

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Ventura County Grand Jury Announces Release of its Report “Linking First Responders: Ventura County Regional Radio System”**

The ability of first responders to communicate on a common radio system is critical when coordinating a response to a major event. The lives of first responders and the people they serve may be at risk if first responders are unable to call for assistance.

The 2023-2024 Grand Jury researched the readiness, interoperability and use of the radio communication systems first responders employ in the event of emergencies affecting Ventura County.

The Grand Jury learned that significant improvements have been made in the ability of first responders to communicate with each other. This report highlights those improvements as well as the remaining challenges.

The Grand Jury finds that:

- Portions of some systems currently in use lack upgraded features, cannot penetrate some buildings, have reception issues in some areas and are not able to provide encryption as needed.
- Without integrated training, inaccurate or incomplete information could be transmitted.
- Two cities have not completed nor presented a Memorandum of Understanding to their city councils to adopt the Ventura County Regional Radio System.
- One city can only communicate with other Ventura County agencies’ dispatch using a “patching” system, rather than by direct communication.
- All county and city fire departments have adopted common technology, providing interoperability regardless of city boundaries. The Ventura County Regional Radio System can communicate with all fire departments.

The Grand Jury makes recommendations to remedy these deficiencies and to continue the work toward optimal implementation of the Ventura County Regional Radio System.

To read the entire report, please go to <https://www.ventura.org/grand-jury/fiscal-year-2023-2024/>

The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury is a panel of 19 local citizens established to investigate public complaints about county, city or special districts management, policies, practices and processes. More information about the Grand Jury can be found at: <https://www.ventura.org/grand-jury/>