Sonoma County
Civil Grand Jury

The Grand Jury provides oversight to county, city government and special districts within Sonoma County, bringing positive change in the best interest of all residents.

2017-2018 Final Report
You Could Make A Difference

County Civil Grand Juries are unique and powerful institutions which offer opportunities for citizens to directly investigate and influence how well county and city governments are serving the residents of their counties.

Nineteen jurors, and a minimum of five alternates, are needed to complete the annual commitment. Here in Sonoma County, about 45% of those who initially apply remain as candidates at the time of the final, random selection at the end of June each year. This means that a minimum of 60 candidates is needed. Since the Grand Jury is an autonomous panel, its ability to effectively serve its purpose depends on the interest, capabilities and skills of the jurors who volunteer to serve. The Grand Jury is an institution that can benefit from voices and points of view reflecting the diversity in age, ethnicity, gender and education found here in Sonoma County. The year-long commitment (July-June), and the amount of time required on a weekly basis, mean that potential candidates must give a great deal of thought to the decision about whether or not to serve on the Grand Jury. We encourage those who can make the commitment, to find out more and apply.

Service on the Grand Jury is a rewarding opportunity to learn about Sonoma County governance and to make a positive contribution to the community.

We invite you to apply for Grand Jury service

www.sonomagrandjury.org
June 20, 2018

Dear Members of the Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury:

Having reviewed the Grand Jury Final report for the fiscal year 2017-2018, I find that it complies with Penal Code section 933. You are to be commended for your thorough investigations and conscientious findings and recommendations. You have fulfilled your duties with hard work and dedication.

The citizens of Sonoma County are indebted to you for your diligent, straightforward efforts. I understand that the performance of your duties requires much of your time in the investigation of issues affecting the citizens of Sonoma County.

Much effort is required to perform the tasks necessary to create your report. On behalf of the Superior Court of Sonoma County, I applaud and thank you for all you have done.

All of you have performed in an exemplary manner in discharging your duties. I especially would like to thank your foreperson, Regina Nellor for her practical leadership and dedication to the work of the Grand Jury.

Once again, congratulations to our Civil Grand Jury. You have worked hard and done your job well. Our county is a better place thanks to the work you have done.

Very Truly Yours,

Gary Nadler, Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California,
County of Sonoma
To the Citizens of Sonoma County and the Honorable Judge Gary Nadler:

On behalf of the 2017-2018 Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury and in accordance with California Penal Code Section 933, it is my privilege to present our Final Report.

The Grand Jury’s mission is to facilitate positive change in Sonoma County. We are charged with overseeing city, County and special district operations. We investigate these entities to evaluate their efficiency, honesty, fairness, and dedication to service the public. Based on our findings, we make recommendations.

The Grand Jury’s effectiveness as the citizens’ ombudsman and watchdog of Sonoma City governance depends on residents’ participation either as complainants or as jurors. Complaints filed by concerned citizens are considered seriously and many result in an investigation and report.

This has been an unusual and daunting year for the Civil Grand Jury, as it has been for the rest of Sonoma County. Faced with the October Firestorm we opted to look at what worked and what didn’t work in the County’s response to this overwhelming emergency.

One of our reports focuses on the efforts of front-line County and City emergency response units. Another concentrates on the plight of companion and other animals during the emergency. And still another looks at how a County agency implemented changes in the permitting process well before the firestorm, and how those changes are helping County residents rebuild.

The California Penal Code requires that the Civil Grand Jury inquire into the conditions and management of jails within Sonoma County. This requirement has been expanded to include a review of all Officer or Employee Involved Fatal Incidents.

We looked at three Sonoma County Detention Facilities: MADF (the Main Adult Detention Facility), Juvenile Justice Center and NCDF (North County Detention Facility). All three facilities were in good condition and were well managed. The Grand Jury received only one notification of an Officer Involved Fatal Incident.

Our complete Final Report is available online at www.sonomagrandjury.org. Report summaries will be published in the Press Democrat and the Sonoma Gazette. Hard copies of the Final Report are available for review at County Libraries.

