



VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

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August 8, 2007

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VENTURA COUNTY
GRAND JURY

Ventura County 2006-2007 Grand Jury
800 So. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009-3751

Dear Jury Members:

SUBJECT: Response to the 2006-2007 Grand Jury report entitled, "Ventura County Emergency Disaster Preparedness"

I appreciate your inquiries related to disaster planning and identification of possible vulnerabilities related to natural disasters within Ventura County. A review of the Ventura County 2006-2007 Grand Jury Final Report was conducted and as requested my responses for recommendations R-01 through R-03, R-05 through R-07, R-9 and R-11 are outlined below.

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 to R- 01: Concur in part. The Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES) conducts regular meetings and maintains on-going communications with the cities and special districts to coordinate and integrate all emergency plans in accordance with local, State and Federal guidelines. Evacuation plans for tsunamis and dam failures have already been implemented. The responsibility for developing and publicly posting hazard specific evacuation plans is the responsibility of each of the respective jurisdictions.

In the fall of 2006, the Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES) implemented a coordinated effort to work with the coastal cities and communities toward the development of evacuation plans for Tsunamis. Tsunami evacuation

SPECIAL SERVICES

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Ventura, CA 93003
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PATROL SERVICES

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(805) 494-8261 FAX (805) 494-8295

DETENTION SERVICES

800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009
(805) 654-2305 FAX (805) 654-3500

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800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009
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plans were completed and posted for the public access in August of 2006. These tools and guidelines have been shared with all ten cities and have been helpful in developing evacuation plans for all types of hazards.

Plans describing how the public and emergency service providers are to be alerted along with their corresponding response procedures are outlined in the County's Multi-Hazard Functional Plan and the emergency operating procedures belonging to the various emergency response agencies from the County and cities. Those plans maintained by the Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES) are available to the public upon request.

Sheriff's OES also coordinates with several County, State and Federal Agencies during the period between "Fire" and "Flood Seasons" to identify areas at particular risk, prepare specific Action Plans, and share that information with the communities and citizens at risk. OES coordinates public presentations of the hazard analysis, mitigation efforts, response plans and recommendations for citizens.

All County Hazard Maps can be found at:

[http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning/pdf/plans/General Plan Hazards Appendix 7 20 06.pdf](http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning/pdf/plans/General_Plan_Hazards_Appendix_7_20_06.pdf)

Those hazards for which Sheriff's OES maintains response plans can be located at **<http://www.vcsd.org/oes/index.html>**

Hazard maps identifying potential failure areas within the County are not site specific nor do they provide information as to the exact location and severity of damage. Despite knowing where the potential County hazard areas reside, this information alone does not allow us to pre-designate with certainty which transportation routes will be open and what areas will be evacuated. Furthermore, the decision to evacuate an area following a disaster is not always a required or recommended action because residents may be advised to shelter in place.

- R-02. The VCDC should decide whether to maintain the fixed-point warning sirens that currently exist near the Casitas and Piru Dams. (C-02 through C-05)

Response to R- 02: Concur. The Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES) has recommended disestablishment of the Casitas Siren system and presented this to the Ventura County Disaster Council (VCDC) at their meeting on March 12, 2007, and again on June 6, 2007. The issue is currently under review by the City of Ventura Westside Community Council for their input.

R-03. If the VCDC decides to maintain the warning siren system, adequate maintenance funds need to be allocated and an agency should be identified that will be responsible for siren operational maintenance and testing. (C-02 through C-05)

Response to R- 03: Concur. Not applicable. See Response to R-02

R-05. The VC OES and VCDC should decide if a coastal tsunami audible warning system is necessary and advisable. (C-02)

Response to R- 05: Concur in part. During the creation of the Tsunami Plan, representatives from the Cities, County and Naval Base actively discussed the issues surrounding warning systems, and considered audible systems to be a less effective solution than the telenotification systems in place and as proposed. Neither the Ventura County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services nor the Ventura County Disaster Council has the authority to require the installation of a tsunami audible warning system for the coastal communities of Ventura County. This decision should be the result of a coordinated plan and collaborative agreement between residents, Naval Base Ventura County, the Cities of Oxnard and Port Hueneme, County of Ventura, entities having jurisdictional responsibility, and agencies with environmental interests in such an endeavor. It should also be noted that the costs to install and administer a siren-warning program would need to be addressed.

Sheriff's OES is in the process of acquiring and installing a telenotification system, and the Cities of Ventura and Oxnard have already acquired individual telenotification systems, which could be used in lieu of an audible warning system.

In the fall of 2006, the Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES) implemented a coordinated effort to work with the coastal cities and communities toward the development of evacuation plans for Tsunamis. Tsunami evacuation plans were completed and posted for the public access in August of 2006. Ventura County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services continues to work with the cities and other agencies to further develop public information and communication regarding tsunami preparation. Ventura County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services is also researching the cost and feasibility of signage and additional public information materials.

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 to R- 06: Concur in part. While it is the individual jurisdictions' responsibility to post their respective plan(s), Sheriff's OES encourages the cities and special districts to maintain public information programs that educate the public about their local emergency plans. Evacuation Plans that are the responsibility of the Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services are presently posted on the Sheriff's website located at <http://www.vcsd.org/oes/index.html>. In 2006, the Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services in conjunction with the Sheriff's Foundation purchased and published a home safety emergency guidebook for the public entitled "PrepGuides". These guides contain telephone numbers and website information for County and City Emergency Management offices. Emergency Alert System Radio Stations are listed in these guides. Sheriff's OES is also currently working with County IT Services to improve the functionality and emergency services content of the County and OES websites.

- R-07. VC OES should revise and reissue the "Hot Spots" manual to include evacuation routes and safe assembly areas, a copy should be maintained in every emergency response vehicle within Ventura County. (C-03)

Response to R- 07: Concur in part. Sheriff's OES cannot pre-designate evacuation routes for the potential flood areas. The "Hot Spot Manual" is updated at least annually or when changes occur. The "Hot Spot" manual does provide information regarding potential shelter sites. Copies of the "Hot Spot" manuals are distributed to all first responders in the County and Cities. The most recent "Hot Spot" plan will be posted to the Sheriff's Intranet Site.

- R-09. All County radio, television, and cable networks should be included in the emergency notification procedure, including broadcasters based in neighboring counties. (C-06)

Response to R- 09: Concur. Radio, television, and cable networks in and around the County of Ventura are already identified in the County's Multi-Hazard Response Plan and are part of the County's emergency notification plan and Local Emergency Communications Committee (LECC). All local (including the adjacent Counties of Santa Barbara and Los Angeles) broadcasters and cable system providers participate in the Emergency Alert System. The system is tested weekly and monthly, in accordance with Federal Communications Commission regulations.

R-11. VC OES should work closely with the BOS to obtain all funding required to complete the County's "Reverse 911" notification system. (C-04)

Response to R- 11: Concur. The Board of Supervisors approved this item on April 3, 2007. The Alert & Warning Coordinator position will be filled and in place on July 29, 2007. The equipment is being configured by the vendor, and should be shipped within the next 4-5 weeks. Installation and acceptance testing is anticipated to take less than 1 week. The process of acquiring the telephone number databases from AT&T and Verizon has begun.

Please feel free to contact Laura Hernandez at her office (805) 654-2552 should you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Brooks", written in a cursive style.

BOB BROOKS
Ventura County Sheriff