition to the UHF band of frequencies there is the existing VHF band of emergency provider frequencies. The State of California requires VHF capabilities for all fire mutual aid fire chiefs within our state. Units coming from outside our region can use the VHF frequencies for common communications. This allows effective communication with resources coordinated by the County OES Fire and Rescue Coordinator on behalf of all agencies.

Unfortunately, agencies have migrated to one system or the other believing one system was sufficient. Due to budget constraints, some have neglected to keep or place both radio systems in their fire vehicles. Efforts need to be put in place to verify that one UHF and one VHF radio (mobile or portable) be in each fire going apparatus. This verification would ensure that the State OES Mutual Aid System criteria are accomplished, allowing direct communications with all equipment responding to any fire or other disaster. The County will pursue verification that multiple radio resources exist for fire agencies in San Diego County and assist with coordination and at times procure the appropriate VHF radios for partner agencies. This task treats another problem identified following the fires of 2003.

## **2. Establish the “Office of the Fire Warden” (OFW) Within the Department of Planning and Land Use.**

It is suggested that the “OFW” would have two primary areas of responsibility. The first area of responsibility is the more traditional prevention and fire protection planning responsibilities associated with DPLU Fire Staff in a more expanded planning and land use role. The second area of responsibility would involve the existing administration of fire contracts with all partner agencies, but in a broader capacity with additional fire agencies in a larger regional organizational structure.

It is important to note that the creation of the OFW is not a required function, as the existing fire enhancement program in DPLU can continue as is, with a lesser service level to communities. As the County’s existing Fire Enhancement Program has expanded, fire protection planning service levels have increased on a voluntary basis (i.e. Borrego Springs, East County, Julian) reference building review. Similarly, weed abatement services through the County and wildland fire and land management agencies have been expanded voluntarily to include fire districts (i.e. Rural, Julian and Valley Center). Fire Service levels have also

increased through contracts with County DPLU. It is possible that the citizens of the county can be better served with a stronger program under the OFW.

#### **a) OFW Land Use Element**

As growth and development within the wildland/urban interface continues to expand, so does the need of a central County Fire Prevention Program. The proposed area of jurisdiction for this function would include the entire unincorporated area of San Diego County, in a similar manner that the Building Division of DPLU serves the entire unincorporated lands. Existing plan review for fire protection conditions on single family development and discretionary projects on unincorporated land outside of fire protection districts would be expanded to include all fire protection districts. Fire Marshal personnel in districts would work with the County Fire Staff or within the County system to provide consistent project review. It is important to recognize that this service level change can be phased and will require a transitional period of time dependent upon the functions that are transferred to the County.

It is intended that by establishing the OFW, a single Fire Code will be adopted for the unincorporated area of the County. As a part of that process, a single fire appeals process would also be established. This process will involve the expertise of existing and future fire marshal positions, but brings the appeal process solely to the County to again provide consistency of fire code applications throughout the unincorporated area. The workload for this process will be transferred from the local fire personnel to the County. Individual property owners and developers will have one shop to visit regarding fuel abatement, sprinkler plans, fire building conditions, fire protection plans, grading plans and complaints

#### **b) OFW Contract Fire Administration and Service**

The service area to be included in a County OFW Program should be all Phase I fire agencies with the **exception** of Ramona Municipal Water District, as this district appears to have financial sufficiency and is part of the CDF fire system. It is recommended that Ramona Municipal Water District be moved to a Phase II agency with LAFCO. It is desirable for the existing fire protection districts having partnerships with the County to become part of a new organization, but it is not a mandatory action that their autonomy be dissolved. It is possible that these partnering fire districts may be deferred to a later Phase of this action and may never need reorganization by LAFCO. They could continue to operate in full cooperation with the County without dissolution. These current districts include Deer Springs, Valley Center, San Diego Rural, Pine Valley and Julian-Cuyamaca. It is however, strongly recommended that all LAFCO Phase One CSA's,, volunteer fire companies

and unserved areas be included in this first reorganization step and become part of a new or proposed County Service area.

The principle responsibilities of the OFW in this capacity will be to provide support to the volunteer fire companies and partner fire districts, prepare master fire budgets, administer service contracts, perform specified vehicle maintenance, manage coordinated fire apparatus purchases, provide oversight/damage assessment for large incidents and as previously stated, administer the County's Fire Prevention (Fire Marshal) Program. Support to the volunteers includes such activities as administration, master planning, mapping and coordination. Training, operations and supervision of volunteers will be the responsibility of the contracting agency. Support to partner fire districts includes financial supplements for personnel, equipment, facilities and operations.

Administering and implementing fire protection service contracts primarily involves the contract fire agency administration (CDF) with oversight and coordination by the future OFW. The County will require a minimum number of positions to complete the administration of potential new contracts. Partner agencies will work with the County's contracting agency (CDF). The County OFW (DPLU Fire today) and its Contractor (CDF) have sufficient background and expertise to complete the offering of full service protection in a contractual manner in designated locations. The future County Office of the Fire Warden and its contractor (CDF) would require six to twelve months to be fully operational with permanent personnel in all contracted areas. The County anticipates a transitional period of 12 to 18 months to bring a reserve firefighter workforce to fruition in all designated volunteer facilities.

County OFW delivered fire protection and emergency medical services would be structured where the Office of the Fire Warden will be the "Contract Administrator" for all fire and EMS contracts. CDF will be the "contractor" to provide fire and first responder EMS service equivalent to or better than existing service provided today. Improved service delivery will be accomplished through increased staffing, strong administration and enhanced response coordination through dispatch services. Existing permanent fire "safety" personnel would be considered for blanketing (absorption) into permanent state service with CDF. Existing "non-safety" personnel may be absorbed by the County OFW and may work at existing work locations, where possible

The County would continue to subsidize existing contracted agencies and expand contracts to all fire agencies within the Phase I program as described above, through the Office of the Fire Warden. It is anticipated that Exclusive Operating Area (EOA) contracts may be transferred to the County Office of the Fire Warden, unless local fire districts can efficiently maintain those responsibilities in cooperation with County OFW (DPLU-Fire). DPLU through

the OFW needs to work with HHS-A-ESD to gain their support to move forward in the EOA field of operations to enhance EMS service. The OFW will work and partner with the HHS-A-ESD to assume management/supervision of operations and contracts with the service provider/contractor in partnership with the County's contract agency (CDF). This assumption will require a transitional period to be coordinated with HHS-A-ESD and CDF. The County OFW would continue to improve EMS response by working with the contracting fire service agency and HHS-A-ESD to eliminate duplication of costs and provide a coordinated response through ambulance provider and first responder fire personnel

Existing volunteer fire companies and reserve firefighters would remain an integral part of the contractual fire protection services. Many of the Volunteer fire stations are owned and operated by private non-profit corporations. These corporations could continue to exist and support the volunteer effort. They will also provide secondary support apparatus and station coverage in the rural communities, when requested. Some communities with volunteer fire companies will not have the benefit of fulltime fire personnel due to the limited emergency response needs and remote locations. It is anticipated that an active countywide reserve program with company officers will in time augment the existing volunteer workforce in specific rural communities. A volunteer/reserve firefighter association should be created in the near future to allow communication to occur from the general volunteer/reserve membership to CDF and the OFW.

#### **IV. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

##### **A. Governance**

If LAFCO named the County as successor to the fire agencies and organizations in Phase I, one boundary should be created to encompass all fire jurisdictions. In that respect, per LAFCO direction and intent, all existing districts and service areas should be dissolved by LAFCO and replaced by activation of latent fire and EMS powers within County Service Area (CSA) 135 (Regional Communications System) or another CSA. All Phase I fire agencies, including volunteer fire companies in unserved areas, would be incorporated within CSA 135 or other CSA. The latent powers would not be activated within cities or fire districts that are not part of the Phase I fire agencies, as identified by LAFCO. However, as mentioned in the preceding section, it may not be necessary to dissolve existing fire protection districts in partnership with the County, as long as regional fire cooperation continues.

The existing advisory board of CSA 135 would need to be evaluated for effectiveness and modification to meet the new obligations of the CSA. The advisory board may need to be recreated to include all Phase I fire and

communication needs or if possible, a second advisory board should be established for all fire matters within the fire and EMS jurisdiction of CSA 135. If a second advisory board is possible, this board should consist of five or more appointed members to represent all affected areas. This advisory board would act much like the current Planning Commission in managing CSA affairs in cooperation with County OFW (DPLU-Fire) staff. The Board of Supervisors will remain the governing body for the new or existing CSA 135 and its advisory board. The Board of Supervisors shall maintain the right to intervene and change any course of action taken by the advisory board at anytime. The Board of Supervisors shall appoint members to the advisory board and determine the appropriate number of appointed positions to be made by each elected Board member. The Board of Supervisors may appoint two elected Board members to serve on this new advisory board. The current LAFCO Fire and EMS Task Force may be replaced with this new CSA Board. This would be an efficient transition, especially if LAFCO deems that Phase II may not be realistic or is best served by a Joint Powers Agreement or by Phase II agencies voluntarily joining the CSA for fire protection services.

Community advisory groups should be created by region to make recommendations to the advisory board on fire and EMS matters. The regional boundaries for these advisory groups can be similar to existing Planning Groups. Appointments to these groups can be made by the Board of Supervisors or by election.

## **1. Facilities**

Currently, a varied range of interests own fire stations and apparatus. Within fire districts, the fire district owns the stations and apparatus, as a public entity. CDF, also a public entity, owns their stations and apparatus. The volunteer fire companies are not public agencies; rather they are private non-profit corporations. Ownership of the fire stations and apparatus varies by agency. Private corporations own some of the stations and apparatus, while the County of San Diego owns others. In some cases there is dual title to the apparatus.

The stations and apparatus that are currently owned by the private corporations could continue to be owned by the non-profit. These non-profits would continue to be responsible for maintenance and other costs associated with ownership. Likewise, the County will maintain those stations and apparatus that are owned by the County. If a Fire District were dissolved then those assets would become County assets and be maintained by the County. The existing District budget would be applied to maintaining the transferred assets. The basic premise is that if it is public money, then it is a public asset.