It has been an honor to serve as Foreperson of this dedicated Grand Jury. We are a volunteer group of County residents. We have diverse backgrounds and different levels of education and expertise. As a resident of Sonoma County I am sincerely grateful to my fellow jurors for their hard work and dedication to the Grand Jury’s mission.

Sincerely,

Regina Nellor, Foreperson
DEDICATION

In early October 2017, a firestorm struck Sonoma County. The Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury recognizes and commends all who reacted to this emergency while it was happening, and who worked to start recovery as soon as the firestorm was controlled.

- Front-line responders performed their duties with bravery, valor and dedication, repeatedly putting their personal safety on the line.

- Emergency support personnel worked tirelessly under difficult circumstances to support Fire and Law enforcement units and evacuations, as well as to keep the public informed. City and County administrative officials stepped into their emergency management roles, often working twelve hour shifts for extended periods.

- County and City employees worked tirelessly in shelters and information centers - wherever they were needed.

- Dedicated staff and volunteers responded heroically by evacuating and sheltering scores of animals. Food, bedding, veterinary service and medical supplies were generously donated as part of the rescue efforts.

- Sonoma County volunteerism was exemplary, supporting the evacuees in countless ways. Both organized volunteer groups and ad-hoc groups responded to the wide variety of needs.

- The Local Assistance Centers, organized by the County to provide access to all fire evacuee needs under one roof. They were praised by FEMA and state officials as an exemplary disaster response. Over 10,000 families accessed services during the first 21 days of operation.

The Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury dedicates these reports to all who suffered loss during the firestorm and to all who worked so hard to bring them to safety.
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INTRODUCTION

The October firestorm in Sonoma County, primarily the Tubbs and Nuns fires, were unprecedented in terms of ferocity, speed, area burned, property damaged and, most importantly, lives lost.

Fires started over much of eastern Sonoma County during the evening of October 8, 2017. There seemed to be fires everywhere. All night Santa Rosa Fire Department attacked many small fires and one large city fire. After several days the fires in Glen Ellen, Kenwood and surrounding areas merged together and became the Nuns Fire.

The very dry, warm, strong winds drove the fire from the Calistoga area down the same path followed by the 1964 Hanly fire, along Mark West Road, into more populated areas. The Hanly fire took two days to reach Santa Rosa. The Tubbs fire took only four hours.

This was truly a firestorm, utterly unstoppable under the extreme wind and dry conditions and fueled by an abundant supply of high growth vegetation.

The 2017-2018 Civil Grand Jury chose to investigate three specific aspects of the firestorm.

These reports concentrate on the following topics:
1. The communication systems of local responders, the command structures of control centers and the emergency preparedness of the organizations charged with protecting citizens.
2. The evacuation and sheltering of companion animals and horses impacted by the fires.
3. The significant changes that Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD), now known as Permit Sonoma, made in how they operated before the fires and how those changes are helping victims of the firestorm rebuild their lives.

SONOMA COUNTY
IMPACT OF
NUNS & TUBB FIRES

- 24 lives lost
- 137 square miles burned
- 7,004 structures destroyed
- 24 lives lost

Nuns Fire destroyed
- 639 homes
- 92 damaged
- 684 outbuildings
- 73 damaged
- 32 commercial buildings
- 7 damaged

Tubbs Fire destroyed
- 4,658 homes
- 94 commercial buildings
- 23 damaged
- 897 secondary buildings
- 92 damaged

Included in this publication of those reports is the annual chart showing the responses by the appropriate county departments to the 2016-2017 Civil Grand Jury Report recommendations.
OCTOBER FIRESTORM
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

“This was their finest hour!”

SUMMARY

The Civil Grand Jury concentrated its investigation on the response to the firestorm emergency. This report focuses on the considerable efforts of the front-line Sonoma County and City emergency response units.

