



CITY OF OJAI

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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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AUG 21 2007

VENTURA COUNTY
GRAND JURY

August 15, 2007

Ventura Grand Jury
800 S. Victoria Ave., L#3751
Ventura, CA 93009

Enclosed is the City of Ojai's response to the 2006-2007 Grand Jury report titled, *Ventura County Disaster Evacuation Plan*. This response addresses each of the Grand Jury's *Findings* and *Recommendations* contained within the subject report.

The City of Ojai recognizes that the Grand Jury's report focused on specific areas of disaster planning, including possible vulnerabilities and deficiencies relating to flooding, dam failures, tsunamis and associated evacuation strategies.

In recognition of the research of public documents and interviews conducted with Ventura County organizations including the Sheriff's Department, and their Office of Emergency Services, Fire Department, Watershed Protection District and other agencies, Ojai wishes to express our respect for the extent and complexity of the work accomplished by the Grand Jury in preparing their 2006-2007 Final Report.

Sincerely,

City of Ojai

Carol Smith
Mayor

Response to Findings

The City of Ojai **concurs with the subject Findings (F-01 through F-036)**, and is aware of the great role of the Ventura County Office of Emergency Services, the Ventura County Disaster Council, the Ventura County Watershed Protection Agency and others who create such resources as flood maps and dam inundation scenarios.

Also, we believe that the identification of tsunami inundation zones and evacuation routes along Ventura County's 42 miles of coastline is another important component to ensure that residents are disaster ready. Public awareness campaigns and signage with tsunami evacuation routes are a reasonable step toward protecting citizens and educating residents. The City of Ojai may, in fact, be the destination of some evacuees from a tsunami.

Response to Recommendations

Response to Recommendations R-01 and R-06 identified for application to the City of Ojai:

R-01 *VC OES and the VCDC should work with the ten cities in the County to facilitate development of coordinated and integrated emergency evacuation plans for each of these communities. These plans should include how the public and emergency service providers are to be informed of an alert and what their responses should be. These local plans need to recognize that the VC OES is the chief disaster coordinator in the County; the plans need to be readily available to the public. (C-01)*

Response **Concur**

The City of Ojai has confidence in the ability of the Ventura County Office of Emergency Services and the Ventura County Disaster Council to develop coordinated and integrated emergency evacuation plans for our community.

City staff has attending training from the VC OES regarding emergency preparedness and hazard susceptibility and the benefits of an Incident Command System and Multi-Agency Coordination System. Recognizing the importance of an integrated plans to match the complexities and demands of single or multiple incidents, the City of Ojai is a willing partner with VC OES.

Ojai's staff is actively working to improve communications with citizens in order to disseminate information during alerts and emergencies. Our goal is to provide information through multiple media. The City is evaluating which communication lines might be available during an emergency when evacuation plan information would be crucial. At this time, we are considering that a limited range, independent radio channel could prove a valuable resource. Due to our limited funds, the City is reviewing opportunities for grant funds for the acquisition and integration of such a resource.

The VC OES has the lead role in implementing an evacuation plan; it is they who can best determine the timeframe for implementation.

R-06

Any evacuation plans developed by VC OES and the cities or special districts in Ventura County should be publicized and widely distributed. A user-friendly brochure detailing preparedness actions and evacuation routes should be developed for distribution to all residents in the County. As maps and plans are updated, the changes should be similarly publicized. (C-01, C-02)

Response

Concur

The City of Ojai is eager to prepare residents with an evacuation plan. In conjunction with the VC OES, staff can assist in the production or distribution of an easy-to-read brochure that would publicize an evacuation plan.

Since the Ojai Valley is geographically situated with only three routes providing access, exit plans out of the City might be simple. The coordination of an expanded evacuation plan that would instruct residents where to proceed once residents reach the coast or inland sites is another matter. We are pleased to assist in publicizing any evacuation plans developed by VC OES.

Once VC OES has developed an evacuation plan that would include the Ojai area, the City of Ojai will join in the responsibility to distributing the information to area residents. Implementation of this recommendation is predicated upon the development of such an evacuation plan by the VC OES.