## **2. Ambulance Service**

It is recommended that all Exclusive Operating Areas (EOA's) remain in place. All EMS management for the EOA's should be moved from the existing districts or other fire entities in Phase I and be transferred to the County DPLU –OFW or

HHSA, unless by mutual agreement between the County and a remaining fire protection district, that the FPD shall retain that responsibility. The County Board of Supervisors will determine when the County DPLU-OFW or HHSA will assume EOA's. The OFW will be responsible to administer all DPLU fire contracts, as well as existing fire protection and EMS contracts, as required of fire protection districts or CSA 's today, if assigned by the Board of Supervisors. No change is proposed for the existing practice of the Health and Human Services Agency – Emergency Services Division (HHSA-ESD) to establish recognition and approve EOA's. The OFW will work with the HHSA-ESD and assume management/supervision of operations and contracts with the service provider/contractor, as appropriate. The service provider can be a private ambulance company as it exists in some areas today or the service provider can be the CSA fire agency via a contractual arrangement.

## **B. Phasing Plan and Participating Agencies**

In order to improve the emergency response service in the entire unincorporated area of the County, basic steps in reorganization must be implemented. Some other choices may be considered optional tasks to improve service, but are not a requirement for improved success for emergency service delivery. The County has a Fire Enhancement Program in place that can be built upon through several steps or options. Dissolving all proposed Phase One departments per LAFCO's original course of action is certainly a way to ensure maximum success. However, through a blended and less intrusive approach to reorganization, service levels can be improved through a continuous phased approach to include agencies for future membership consideration. This requires continuous evaluation and reporting of success to both LAFCO and the County. Partnerships can be created in a voluntary manner in many cases, but occasionally difficult decisions deemed unfavorable to some fire agencies may ultimately need to prevail. Such actions would only be required; if fire service evaluations indicate service levels in uninvolved Phase I departments are not meeting expectations. A combination of steps may be acted upon by policy makers at their discretion.

### **1. Phasing Concepts - Option 1**

#### **STEP 1 (Year 1 Proposed)**

All unserved areas and underserved Volunteer Fire Company communities in the unincorporated portions of the County will become part of one CSA (CSA 135 possibly).

Create and appoint a regional advisory board for the Fire portion of the CSA and the accompanying sub groups of the advisory board.

All existing CSA's in the LAFCO and County Phase 1 area are replaced and become part of the new CSA (CSA 135 possibly).

All existing Fire Protection Districts that are part of the existing partnership or future partnership with the County remain in place and will continue to work with the County Program (OFW or DPLU – Fire).

After one full year of implementation, the County staff (OFW or DPLU-Fire) through the advisory committee will report to LAFCO and the Board of Supervisors on success and difficulties with the new CSA program.

Any fire protection district may choose to become part of the CSA, if they request such action of LAFCO. Costs for dissolution and annexation should be borne by the County.

A mandatory report and recommendations on the new CSA Program will be completed by County Staff (OFW or DPLU-Fire) for LAFCO and the Board of Supervisors. Recommendations can be to have the CSA and partnerships remain in place as they exist due to desired success, or the recommendations can lead to Step 3 if the program is deemed unsuccessful and does not meet the desired intent of LAFCO or the Board of Supervisors.

#### **STEP 2 (As required)**

By fire protection district desire or by action of the Board of Supervisors and LAFCO, existing Phase One Fire Protection Districts would be dissolved and become part of the CSA (Proposed CSA 135).

County Staff (OFW or DPU-Fire) shall continue to provide annual reports to LAFCO and the Board of Supervisors on the success of the CSA Program. County Staff shall make recommendations for success or change based on evaluation of service.

County Staff (OFW or DPLU-Fire) shall prepare a critical report on the operation of the new CSA (probable CSA 135). An outside agency may be considered to work with staff or independently to prepare this report. In the event the CSA is not performing to expectations, County Staff will make recommendations in their annual report that considerations should be made for a stronger level of service, which could include creation of a new fire protection district or County Fire Agency.

#### **STEP 3 (As required)**

LAFCO should examine Phase II agencies and the County for operational success and consideration for service delivery improvement. The evaluation could lead to discussions leading to allow Phase II agencies to remain in place or to consider more options for reorganization involving those districts.

## 2. Phasing Concepts - Option 2

LAFCO to implement original plan for reorganization, as set forth by Board of Supervisors. (Formation of a new Regional Fire Protection District).

### **V. PROPOSED ENHANCEMENT**

LAFCO and the County should consider creating the "Office of the Fire Warden" and this office will hire limited additional staff to support administration needs. A total of four or five permanent positions are anticipated for hiring, along with one student worker. The new Classifications within the OFW are: Administrative Analyst I, Fire Code Specialist, Fleet/Facilities/Equipment Officer and one unnamed support position for contractual compliance. The cost for County OFW positions are not identified in this proposal.

LAFCO and the County should consider expanding contracting for fire services with CDF. The focus of this operational proposal is to improve the unserved and underserved areas of the County, as defined by ISO class. Those areas of the County that fall below an ISO classification of 7 are the specific focus. Specifically they are the areas with an 8, 9 or 10 rating. **If ISO ratings (Grading Schedule) are improved due to assured engine company response, the emergency medical response will be improved at the same time.** Departments with existing ISO ratings of 7 or better will receive improved emergency response and coordination through a stronger regional organizational structure whether formally or informally. A more expansive and defined Command and Control process will be set forth in all cases. Creation of a single point of governance along with support of Volunteer Companies and ensuring a year-round career presence will meet this goal. Opportunities to accomplish this goal exist with CDF.

The funding for the Office of the Fire Warden may be made in one appropriation or in a Phased allocation.

Advantages to phasing are:

- Hiring new personnel can be better accommodated by the contractor.
- A reserve firefighter academy can be established utilizing existing facilities.
- Reserve firefighter recruitment may begin and training can be offered on an academy style basis over a period of time.
- An inventory and audit of resources and budgets, including debt service, can be completed prior to a final implementation.
- Funding by the County may be spread over two or three years.(Two is recommended for phasing)

Disadvantages to phasing are:

- Funding impacts are not fully known, if appropriated over multiple fiscal years.
- Complete implementation would not be targeted for a one year period.

- The complete reorganization would take longer for some fire agencies compared to other agencies.
- Volunteer fire companies would not receive maximum support by the County in the earliest amount of time.

## **VI. FUNDING REQUEST FOR THE ENTIRE PROPOSAL**

The County has already allocated \$8.53 million toward the Fire Enhancement Program. Additional funding required to complete enhancement for all Phase I fire agencies has a cost of \$4.5 Million. Staffing will be accomplished by establishing 3 persons per engine utilizing permanent CDF personnel and reserve/volunteer firefighters.

A general breakdown of planned improvement requiring funding is as follows:

Borrego Springs FPD: Add permanent battalion chief + engine staff	\$771,191
East County FPD: Add engine staffing	\$900,000
South/East County Area: New Division Chief and Battalion Chief	\$376,435
Warner Springs CDF: New Schedule A (requires engine)*	\$619,978
CDF Mt. Woodson: New Amador Agreement	\$191,959
CDF Support Staff (Administration/Operations)	\$389,000
Reserve Staffing Costs (Stipend)	\$1,000,000
Training and Facility Operations/ Maintenance Cost	<u>\$251,437</u>
TOTAL	\$4,500,000

Total New Funds Required = \$4.5 Million\*

Current	\$8,530,000
Total	\$13,030,000

\*NOTE: An additional cost for the new DPLU-OFW staff is required and is not identified as part of the Total New Funds listed above. Funding may be required for an engine.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

There are five elements of an emergency: event, response, recovery, mitigation and prevention. Likewise, there are five elements in the fire problem within our County. **Events** will always occur regardless of how hard we try and prevent them from happening. The **response** is the operations portion of the emergency delivery system. **Recovery** is the actions necessary for a return to normalcy as before the event.

**Mitigation** is the action taken to permanently eliminate or reduce the long-term risk to human life, property and function from hazards. Fire **prevention** is the activity directed at reducing fire occurrence; includes public education, law enforcement, personal contact, and reduction of fire hazards and risks.

In order to address the fire problem in this region, these elements need to be applied. Prevention, mitigation and recovery are all **land use related activities**. These land use activities are all found within the Land Use and Environmental Group (LUEG) of the County of San Diego. Additionally, these activities support fire operations by reducing risk to fire fighters and citizens. Vegetation modification/clearance, automatic fire sprinklers and enhanced building construction may be used to mitigate the requirement of a fourth person on an engine.<sup>3</sup> A coordinated approach between planning and response will make our county a safer place to live.

In an effort to minimize costs and enhance service, one needs to look at what is in place today and improve upon it. Rather than create an entirely new organization, utilizing existing organizations and infrastructure would save time and money. The County of San Diego has all the phases of government in place and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection has the operational elements of fire protection in place. Having each agency do what they do best through contracts and partnerships promotes a high probability of success.

