

December 27, 2005

Judge Allan Hardcastle
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
P. O. Box 5109
Santa Rosa, CA 95402

Re: **REVISED** Response to 2004-2005 Sonoma County Grand Jury Report – “A Disaster Waiting to Happen”

This letter responds to the findings and recommendations contained in the 2004-05 Sonoma County Grand Jury Report of “A Disaster Waiting to Happen” and to the December 20, 2005 letter from Grand Jury Foreperson Melinda A. Cabral regarding the format of the original response dated August 26, 2005. The Sonoma City Manager was asked to respond to the following reports, findings and recommendations in the referenced report :

- F3, F4, F9, F10, and F13

Finding F3.

Written plans and checklists are not consistent among county, cities, agencies, and departments, and in some cases are non-existent.

Response – Agree with explanation

Differences in the capabilities, resources, and risk factors between Sonoma County and its nine cities suggest that each agency’s plan need not be the same in scope and detail.

Coordination of the efforts of each agency occurs through their participation in the Sonoma County/Operational Area Emergency Coordinators Forum and Emergency Council. Sonoma has exercised its EOC and participated in countywide emergency management training. The City of Sonoma has good working relationships with the County as the lead agency in this Operational Area.

Without reviewing the plans and checklists of other cities, the City of Sonoma is not in a position to respond to the finding regarding inconsistencies between agencies or about checklists being non-existent in some agencies.

Finding F4.

Where plans and checklists do exist, they are not always stored in multiple safe places for guaranteed access in the event of a disaster. The most common place is the office, notwithstanding that a disaster does not limit itself to regular work hours, and office buildings may not be accessible!

Response – Disagree

Generally, duplicate copies of plans and checklists are stored in the Emergency Operations Center and in staff offices. Consideration of the location of back-up copies of key emergency response documents will be undertaken during future preparedness reviews.

Finding F9.

All county employees are listed as disaster recovery resources, as indeed are members of the grand jury, but there is no clear plan on how they will report in for duty, or how they will be used.

Response – Agree with explanation

Without reviewing County procedures, the City of Sonoma is not in a position to respond to the finding regarding the clarity of County plans for how its employees will report for duty or how they will be used.

Finding F10

The city plans are not consistent in scope and detail. The City of Santa Rosa has a well-structured but dated plan. Cotati’s plan is literally a copy of the county plan, Cloverdale is still using the 1989 two volume door-stopper plan that existed before the adoption of SEMS, and Healdsburg’s plan is dated 1987. See Exhibit D for a table comparing the format and date of the county and city plans.

Response – Agree with explanation

See response at F3, above

Finding F13.

There is an agreement dated 1997, between the cities and the county, promising help from the county for the construction of, training in, and testing of city-based disaster plans. This assistance is not provided, nor sought on a continually consistent basis, despite the payment of a \$2000 annual fee by the cities.

Response – Disagree with explanation

Sonoma County staff coordinates multi-jurisdictional training in which City of Sonoma staff have participated. County staff has been consistently responsive to requests for advice and assistance with respect to emergency plans and preparedness from the City of Sonoma.

Recommendation 3 – Each city council should:

- *Initiate an annual review of its disaster plan, coincident with the budget cycle, starting with the 2006-2007 cycle. These reviews should include the following tasks as a minimum:*
 - *Examine status of the actions from the previous year’s review.*
 - *Review any tests during the year and any plan changes required as a result of the tests (“no change” is an unlikely outcome).*
 - *Request detail of any changes to the plan occasioned by known state, national or world emergencies that occurred in the review year.*
 - *Request detail of any changes to the plan required by directives from the Department of Homeland Security (with due regard to any security and secrecy requirements).*
 - *Concur by vote, that the review has been completed successfully.*

Response – will be implemented in the future

City staff reviews the disaster plan on a periodic basis and makes adjustments as needed to improve efficiency or in response to exercises, current events and new regulations. Additional resources that may be needed to implement modifications to the plan, or to the City’s emergency response capabilities, are brought to the City Council as part of the budget process.

An update of the City’s emergency plan is currently in progress. Re-assignment of responsibility for coordinating the City’s emergency response plan development and emergency response training is in process as part of an overall review of the City budget and a proposal will be presented to the City Council before the end of the current fiscal year.

Recommendation 5 – The Board of Supervisors and each city council, should:

- *Demand that plans be put in place to ensure that all existing employees have been or will be trained in SEMS and the Emergency Recovery Plan for the county, and/or their city. The training should be completed by year-end 2005.*
- *Document the reporting steps employees must take as support individuals in the event of a disaster.*
- *Endorse that the most effective use of most employees is to focus on business resumption.*

Response – has been implemented

The City conducts periodic orientation and tabletop field training exercises in SEMS responsibilities. The City’s emergency plan documents the roles and reporting relationships of various staff members. Orientation of new employees includes their roles in emergency response efforts.

While business resumption is an important priority and is considered in basic operations planning, the first priority in the City’s response to an emergency situation is the protection of public lives and safety.

Very truly yours,

Michael Fuson
City Manager

cc: Melinda A. Cabral, Foreperson, Sonoma County Grand Jury
Mayor and Councilmembers
City Clerk