The Civil Grand Jury recognizes that the complexity of many emergency agencies responding and the scope and rapidity of the fires created significant challenges to efficient and effective communications. County agencies were in a tactical mode, locating and evacuating people as quickly as possible. The Tubbs fire advanced rapidly. The call to evacuate the Fountaingrove area was made by one experienced, knowledgeable City Fire Marshall who boldly took the initiative based on experience, expertise and sound judgment.

Sonoma County has 43 individual fire districts that are functionally independent. The Civil Grand Jury often heard the opinion that a differently organized county fire system would be better able to respond to complex emergencies. The existing system evolved in an earlier, more rural county. The California Fire Chiefs Association recommends that counties and the state develop a proactive system rather than a reactive system. The current reactive system sends resources after an emergency is already happening. A proactive system would pre-position resources during high alert times and be better prepared for a timely response.

The 2004-2005 Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury issued a report, “A DISASTER WAITING TO HAPPEN”, which examined the state of emergency preparedness one decade after the adoption of Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS). The report predicted disaster under the then-existing conditions. The current Civil Grand Jury sees many parallels between the analyses and predictions of 2005 and the current issues in Sonoma County.

The emergency management system in Sonoma County follows the standards based on the state and federal Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Within SEMS, Emergency Operation Centers (EOCs) provide a centralized location for emergency management coordination and decision-making during a critical incident, emergency, or disaster.

Each jurisdiction creates its own emergency management plan with guidelines to activate an EOC. During the fires, EOCs were activated by: Sonoma County, Santa Rosa, City of Sonoma, Rohnert Park, Petaluma, Healdsburg and Cloverdale, as well as Sonoma State University and Santa Rosa Junior College.

City Managers usually serve as the EOC Director and department heads lead the four main EOC areas mentioned above. The Sonoma County Code of Ordinances designates the County
Administrator as the director of emergency services and that person serves as County EOC Director.

The Red Cross historically provides shelter management. They arrived late because they were finishing operations elsewhere in the state. In Santa Rosa, the initial designated shelter was the Finley Center. It reached capacity by 3:45am on October 9. The Veteran’s Building in Santa Rosa was open by then to accept more evacuees. Many more shelters were set up elsewhere in the county including Petaluma, Sonoma Valley, Rohnert Park and Sebastopol.

Three technological alert systems are available to notify people in an emergency, SoCo Alert, Nixle, and IPAWS/WEA. The California OES (Office of Emergency Services) report commissioned by the County Administrator gives an in-depth analysis of the three alert systems.

A large percentage of people were alerted by:
- The strong smell of smoke and visible flames
- Police and Fire sirens, loudspeakers and knocking on doors
- Neighbors knocking on doors and using car horns and megaphones

Emergency managers praise the community involvement and neighborhood awareness since they were critical in providing notification and helping to get people out of danger.

This investigation provides us with an opportunity to recommend improvements in emergency response to deal with the next big emergency, which most planners expect will be an earthquake. The larger issues involve: (1) communications in almost all aspects of the response, (2) the outdated system of mutual aid, (3) a challenging County emergency management structure, and (4) the lack of strategic oversight by an emergency response entity or individual.

GLOSSARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>CAD</td>
<td>Computer Aided Dispatch</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAL FIRE</td>
<td>California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection</td>
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<td>Cal OES</td>
<td>California Office of Emergency Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>EOC</td>
<td>Emergency Operations Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPAWS</td>
<td>Integrated Public Alert and Warning System</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIXLE</td>
<td>Subscription Emergency Notification Service</td>
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<td>REDCOM</td>
<td>Redwood Empire Dispatch Communications Authority</td>
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<td>SEMS</td>
<td>Standardized Emergency Management System</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOCO Alert</td>
<td>Sonoma County Emergency Notification (aka Reverse 911)</td>
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<td>WEA</td>
<td>Wireless Emergency Alerts</td>
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BACKGROUND

The 2004-2005 Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury issued a report, "A DISASTER WAITING TO HAPPEN," which examined the state of emergency preparedness one
A decade after the adoption of Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS). The report predicted disaster under the then-existing conditions. Some comments from that report:

"The grand jury found widespread inconsistent approaches to emergency and disaster planning. Some county employees embraced the process of planning with enthusiasm, while others, typically senior management and elected officials, were non-enthusiastic, relying instead on 'people will know what to do.'"