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<sup>3</sup> NFPA 1710



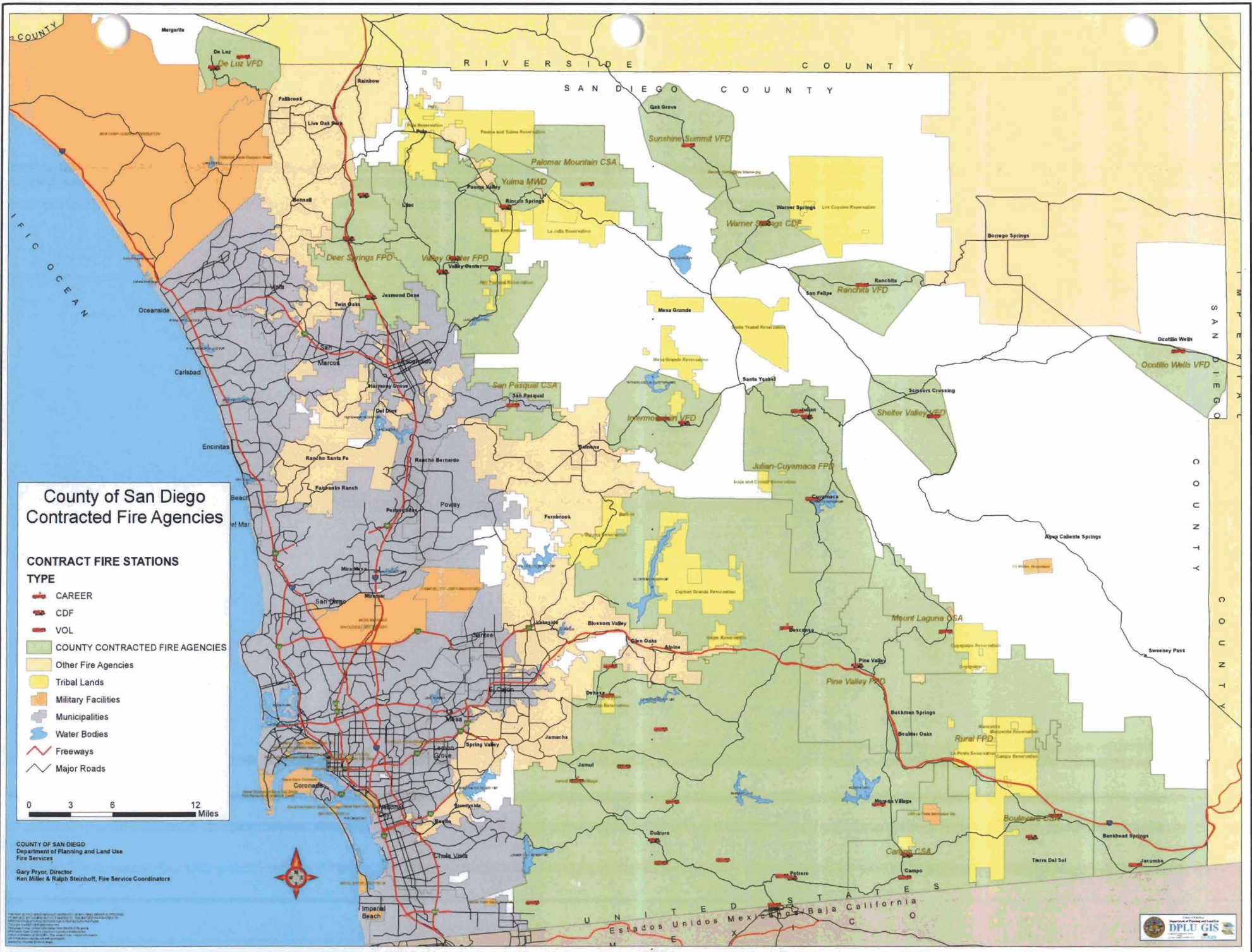
## Fire Facilities Inventory Within Phase 1 Area

Agency	Volunteer Stations	Full Time Stations
Sunshine Summit	1	
Ranchita	1	
Ocotillo Wells	1	
Intermountain	1	
DeLuz	1	
Shelter Valley	1	
CSA 107 Elfin Forest	1	
CSA 109 Mt Laguna	1	
CSA 110 Palomar Mt	1	
CSA 111 Boulevard	1	
CSA 112 Campo	1	
CSA 113 San Pasqual	1	
CSA 115 Pepper Drive	0	
East County FPD		2
Deer Springs FPD		2
Julian-Cuyamaca FPD	2	
Borrego Springs FPD		1
Pine Valley FPD	1	
Ramona MWD		3
Valley Center FPD		2
Yuiama MWD	0	
Rural		
Sta 63 Lawson Valley	1	
Sta 64 Donovan		1
Sta 66 Jamul		1
Sta 67 Otay Mesa	0	
Sta 75 Dehesa	1	
Sta 76 Harbison Cyn	1	
Sta 77 Deerhorn	1	
Sta 64 Lee Valley	1	
Sta 78 Dulzura	1	
Sta 79 Tecate	1	
Sta 80 Potrero	1	
Sta 82 Lake Morena	1	
Sta 85 Descanso		1
Sta 88 Jacumba	1	
Totals	25	13

## Fire Facilities Inventory Within Phase 1 Area

California Department of Forestry	Amador Stations	Seasonal Stations	Camp	Air Base
Rainbow			1	
Red Mt		1		
DeLuz	1			
Miller	1			
Valley Center	1			
Rincon	1			
San Marcos		1		
Puerta La Cruz			1	
Ramona		1		
Witch Creek	1			
Warner Springs	1			
LaCima			1	
Monte Vista		1		
Flinn Springs		1		
Julian		1		
Cuyamaca		1		
McCain			1	
Dulzura	1			
Potrero	1			
Lyons Valley		1		
Campo	1			
White Star	1			
Air Attack				
Ramona				1
Gillespie				1
Fallbrook				1
Totals	10	8	4	3
US Forest Service	14 Stations			
Tribal	10 Stations			
Total Fire Stations all types	80			
Camps	4			
Air Attack	3			

\* CDF currently staffing seasonal stations during winter.



### County of San Diego Contracted Fire Agencies

**CONTRACT FIRE STATIONS  
TYPE**

- CAREER
- CDF
- VOL
- COUNTY CONTRACTED FIRE AGENCIES
- Other Fire Agencies
- Tribal Lands
- Military Facilities
- Municipalities
- Water Bodies
- Freeways
- Major Roads

0 3 6 12 Miles

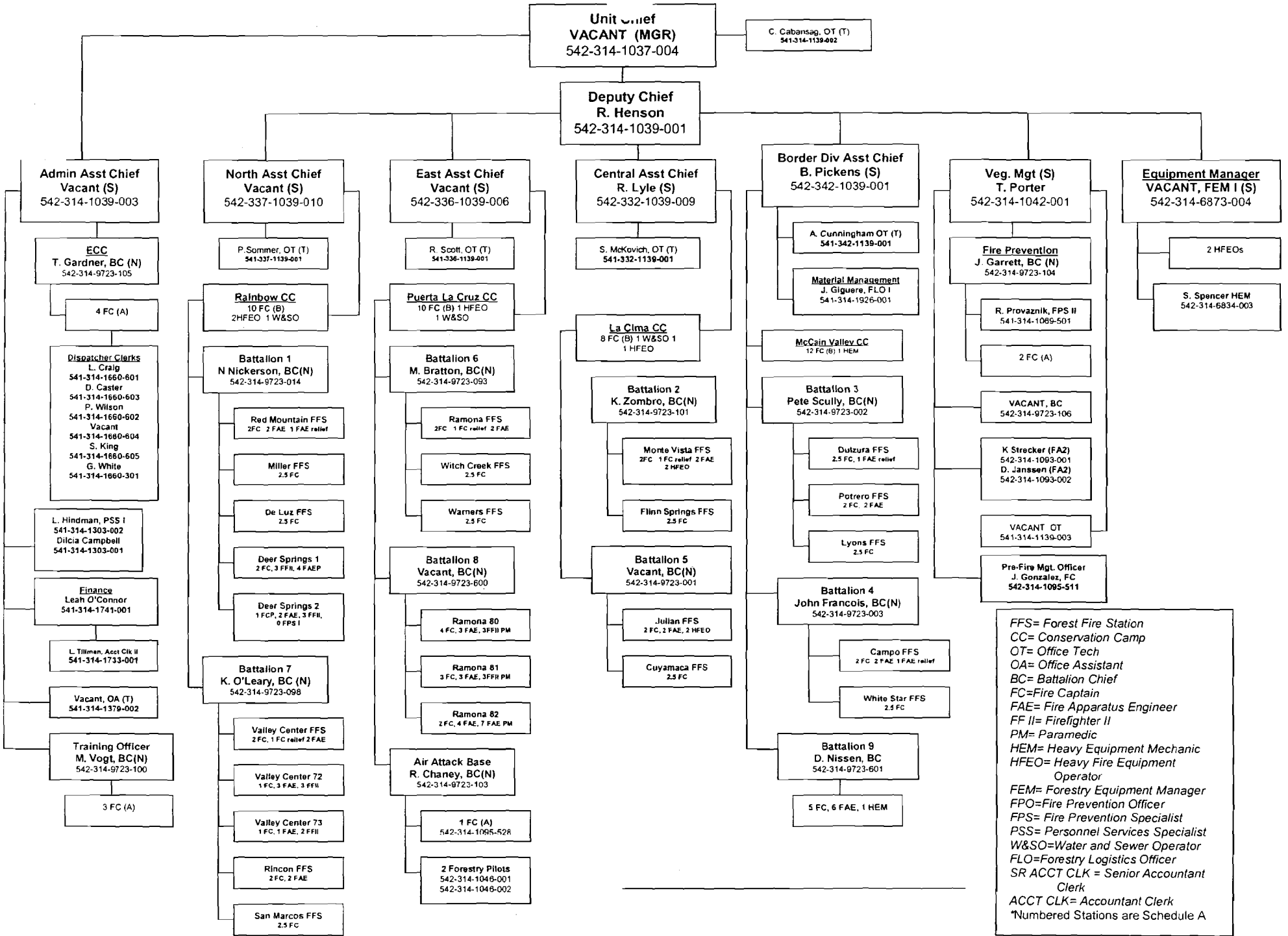
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
Department of Planning and Land Use  
Fire Services

Gary Pryor, Director  
Ken Miller & Ralph Steinhoff, Fire Service Coordinators



California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection  
 Organization Chart  
 San Francisco Unit

Current 12/18/06



FFS= Forest Fire Station  
 CC= Conservation Camp  
 OT= Office Tech  
 OA= Office Assistant  
 BC= Battalion Chief  
 FC=Fire Captain  
 FAE= Fire Apparatus Engineer  
 FF II= Firefighter II  
 PM= Paramedic  
 HEM= Heavy Equipment Mechanic  
 HFEO= Heavy Fire Equipment Operator  
 FEM= Forestry Equipment Manager  
 FPO=Fire Prevention Officer  
 FPS= Fire Prevention Specialist  
 PSS= Personnel Services Specialist  
 W&SO=Water and Sewer Operator  
 FLO=Forestry Logistics Officer  
 SR ACCT CLK = Senior Accountant Clerk  
 ACCT CLK= Accountant Clerk  
 \*Numbered Stations are Schedule A

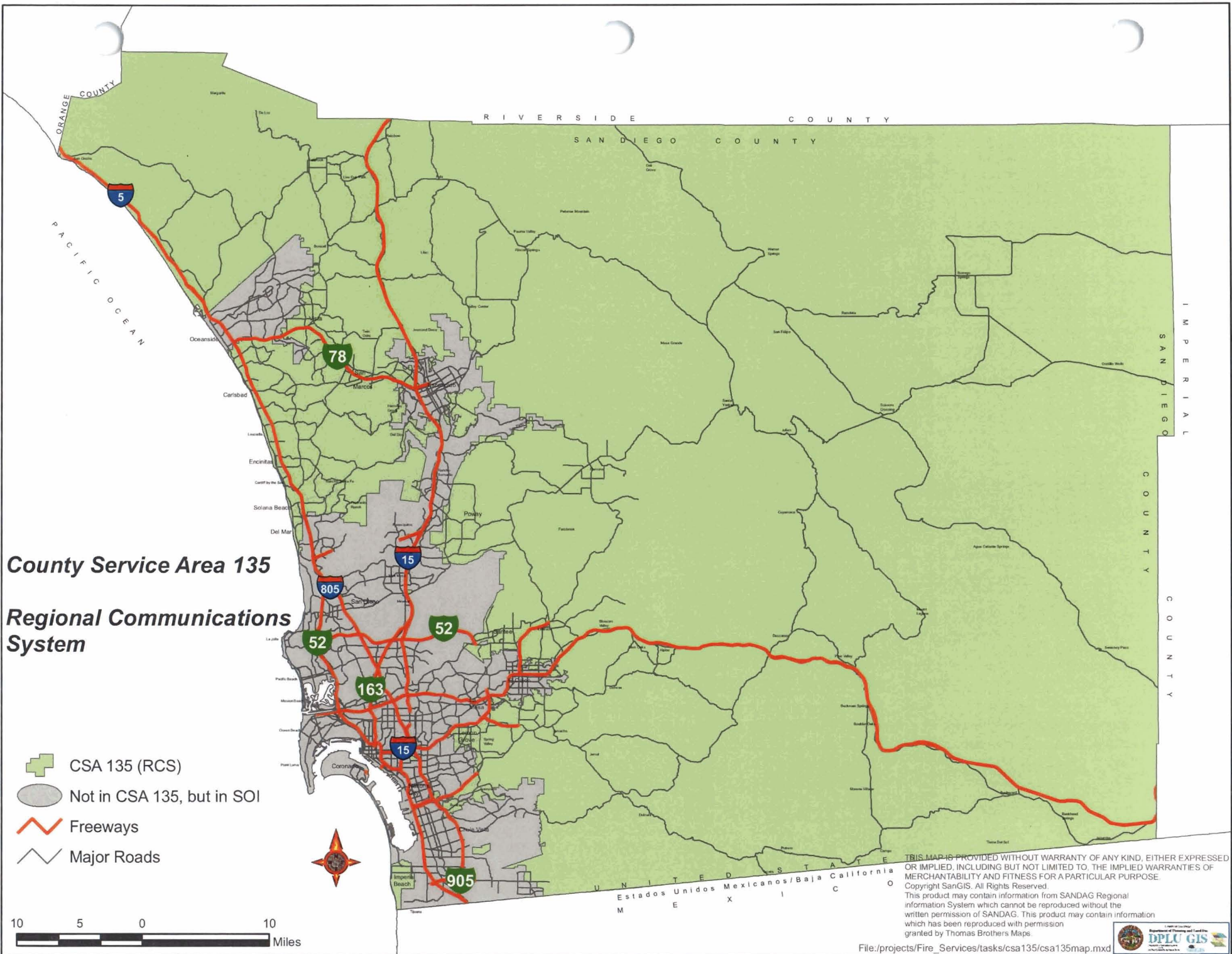
# SAN DIEGO UNIT

2249 Jamacha Road  
 El Cajon, California 92019  
 Phone (619) 590-3100 Fax (619) 590-3106  
**Kevin Eggleston, Acting Unit Chief**

Rev 11/9/06 (MVU Stations Camps)

<p><b>DIV 7 Rainbow CC</b>  <b>Bill Clayton</b>, Asst Chief                  8215 Rainbow Heights Rd                  Fallbrook, CA 92028                  (760) 728-7492/7721                  Fax 728-7732                  Female Camp                  Pauli Sommer OT</p>	<p><b>DIV 6 Puerta la Cruz CC</b>                  , Asst Chief                  32363 Highway 79                  Warner Springs, 92086                  (760) 782-3559/3669                  Fax 782-2762                  Female Camp                  Rebecca Scott, OT</p>	<p><b>DIV 5 LaCima CC</b>  <b>Randy Lyle</b>, Asst Chief                  15108 Sunrise Highway                  Julian, CA 92036                  (760) 765-0140                  Fax (760) 765-3080                   Sandy McKovich OT</p>	<p><b>DIV 4 Mc Cain CC</b>  <b>Bruce Pickens</b>, Asst Chief                  P O Box 1560                  Boulevard, CA 91905                  (619) 766-4412                  Fax 766-4483/766-9052(cdc)                   Akilah Cunningham-Harris                  OT</p>	
<p><b>Batt 1 RED MOUNTAIN <u>Div 7</u> BC Ned NICKERSON</b>                  3660 E. Mission Road                  Fallbrook CA 92028                  (760) 728-1323                  Fax (760) 731-2283</p>	<p><b>DeLuz Station</b>                  39431 DeLuz Road                  Fallbrook, CA 92028                  (760) 728-2422                  Fax 728-1294</p>	<p><b>Miller Station</b>                  9127 W Lilac Rd                  Escondido CA 92025                  (760) 728-8532                  Fax 728-0621</p>	<p><b>Deer Springs Station 1 A</b>                  8709 Circle R Drive                  Escondido, CA 92026                  (760) 749-8001                  Fax 749-6572                  Louise Gregg</p>	<p><b>Deer Springs Station 2 A</b>                  1321 Deer Springs Rd                  San Marcos, CA 92069                  (760) 741-5512                  Fax 741-5818 Call first</p>
<p><b>Batt 2 MONTE VISTA – <u>Div 5</u> BC Kelly ZOMBRO</b>                  2249 Jamacha Rd                  El Cajon CA 92019                  (619) 590-3100                  Fax 590-3106</p>	<p><b>Flinn Springs Station</b>                  9711 Flinn Springs Rd                  El Cajon, CA 92021                  (619) 443-7121                  Fax 443-6178</p>			
<p><b>Batt 3 DULZURA <u>Div 4</u> BC Pete SCULLY</b>                  17304 Highway 94                  Dulzura, CA 91917                  (619) 468-3391                  Fax 468-3276</p>	<p><b>Potrero Station</b>                  25130 Highway 94                  Potrero, CA 91963                  (619) 478-5544                  Fax 478-2452</p>	<p><b>Lyons Valley Station</b>                  17759 Skyline Truck Tr                  Jamul, CA 91935                  (619) 468-3435                  Fax 468-3916</p>		
<p><b>Batt 4 CAMPO <u>Div 4</u> BC John FRANCOIS</b>                  31577 Highway 94                  Campo CA 91906.                  (619) 478-5516                  Fax 478-2439</p>	<p><b>White Star Station</b>                  1684 Tierra Del Sol Rd                  Boulevard, CA 91905                  (619) 766-4533                  Fax 766-4215</p>			

<b>Batt 5 JULIAN <u>Div 5</u> BC VACANT</b> 1587 Highway 78 Julian CA 92036 (760) 765-0511 Fax 765-0559	<b>Cuyamaca Station</b> 13650 Highway 79 Julian, CA 92036 (760) 765-0085 Fax 765-0423	
<b>Batt 6 RAMONA <u>Div 6</u> BC Mike BRATTON</b> 16310 Highway 67 Ramona, Ca 92065 (760) 789-1150 Fax 789-8781	<b>Witch Creek Station</b> 27330 Highway 78 Ramona, CA 92065 (760) 789-1448 Fax 789-6934	<b>Warner Springs Station</b> 31049 Highway 79 Warner Springs, CA 92086 (760) 782-3560 Fax 782-3541
<b>Batt 7 VALLEY CENTER <u>Div 7</u> Kevin O'LEARY</b> <b>Valley Center Station 1 (CDF)</b> 14946 Vespar Road Valley Center, CA 92082 (760) 749-1702 Fax 749-7632	<b>Valley Center Station 72</b> <b>VCFPD A</b> 28234 Lilac Rd Valley Center CA 92082 (760) 751-7603 Fax 749-3892	<b>Valley Center Station 73</b> <b>VCFPD A</b> 28205 N Lake Wohlford Rd Valley Center, CA 92082 (760) 751-7605 Fax 749-2207
	<b>Rincon Fire Station</b> 16971 Highway 76 Pauma Valley, CA 92061 (760) 742-3243 Fax 742-1636	<b>San Marcos Station</b> 236 Pico Avenue San Marcos, CA 92069 (760) 744-0402 Fax 744-1473
<b>Batt 8 RAMONA MWD <u>Div 6</u> Mike VOGT</b> <b>Station 80 A</b> 829 San Vicente Road Ramona, CA 92065 (760) 789-8914/788-2222 Fax 788-6017	<b>Station 81 A</b> 24462 San Vicente Rd Ramona, CA 92065 (760) 789-9465/788-2229 Fax 788-0713	<b>Station 82 A</b> 3410 Dye Road Ramona, CA 92065 (760) 789-0107/788-2269 Fax 788-7481
<b>Batt 9 RURAL FPD Dave NISSEN</b> <b>Station 66 A</b> 14145 Hwy 94 Jamul, CA 91935 (619) 669 6580 Fax (619) 669-1674	<b>Station 85 A</b> P.O. Box 336 9718 River Road Descanso, CA 91916 (619) 445-4731 Fax (619) 445-6152	
<b>RAMONA AIR ATTACK BC Ray CHANEY</b> 2498 Montecito Road Ramona, CA 92065 (760) 789-1370 F 788-9634	<b>HELITACK BASE</b> Gillespie Helitack Base 1745 North Marshall Ave El Cajon, CA 92020 (619) 258-1397 Fax 258-7468	<b>HELITACK BASE</b> Fallbrook Helitack Base County Airport-Fallbrook Fallbrook, CA 92028 (760) 723-6050 Fax 723-3681