"There are no consistent plans to inform the public ahead of time of what information will be available at the time of a disaster, nor is there a consistent plan to make use of media, or the City Watch system in the event of a disaster. (The City Watch system is a software program that allows for sending informational or alert messages to a given geography of telephone subscribers)."

"The senior management commitment to the various disaster plans, at the Board of Supervisors level, County Administrator, the city council level, the city manager level, and the public safety level, is demonstrably inconsistent and does not bode well should the county experience a major disaster."

The report and the joint response to the 2005 Civil Grand Jury recommendations are referenced in the bibliography.

The current Civil Grand Jury sees many parallels between the analyses and predictions of 2005 and the current issues in Sonoma County.

The Civil Grand Jury looked at several aspects of the recent emergency; this report concentrates on the emergency response. A fire disaster of this magnitude exceeded every agency’s expectation, made worse by:

- Multiple fires during night and early morning hours
- An abundance of dry vegetation due to rains earlier in the year followed by a dry period
- Dense smoke and flying debris
- Dry, sustained high winds with gusts exceeding 70 miles per hour
METHODOLOGY

The Civil Grand Jury’s focus was on the early days of the fire, with the initial background material collected from newspapers, live press releases, and social media. The Civil Grand Jury sought first-hand accounts from first responders and government employees through interviews. In addition, the Civil Grand Jury researched and reviewed official City and County documents.

The Civil Grand Jury interviewed representatives of:

- The Sonoma County Sheriff’s Office
- The Sonoma County Emergency Operations Center
- REDCOM
- The Santa Rosa Police Department
- The Santa Rosa Fire Department
- The Santa Rosa Emergency Operations Center
- The City of Sonoma Police Department
- The City of Sonoma Emergency Operations Center
- The Rohnert Park Emergency Operations Center
- The Petaluma Emergency Operations Center
- The Healdsburg Emergency Operations Center
- The Sonoma County Administrator’s Office
- The California Fire Chiefs Association

The Civil Grand Jury reviewed:

- REDCOM call log CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) Report of October 8, 2017, 1900 hours to October 9, 2017, 1900 hours.
- Santa Rosa Police Department Event Log of October 8, 2017, 1900 hours to October 9, 2017, 1900 hours.
- REDCOM Standard Operating Procedures Manual
- The City of Sonoma Emergency Operations Plan
- The City of Santa Rosa Emergency Operations Plan
- The Rohnert Park Emergency Plan
- Cal OES Public Alert and Warning Program Assessment for Sonoma County
- Cal OES SEMS Guidelines
- Sonoma County Code of Ordinances Chapter 10 – Civil Defense and Disaster
DISCUSSION

The Grand Jury focused its investigation on three areas of government and public concern:

- Fire Response
- Communication
  - Between emergency response levels (City, County, State)
  - Public emergency notification
  - General public information
- Evacuation

The Firestorm:

Nuns Fire Precursors

In the area bounded by the Valley of the Moon to the north and the Sonoma Raceway to the south, several fires (Adobe, Norrborn, Patrick, Pressley, and Oakmont fires) started during the evening of October 8, the biggest of which struck Glen Ellen and Kenwood. Units from CAL FIRE, the Valley of the Moon, Glen Ellen, and Agua Caliente responded. These fires would unite to become the Nuns fire.

Tubbs Fire County Action

This fire originated in northern Calistoga, in Napa Valley around 10:00pm, on October 8. First reports were of vegetation fires, quickly followed by structure fires. High winds exceeding 70 miles an hour and dry conditions accelerated the fire into Sonoma County. CAL FIRE strike units were called in but were unable to contain or even slow down the fire. Embercasts are potential in any fire. This fire was aggravated by the high winds that carried the embers miles away rather than the embers dropping to the ground. The fire progressed quickly along Porter Creek and Mark West roads. It branched both north and south. Many structures were lost, but the crucial life-saving actions were largely successful.