**County Service Area 135**

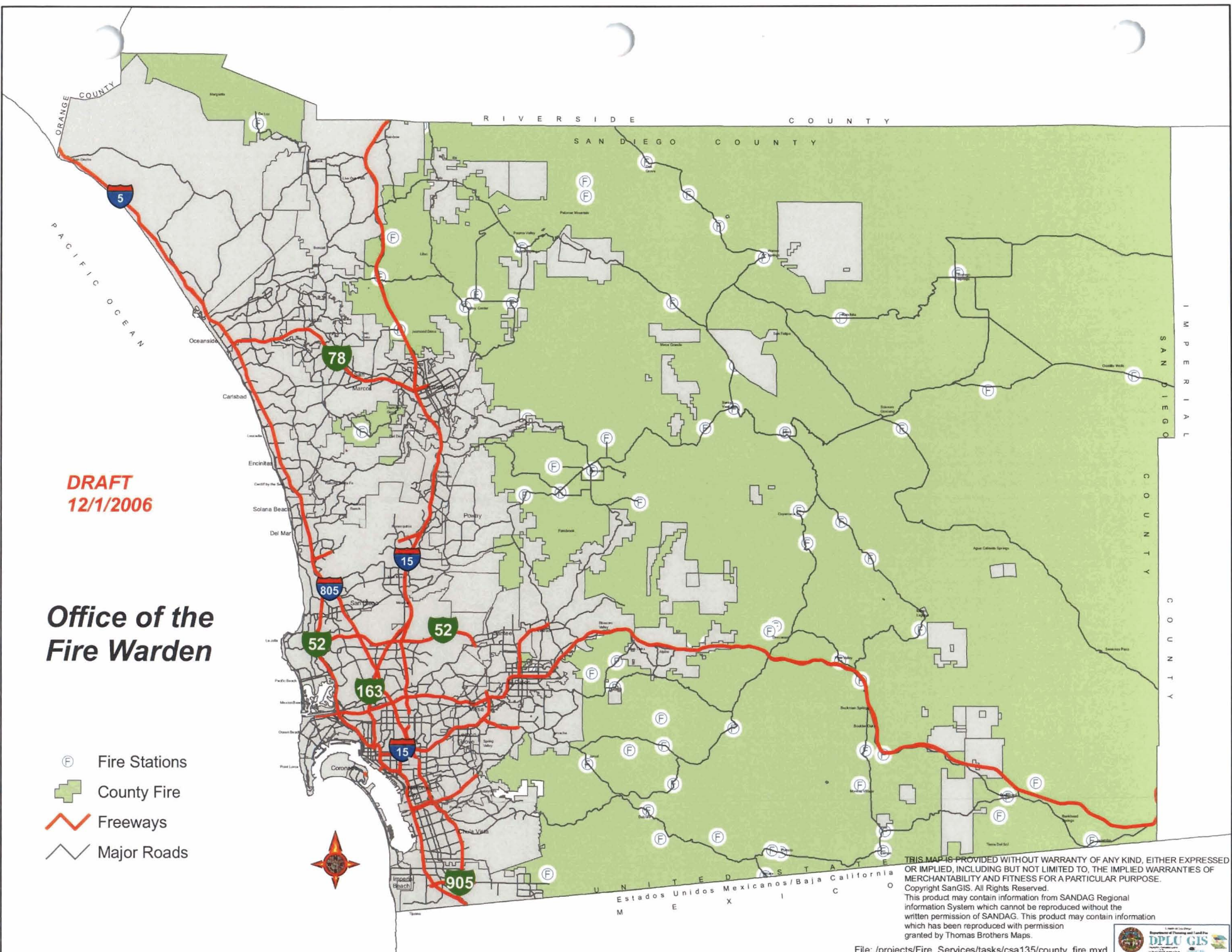
**Regional Communications System**

-  CSA 135 (RCS)
-  Not in CSA 135, but in SOI
-  Freeways
-  Major Roads







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**DRAFT**  
**12/1/2006**

**Office of the  
Fire Warden**

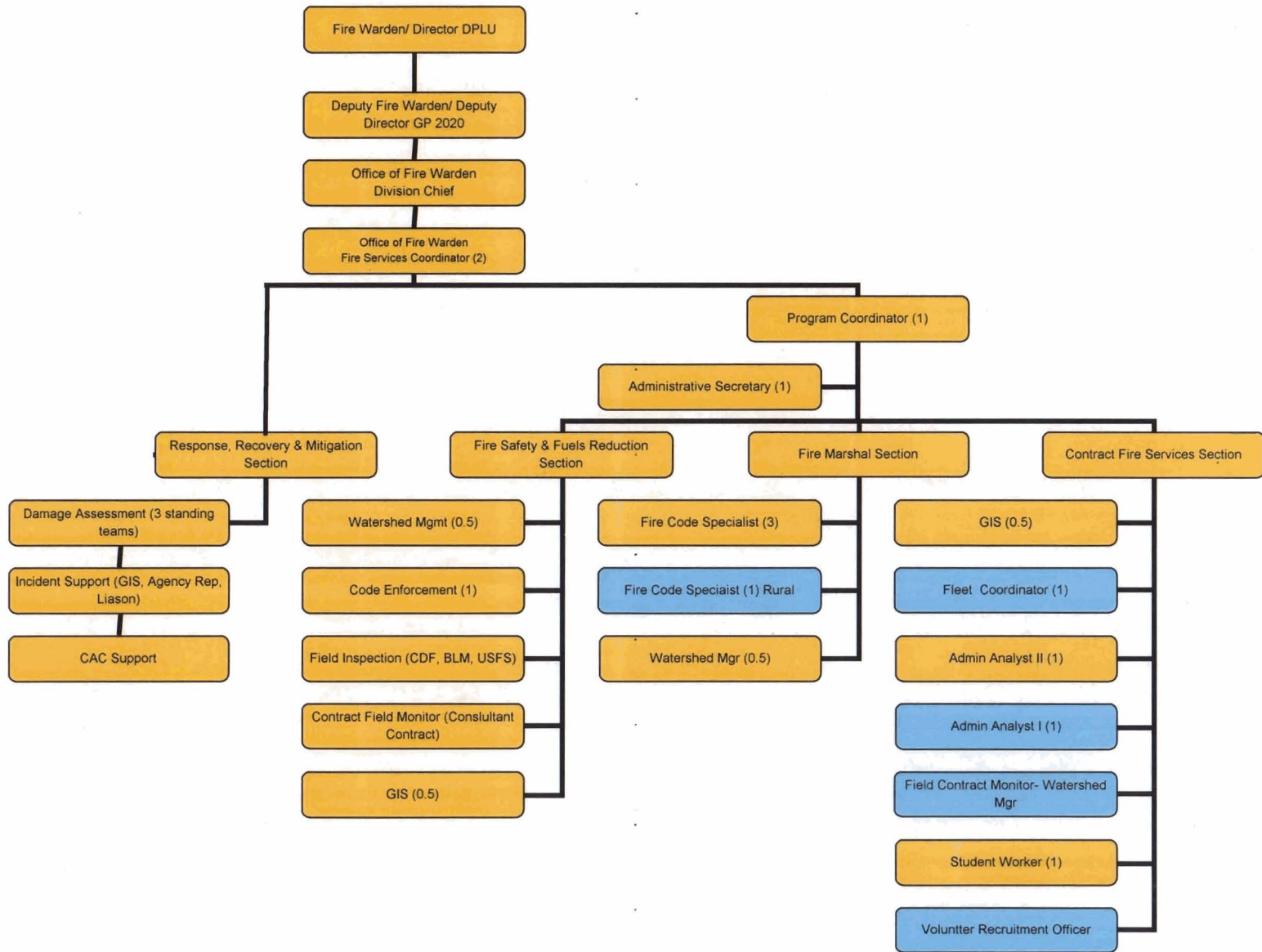
-  Fire Stations
-  County Fire
-  Freeways
-  Major Roads



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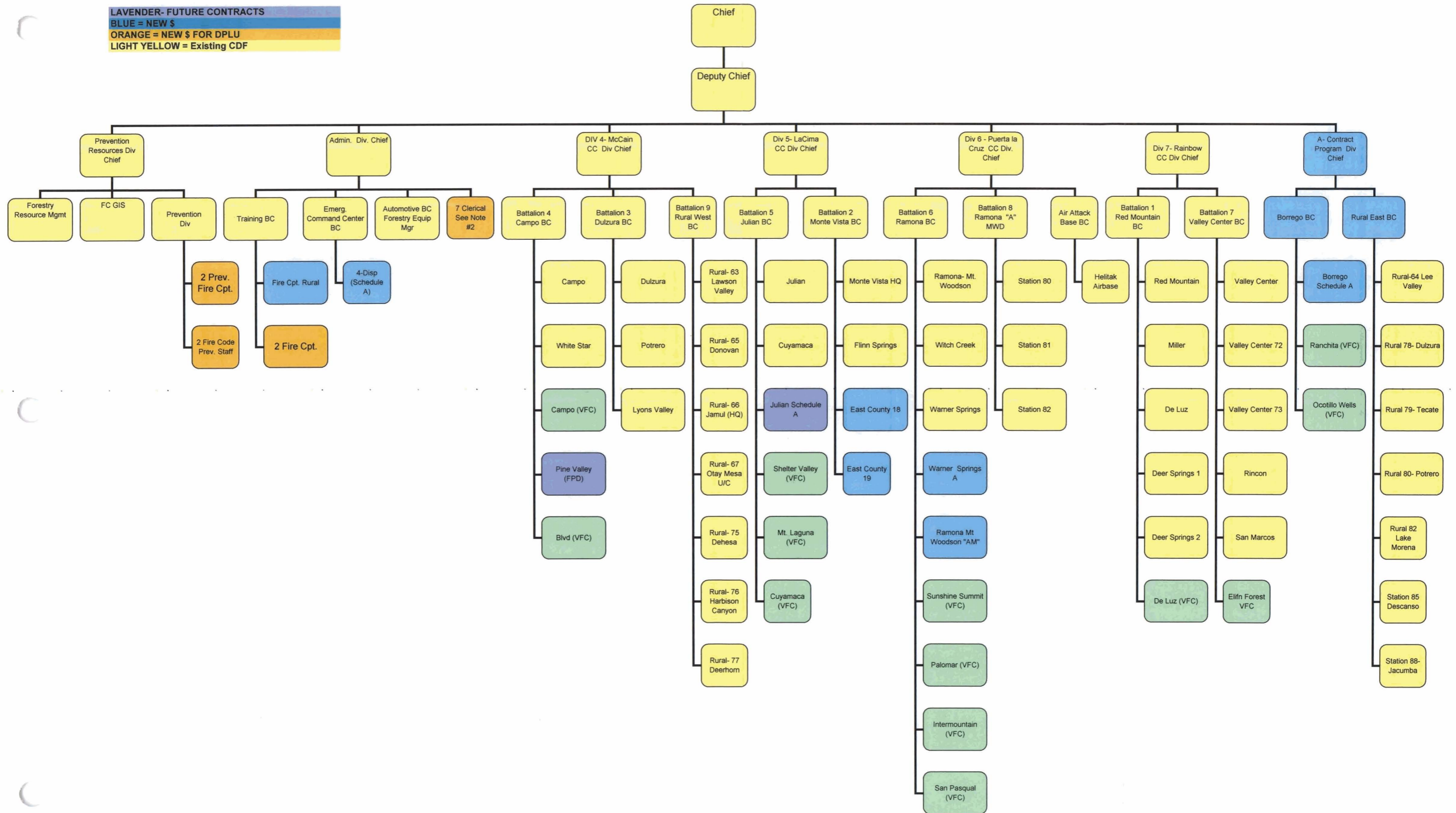


# County Department of Planning and Land Use Proposed Staffing- Fire Services



PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL CHART - FIRE

LAVENDER- FUTURE CONTRACTS  
 BLUE = NEW \$  
 ORANGE = NEW \$ FOR DPLU  
 LIGHT YELLOW = Existing CDF





# LAFCO

1600 Pacific Highway • Room 452 • San Diego, CA 92101  
(619) 531-5400 • FAX (619) 557-4190

San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission

Website: [www.sdlafco.org](http://www.sdlafco.org)

## Chairman

November 17, 2006

Andrew L. Vanderlaan  
Public Member

## Vice Chairman

Bill Hom  
County Board of  
Supervisors

TO: Gary Pryor, Planning Director  
Department of Planning and Land Use (O650)

FROM: Michael D. Ott, Executive Officer  
Local Agency Formation Commission (A216)

## Members

Donna Frye  
Councilmember  
City of San Diego

SUBJECT: Options for providing structural fire protection and emergency medical services within the Phase I portion of unincorporated San Diego County

Dianne Jacob  
County Board of  
Supervisors

The enclosed questionnaire integrates DPLU's comments and suggestions for LAFCO's review of structural fire protection and emergency medical services in the unincorporated area. Thank you for a speedy turnaround of the draft questions.

Andrew J. Menshek  
Padre Dam  
Municipal Water District

Ron Morrison  
Councilmember  
City of National City

The forthcoming LAFCO micro report will present multiple options for consolidating structural fire protection and emergency medical services in the Phase I reorganization area. Because of the County's evolving program to subsidize structural fire protection services, activating the fire protection and emergency medical services functions of County Service Area (CSA) No. 135 and naming the County of San Diego as successor agency will be added to options under consideration.

Jud Pocklington  
South Bay Irrigation District

Betty Rexford  
Deputy Mayor  
City of Poway

## Alternate Members

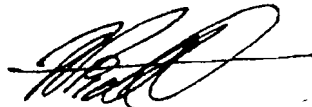
Christy Guerin  
Mayor  
City of Encinitas

The micro report will review the legal, fiscal, and operational components of the various options for governance. Your assistance in crafting inquiries that would provide a thorough understanding of the county-dependent models is invaluable and the time and effort, which is required by the compressed December 1, 2006 deadline, is appreciated.

Greg Cox  
County Board of  
Supervisors

Please have your staff contact Shirley Anderson if you have further questions or suggestions for LAFCO's review.

John S. Ingalls  
Santa Fe  
Irrigation District



MICHAEL D. OTT  
Executive Officer

Harry Mathis  
Public Member

Kevin Faulconer  
City of San Diego  
Representative

MDO:tjc

## Executive Officer

Michael D. Ott

cc: Ivan Holler, Deputy Director of Planning and Land Use  
Ken Miller, Fire Services Coordinator of Planning and Land Use  
Ralph Steinhoff, Fire Services Coordinator of Planning and Land Use

## Counsel

William D. Smith

**REORGANIZATION OF STRUCTURAL FIRE PROTECTION  
AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES  
IN UNINCORPORATED SAN DIEGO COUNTY—PHASE I**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

Please respond by December 1, 2006

**GOVERNANCE**

1. If LAFCO named the County as successor to the fire agencies and organizations included in Phase I of the reorganization, how would governance of a county program be structured? For example: Should special districts, which provide structural fire protection and emergency medical services, be dissolved and the responsibility for unincorporated area fire protection and emergency services transfer to the County?
2. Should special districts and volunteer organizations be left in place and the County (CDF) program expanded to further subsidize structural fire protection service? Under this scenario, how would emergency services be extended to unserved areas?
3. LAFCO will review at least two options for County-dependent governance of structural fire protection and emergency medical services within Phase I: (1) a County Service Area (CSA); and (2) an internal department of the County of San Diego. Please provide details of any additional governance options that you believe should be explored.

**OPERATIONS**

4. Describe the service area that should be included in a County program. What justification should be used for including or excluding selected areas?
5. The goal of the current County program is to lower ISO ratings? If delivery of emergency services became a county function, what emphasis would be placed on emergency medical services?
6. What would be required of the County if LAFCO dissolved the fire protection agencies and organizations within Phase I and transferred service responsibility to the County? For example, is current county expertise and staffing levels sufficient or would recruitment and training be required before the County would be able to assume responsibility for delivering emergency services? What would be the estimated cost implications to the County? What would the approximate timing be for assuming full responsibility?
7. Could EOA contracts be transferred to the County without requiring re-bid?

## **ADMINISTRATION**

8. Please provide an overview of how administration of County-delivered fire protection and emergency medical services would be structured. Please be specific about staffing requirements; plans for absorbing personnel from dissolved special districts; and the cost for administrative overhead. Estimate timing for developing a structure capable of fully administering Phase I services.

## **CONTRACTURAL ARRANGEMENTS**

9. Would emergency services be provided by County personnel or would the county contract with CDF as service provider?
10. Does CDF have available capacity to undertake additional contracts within Phase I? Has CDF indicated that it would engage in further Schedule A and Amador contracts within Phase I?
11. If CDF became the area contract service provider, how would dispatch services be provided and what would be the associated impacts on CDF? If adjustments to dispatch services were required, what is the estimated cost and timing to implement changes?
12. What impact would occur to the Heartland JPA, if unincorporated area dispatch services migrated from the Heartland JPA to CDF?
13. Address issues concerning current special district personnel. Identify current district personnel by classification, staff years, and total compensation, that would either be discharged or become County employees, or be absorbed by CDF? Indicate the approximate level at which the current employees would be assimilated by the County or CDF.
14. How would mutual and auto aid agreements with surrounding agencies be impacted if responsibility for providing emergency services were transferred to the County? Would a county department have the capacity to reciprocate fully through CDF contracts?
15. At the service levels being reviewed by the Commission, volunteer programs would contribute an estimated \$14 million dollars towards the operational cost of providing structural fire protection and emergency medical services within Phase I. Volunteer efforts also contribute an unknown amount to fund-raising, clerical, maintenance, and administrative functions. Would a county-administered emergency service system incorporate volunteer functions? How? Would CDF—if designated the contract service provider—integrate volunteer organizations into CDF operations? If volunteer organizations were disbanded, how would volunteer contributions be replaced?

**FISCAL**

16. Under a consolidated structure of Phase I agencies, voter-approved benefit fee revenue could not be available for system-wide use. Please explain how funds would be restricted to the area of origin within a county system?
17. What is the estimated cost to provide emergency services through CDF contract to replace seven fire protection districts; six county service areas; and the emergency service functions of four municipal water districts, plus the seven affected volunteer fire departments?
18. Would the County fund a uniform level of structural fire protection and emergency medical services in the unincorporated area—if revenues from special district property tax and voter approved benefit assessments were insufficient?
19. Debts and liabilities of dissolved agencies—as well as assets and revenues—would transfer to the County if the County were named successor service provider within the Phase I reorganization area. Issues such as resolving an estimated capital budget shortfall in the East County FPD would become a County task. Please comment on this matter.
20. LAFCO's approval of the fire agency reorganization proposal (Phase I) would be conditioned on providing the County with an opportunity to audit the financial records and review the affected facilities and apparatus. The purpose of this condition would be to enable the County to develop a strategic plan for assuming successor agency responsibilities. Please comment on this possible condition of LAFCO's approval and estimate an amount of time that should be given to the County to complete the audit and review.
21. If the reorganization of Phase I includes formation of a new regional FPD or CSA, LAFCO will establish a Gann (spending) limit for the new district. Every agency is compelled to operate within its Gann perimeter; accordingly, it is important that the spending limit be sufficient to support agency activities. Please provide an estimate for a Gann limit that would support the proposed level of fire protection and emergency medical services provided within a County structure.
22. Please provide an estimated budget for County-delivered structural fire protection and emergency medical services within the Phase I area.

**RETURN TO:**

Shirley Anderson, Chief Policy Research  
Local Agency Formation Commission  
1600 Pacific Hwy., Room 452  
San Diego, CA 92101  
MAIL STOP: A216



GARY L. PRYOR  
DIRECTOR



## County of San Diego

### DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND LAND USE

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December 1, 2006

Michael D. Ott, Executive Officer  
Local Agency Formation Commission  
1600 Pacific Highway Room 452  
San Diego, California 92101

#### LAFCO QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Dear Mr. Ott:

I am submitting the Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU) response to your questionnaire, as requested in your letter dated November 17, 2006. A separate proposal will be provided to your office next week that will outline a concept and provide detail on the alternative. The proposal will detail budget projections based on information DPLU has today. However, an audit of existing budgets will be required in the future to finalize an accurate budget.

We have not yet provided the budget detail per question 22 because final numbers need verification. Several areas need to be examined to identify true revenue and expenditures. However, the budget will be finalized for your review next week. DPLU will request a meeting to discuss the proposal once it is received. At that time, any requests for additional data and assistance from LAFCO will be considered to assure the best available information is utilized for the proposal.

We are pleased to work with you and LAFCO to complete the final "Micro Report". Should you have immediate questions prior to receiving the alternative proposal, please direct them to Ken Miller at (858) 694-2951. Questions may also be sent via email to [Kenneth.Miller@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Kenneth.Miller@sdcounty.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ivan Holler".

IVAN HOLLER, Deputy Director  
Department of Planning and Land Use

IH:km

Attachment: LAFCO Questionnaire Response

CC: Gary Pryor  
Ken Miller  
Ralph Steinhoff  
Shirley Anderson  
John Traylor  
John Goss  
Susan Quasarano

## RESPONSE TO LAFCO QUESTIONNAIRE

### GOVERNANCE

1. If LAFCO named the County as successor to the fire agencies and organizations in Phase I, one boundary should be created to encompass all fire jurisdictions. Ideally, per LAFCO direction and intent, all existing districts and service areas should be dissolved by LAFCO and replaced by activation of latent fire and EMS powers within County Service Area (CSA) 135 (Regional Communications System). All Phase I fire agencies, including volunteer fire companies in unserved areas, will be incorporated within CSA 135. The latent powers would not be activated within cities or fire districts that are not part of the Phase I fire agencies, as identified by LAFCO. The existing advisory board of CSA 135 would need to be evaluated for effectiveness and modification to meet the new obligations of the CSA. The advisory board will need to be recreated to include all Phase I fire and communication needs or if possible, a second advisory board should be established for all fire matters within the fire and EMS jurisdiction of CSA 135. If a second advisory board is possible, this board should consist of nine or eleven appointed members to represent all affected areas. The Board of Supervisors will remain the governing body for the new or existing CSA 135 and its advisory board. The Board of Supervisors shall appoint members to the advisory board and determine the appropriate number of appointed positions to be made by each elected Board member. The Board of Supervisors may appoint two elected Board members to serve on this new advisory board. It is suggested that each Board member have at least one appointment to this new advisory board. In the event a Board Member does not represent the affected area, consideration should be made to defer all other appointments to Board Members representing the affected communities in CSA 135. The current LAFCO Fire and EMS Task Force may be replaced with this new CSA Board. This would be an efficient transition, especially if LAFCO deems that Phase II may not be realistic or is best served by a Joint Powers Agreement or by Phase II agencies voluntarily joining the CSA for fire protection services.

It is recommended that all Exclusive Operating Areas (EOA's) remain in place and all EMS management for the EOA's be moved from the existing districts or other fire entities in Phase I and be transferred to the County. The County Board of Supervisors will create an Office of the Fire Warden (OFW) within the Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU). The OFW will be responsible to administer all DPLU fire contracts, as well as existing fire protection and EMS contracts, as required of fire protection districts or CSA 's today. The Health and Human Services Agency – Emergency Services Division (HHSA-ESD) will continue to establish recognition and approval of EOA's. The OFW will work with the HHSA-ESD and assume management/supervision of operations and contracts with the service provider/contractor. The service provider can be a

private ambulance company as it exists in some areas today or the service provider can be the CSA fire agency via a contractual arrangement.

2. A second alternative fire protection program that may be less controversial would be to leave existing fire protection districts and CSA's in place. Existing volunteer fire companies in the unserved areas would become part of a new or existing CSA, allowing collection of fire mitigation fees and property tax accrued for fire protection purposes. The Board of Supervisors remains the governing body for the CSA's. A fire advisory board would be established by the Board of Supervisors and should consist of seven appointed members. Each elected Board Member shall appoint one position to the advisory board. Two Elected Board Members may serve on the new advisory board. The County would continue to subsidize existing contracted agencies and expand contracts to all fire agencies within the Phase I program through the Office of the Fire Warden. This would continue to be a voluntary participation by agencies, as a fire agencies cannot be forced to participate in the existing fire program or future program without establishing a new parent organization with legal boundaries and powers.

This option does not improve Regional Fire Protection to a maximum degree. It does not meet the goals of LAFCO for reorganization or Proposition C either.

If agencies do not participate, a regional approach to fire protection services is limited in regional operations pertaining to emergency management, fleet replacement, communications and other operational considerations. An economy of scale leading to cost savings is not maximized, if all agencies do not join the program. This occurs because remaining fire district boards can control their own destiny with revenue they receive, rather than pooling purchases and expenditure where possible. However, overall costs could be similar with this option, as with a new or expanded CSA encompassing all Phase I fire agencies.

3. A third consideration for reorganization could be to build upon item 2 above and have fire protection districts remain in place. All existing CSA's will be dissolved and the existing volunteer fire companies in former CSA's and unserved areas become one CSA under CSA 135 or a new CSA. The Board of Supervisors remains the governing body for the CSA. A fire advisory board would be established by the Board of Supervisors and should consist of seven to nine appointed members. Each elected Board Member shall appoint one position to the advisory board. Two Elected Board Members may serve on the new advisory board. Any remaining appointments may be determined by the Board based on affected supervisorial districts. This approach brings unification in a legal and financial sense to the existing volunteer fire program in San Diego County. Fire districts would remain in place with the County, through the Office of the Fire Warden, continuing to support existing fire agency contracts and expand contracts to other non-participating fire districts within Phase I. The program again remains a voluntary program, but funding offers could encourage participation to allow fire protection services to be enhanced.

Again, if agencies do not participate, a regional approach to fire protection services is limited in regional operations pertaining to emergency management, fleet replacement, communications and other operational considerations. An economy of scale leading to cost savings is not maximized, if all agencies do not join the program. This occurs because remaining fire district boards can control their own destiny with revenue they receive, rather than pooling purchases and expenditure where possible. The costs for this operation would be similar to items 1 and 2 above. However, if agencies choose not to participate, then costs are reduced. This option provides a regional approach to fire protection closer to meeting the Item 1 option above, but it is not as effective regionally as Item 1. However, only one CSA advisory Board would be created for thirteen fire agencies to enhance regional fire response.

## **OPERATIONS**

4. The service area to be included in a County OFW Program should be all Phase I fire agencies. Options described in Items 1, 2 or 3 above would all have the same proposed boundaries, which include only unincorporated areas (including islands) that are not in the Phase II fire agency listing. Boundaries may be reduced if non-participating fire districts continue to not become part of the new regional program in some fashion. Justification to be excluded from participation in the program could be: annexation to a city or Phase II agency.

5. The existing County Fire Enhancement Program is targeting Insurance Services Office ratings to be lowered over time through improved fire responses. At the same time fire response improves, the emergency medical response improves an equal amount. An assumption has been made that if a trained engine company responds to a fire, that same engine company will respond to the emergency medical responses that are the majority of the fire service calls. Career personnel in the proposed programs will be trained to the Emergency Medical Technician level. Volunteer and reserve firefighters will be trained to the Advanced First Aid level with a goal to be trained as Emergency Medical Technicians. The County OFW would continue to improve EMS response by working with the contracting fire service and HHSA-ESD to eliminate duplication of costs and provide a coordinated response through ambulance provider and first responder.

6. The County Office of the Fire Warden and its contractor (CDF) would require six to twelve months to be fully operational in all contracted areas identified in Items 1, 2 or 3 above. Hiring or blanketing new personnel for the fire service requires a minimum amount of time to advertise, test, conduct background-checks and provide physicals prior to reporting to work. The County will require a minimum number of positions to complete the administration of potential new contracts. The costs for contracting with CDF and for new County OFW

positions are provided by separate document see Item 22 and County Proposal). The County OFW and its Contractor have sufficient background and expertise to complete the offering of full service protection in a contractual manner. DPLU through the OFW needs to work with HHSA-ESD to gain their support to move forward in the EOA field of operations to enhance EMS service.

7. It is anticipated that EOA contracts will be transferred to the County Office of the Fire Warden. It is understood that LAFCO has explored transfer of EOA's to a fire protection district and early indications are that the County HHSA-ESD Medical Director supports a transfer without requiring a rebid for service. This will take a concurrence of legal counsel and HHSA-ESD. Any former non-safety fire district personnel would become County employees, unless service can be transferred to a separate ambulance provider at a later date. This is not a preferred option, as some current district employees may become unemployed. There is the possibility that existing non-safety employees could be absorbed by a private ambulance company.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

8. County OFW-delivered fire protection and emergency medical services would be structured where the Office of the Fire Warden will be the "Contract Administrator" for all fire and EMS contracts. CDF will be the "contractor" to provide fire and first responder EMS service equivalent to or better than existing service provided today. Improved service delivery will be accomplished through increased staffing, strong administration and enhanced response coordination through dispatch services. Existing permanent fire "safety" personnel would be considered for blanketing (absorption) into permanent state service with CDF. Existing "non-safety" personnel would be absorbed by the County OFW and will work at existing work locations where possible. Some employee relocations may be required to enhance customer service delivery. Existing volunteer fire companies and reserve firefighters would remain an integral part of the contractual fire protection services. Volunteer and reserve firefighters will report to the paid CDF fire officer in a written chain-of-command and will provide immediate response on staffed engines when required. They will also provide secondary support apparatus and station coverage in the rural communities when requested. Some communities with volunteer fire companies will not have the benefit of fulltime fire personnel due to the limited emergency response needs and remote locations. It is anticipated that an active countywide reserve program will in time augment the existing volunteer workforce in specific rural communities.

The projected staffing needs are described by separate documentation that includes projected new funding. New administrative overhead will be required by the OFW and CDF. An organizational chart for the OFW and its relationship with CDF has been provided by separate document. It is anticipated that the

new OFW and CDF personnel could be fully operational within six to twelve months of approval by the Board of Supervisors. Some of the operational functions to be managed by CDF can be implemented in less time. It is anticipated that most County OFW positions can be implemented within six months or less.

## **CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS**

**9.** The County Office of the Fire Warden will contract with CDF for fire protection services in any area established by LAFCO or the Board of Supervisors.

**10.** CDF does have available capacity to undertake additional contracts within Phase I. CDF has indicated they are willing and able to engage in further Schedule A and Amador agreements. CDF has indicated that hiring new personnel will take some time to access hiring lists, interview and make appointments. CDF has also indicated that training of permanent personnel will be required. However, to implement staff hires expeditiously, CDF does have the ability to hire personnel on a "Limited Term" basis for immediate hire with permanent hire status being made at a later date. This hiring flexibility allows a more immediate hiring process to be implemented to meet the needs identified by any contractual option.

**11.** If CDF were the contract fire service provider, dispatch would be a function of CDF through their Emergency Command Center (ECC). The impacts on CDF would be to hire additional personnel to provide dispatcher coverage to the EM-D level. At least two dispatchers would be needed for the night shift (for 2.0 staffing 24/7) plus one dispatcher for vacation relief for day & night needs. Costs for dispatch services would be higher. A new CSA would need to have PERS retirement for State employees. Shift supervisors/Admin would require a slightly higher salary, but this would help with hiring and retaining more dispatchers. The estimated costs for increased dispatch services is estimated to range between \$260,000 and \$330,000 depending on the option the County Office of the Fire Warden exercises with concurrence of CDF.

CDF would utilize existing CDF hiring options and County hiring options to permanently fill new vacancies. This methodology would alleviate difficulties CDF has experienced in filling existing positions under the State system and open the door to more hiring opportunities through the County. The expectation would be that hiring could be more expeditious. A new CSA that contracts to CDF may create dispatch positions and move all CDF dispatchers to the new CSA. This could provide various classifications in the dispatch series ranging

from entry level personnel to senior dispatchers with commensurate pay scales and the ability to work and pay them as needed. This may be the best long-term approach to meet dispatch needs of an ECC.

Training at lone may or may not be available. Hopefully, new dispatchers will be sent to this CDF Training Facility, as these employees will be working in a CDF dispatch office and work within a Schedule A contract. If not, then they would have to get with either another CDF unit and place in them in their training academy or participate with other dispatcher centers in the county when they conduct their training. Dispatchers would still have to complete ROSS and CAD training with the state. (Unknown options at this time)

EMD would require additional software, cards and training for all ECC personnel. Costs to be attached separate for hard costs, unknown is for QI and overtime. This would also require additional supervision (making sure all Captains are fully trained and on the floor at all times), but if reports need to be checked each month then a contract with hospital or county EMS or have Medic Coordinator (would watch field medics and could oversee this portion of program).

The CDF ECC Chief would have an additional workload and supervisory responsibility with the additional contracting obligations. Consideration would be given to either have a full time 24/7 chief officer coverage, have an existing battalion chief assume some ECC coverage from Headquarters, or assign a lead Fire Captain as ECC Coverage and announce each day. A consideration should be made to either hire an additional Telecommunications Analyst 1 or county person that can attend radio meetings for the ECC, take care of all the Handie Talkies (HT) (each full time CDF employee will have their own= 225 Schedule B HT's) plus any Schedule A needs for CSA radios. Pagers, cell phones, towers and vaults could be assigned to this person. One possibility would be to hire a second ECC Chief. One ECC Chief would be operations (dispatch on the floor) and the other ECC Chief could be responsible for hardware (vaults and towers and HT's and cell phones and pagers and MDC's).

**12.** Heartland Communications would be impacted in negative ways, positive ways and in some cases no impact would be anticipated.

**NEGATIVE IMPACT:**

Heartland would most likely have to lay off one or two dispatchers or move some of the full time personnel to part time with the loss of income due to the reduced call intake.

Heartland agencies may need to pay a higher cost for dispatch to maintain their current EM-D status. These costs would be borne by the more affluent Phase II fire agencies.

## POSITIVE BENEFITS

A reduction in approximately 3,500 emergency dispatch calls will be realized, if CDF were the dispatch agency within a new CSA...

Heartland would be focused on one zone (their original dispatch areas) and would be more proactive with those calls.

This could mean a higher dispatcher to call ratio with the one zone.

Radios and communications plans would be focus on central area of county.

It is anticipated that some Heartland Dispatchers may show interest and migrate to job opportunities within CDF as state or OFW employees.

The existing Phase II Agencies within Heartland will receive more personal service through Heartland through a reduction in rural dispatch service communications.

The Phase II fire agencies can also continue to seek assistance from Indian Gaming Grant opportunities.

## NEUTRAL

Current Ambulance contracts (Julian Fire and Rural Paramedic w/AMR) could continue with Heartland if they wanted to ease the loss of income with the other departments. They would be some additional work with CDF to call for the units, but no more than currently.

**13. Issues concerning special district personnel.** "Non-safety" special district employees (i.e., Fire Marshals, clerical support) would become Office of the Fire Warden employees at their current work locations or where they best serve the needs of the community regarding customer need and land use development. These facilities are located in key locations to serve the public: El Cajon, Kearny Mesa and El Cajon. Existing permanent "safety" employees will have the opportunity to become permanent state employees in the appropriate firefighting classification within the CDF system. It is anticipated that classifications of Firefighter II, Fire Apparatus Engineer and Fire Captain will be the primary "safety" classifications to be considered for new hires and blanketing positions. The positions of Division Chief (1), Battalion Chief (2) and Dispatcher Clerk are also being considered. A separate table has been provided in the County OFW proposal that identifies all positions and costs associated with CDF providing expanded fire protection service by contract. The Associated salaries and total compensation are provided within said tables.

The County OFW will hire limited additional staff to support administration needs. A total of four or five permanent positions are anticipated for hiring, along with one student worker. The Classifications within the OFW are: Administrative Analyst I, Fire Code Specialist, Fleet/Facilities/Equipment Officer and one unnamed support position for contractual compliance. The cost for County OFW positions are also identified within the table included in the County OFW proposal.

**14.** Mutual and Automatic Aid agreements will be in effect and enhanced with the County Office of the Fire Warden and CDF in contractual partnership. CDF would assure that these agreements are in place and utilized in the appropriate response manner to maximize emergency response capabilities. CDF would reciprocate with local resources for structural response, as well as providing additional wildland land apparatus with structural equipment and personnel to provide a more uniform response standard.

**15.** A staffing goal of the County through the Office of the Fire Warden is to have three persons per engine. Staffing goals would be achieved through a combination of permanent, reserve and volunteer firefighters. A County OFW-administered emergency service system would incorporate volunteer functions as an integral part of the total emergency response system. Volunteer fire companies and reserve firefighters will be a part of the planned station coverage and dispatch response. Some volunteer fire stations would remain as volunteer fire stations with a goal to add firefighter reserves to the local volunteer fire company membership. CDF would be responsible to ensure that volunteers and reserve firefighters are well trained, equipped and dispatched, as part of all appropriate initial dispatch operations within the volunteer/reserve station assignment area. Volunteers and reserve firefighters will work at specific stations in an on call status or as a designated shift firefighter.

A volunteer/reserve firefighter association should be created in the near future to allow communication to occur from the general volunteer/reserve membership to CDF and the OFW. If volunteer organizations were disbanded, volunteer time and money equivalencies would need to be replaced with permanent fulltime personnel. The grand total value of volunteer and reserve employees is estimated to be \$7.95 million, in options described in Items 1, 2 or 3 above. The estimated value of volunteer fire companies in Items 1, 2 or 3 at nine fire stations is estimated to be \$7.65 million. This is determined by projecting fulltime staffing costs at two permanent personnel with one reserve firefighter to complete 3.0 staffing levels at existing volunteer fire company stations. Six permanent stations planned to be staffed with a reserve today or in the future, also contribute a reserve value of \$300,000. Additional volunteer/reserve time has been collected by phone survey. This method to determine staffing value for station coverage and training hours is a lesser value today. We will strive to include this estimate in next week's proposal.

**16.** Zones would be established in the new CSA's that will allow any fee or assessment to remain within that particular community or former fire district. If fire districts remain in place, then fees and assessments will remain with said district. Mitigation fees may be pooled within the CSA to allow funds to accumulate more rapidly and allow apparatus and facility improvements to be made on an annual basis in the most deserving areas with regard to age and physical state of construction or operation. This allows money in the more rural areas to be placed into service rather than waiting twenty plus years before sufficient funding is collected to provide apparatus or facility improvements. Mitigation fees are only allowed to be retained for a five year period or they are returned to the developer. By pooling funds using a regional impact basis, fees will be committed within the five year window of opportunity.

**17.** The estimated cost to provide emergency services through CDF contracts for seven fire protection districts, six CSA's, four Mutual Water Districts and seven volunteer fire companies is approximately \$25,388,000. This value is listed in the budget sheet provided in the separate County Proposal and excludes operating costs. CDF costs are all inclusive of permanent staff needs from firefighter including chief officers. Staff benefits are also included in this estimate. Additional costs would include facilities, utilities, operations, and reserve costs. The net new funding required to provide service enhancements to 55 stations through expanded CDF contracts and volunteer enhancement is preliminarily estimated to be between \$6.2 to \$10.8 million. This amount will remain an estimate until completion of a financial audit of all agencies assets and liabilities.

**NOTE: BENEFIT FEES AND SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS MUST REMAIN WITHIN THE COMMUNITY OF ORIGIN THAT PAYS SAID FEES OR ASSESSMENTS!**

**18.** The County Board of Supervisors is the appropriate governing body to determine future funding needs for fire and EMS purposes. The Board would need to evaluate and consider creating a policy to determine if or when the County would fund a uniform level of structural fire protection and emergency medical services in the unincorporated areas--if revenues from special district property tax and voter approved benefit assessments were insufficient. An assumption must be made that this insufficiency would occur after the Board of Supervisors implemented a plan as described in Items 1, 2 or 3 above. The Board would probably examine if funding experienced a sunset clause that caused the deficiency. In that case the Board may task the citizens in a specific community to vote to retain such a fee or assessment or see service levels reduced by the electorate. The Board may also consider future new fees or community facilities districts to offset unplanned funding needs.

**19.** The Board of Supervisors would be the appropriate body to determine acceptance of debts and liabilities, along with assets and revenues of Phase I Agencies, if options in Items 1, 2 or 3 are adopted. The Board would also be the appropriate elected Board to determine what could be done to assist the East County Fire Protection District. One option has been proposed for Board of Supervisor revue within the budget package submitted by the County. This option is a suggestion for consideration and has not and cannot be presumed to be approved by the Board of Supervisors prior to their own determination and action.

**20.** The County would request 90 to 120 days to complete and audit and review of existing Phase I agency resources (facilities, apparatus, equipment, budget) with the purpose to develop a strategic plan to assume successor responsibilities.

**21.** Generally speaking, the Gann (spending) limit for a new CSA should be established by LAFCO by adding all revenue and compare to past expenditures. After comparison, apply the appropriate annual increase to the grand total value of expenditures based on anticipated grand total revenues. This should be referred to County Counsel and the Tax Assessor by LAFCO to assist in defining the appropriate value based on input from LAFCO. A complete financial audit needs to be completed before the spending limit is established.

**22.** An estimated budget has been provided within the County Fire Protection Proposal. A separate fire protection proposal for the Office of the Fire Warden will be submitted next week as a major supplement to these questions. It is intended that this document will be the basis of meeting LAFCO's request for alternative fire protection options.