The activity shifted to saving lives. Public evacuation notifications were sent by Nixle and SoCoAlert starting around 11:30pm The Sonoma County Sheriff’s deputies, assisted by some Santa Rosa police units, were fully engaged in evacuation procedures while dodging the oncoming fire.

“It would be a miracle if no emergency personnel were lost tonight.”
Paraphrased from first responders interviewed
City of Santa Rosa

The City of Santa Rosa Fire Department was responding to fires all evening on October 8. Around 9:30pm a two-alarm structure fire near 6th Street kept firefighters busy battling that blaze. Overall activity increased as the wind picked up and many more fires erupted. The Santa Rosa Fire Marshall was on his way to the St. Helena CAL FIRE command center, but was forced to turn back because of the advancing fire on Porter Creek Road. Santa Rosa fire personnel were desperately trying to determine the scope and extent of the fire. The extreme conditions interfered with visibility, access, and communication. Fire and law enforcement activities were in full force in the Mark West area. Emergency personnel raced to evacuate citizens ahead of the unpredictable, quickly advancing flames.

The Santa Rosa Fire Marshall investigated Cross Creek Road. Realizing the danger of the encroaching fire, he called for the evacuation of Skyfarm and Fountaingrove. It is highly probable that this evacuation, called at 1:41am, saved thousands of lives.

The fire jumped over Mendocino Avenue into the Journey’s End trailer park astounding experienced firefighters. The fires crossed over the six lanes of Highway 101 and four lanes of the parallel Cleveland Avenue where it hopscotched into the Coffey Park area. The provisional fire-fighting command base at Kmart had to be abandoned because of the winds and fire. The command base was moved to Fire Station 3 on Coffey Lane.

As late as 7:00am on October 9 there were towering flames at Journey’s End. A major stand at the north end of Kaiser Permanente Hospital stopped the southward progress of the fire in that location.

Coffey Park

The Coffey Park conflagration was especially frustrating to firefighters since atmospheric conditions held the very dense smoke low to the ground. Because of this, firefighters could neither see the glow of nearby flames nor see the plume of a new outburst. When these conditions finally cleared, they were able to stop the advancing flames.

“We were chilled by the realization that hundreds to thousands might lose their lives.”
Paraphrased from first responders interviewed
Sonoma County Emergency Management

- SEMS (Standard Emergency Management System) is the California Office of Emergency Services (OES) framework defining the hierarchical emergency setup under which County systems operate. The County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) reports to State OES and city EOCs report to the County EOC. Formally, city EOCs must communicate with the County EOC only and cannot formally communicate directly with other city EOCs or with the State/CAL FIRE.

- REDCOM is the emergency and fire call center located in the Sheriff’s building. 911 calls are answered by the Sheriff’s office dispatch center when the call originates from the county areas or by city Police Departments. If the call concerns a fire, that call is manually rerouted to REDCOM for both county and city originated calls. REDCOM and the Sheriff Dispatch are software/hardware compatible. REDCOM has an active project to provide compatibility between REDCOM and CAL FIRE control, located in St. Helena.

Example

Lines of Coordination and Communications between Local Governments and the Operational Area

- Emergency Operation Centers (EOCs) provide a centralized location for emergency management coordination and decision-making during a critical incident, emergency, or disaster. Each jurisdiction creates its own emergency management plan with guidelines to activate an EOC. During the fires, EOCs were activated by: Sonoma County, Santa Rosa, City of Sonoma, Rohnert Park, Petaluma, Healdsburg and Cloverdale, as well as Sonoma State University and Santa Rosa Junior College. Some EOCs have dedicated, permanent space, but many – including Santa Rosa and Petaluma – set up in shared spaces as needed.
Under the direction of each jurisdiction’s emergency management, an EOC provides four functions in response to an emergency:

- Operations, with responsibility for the coordinated tactical response to the emergency.
- Planning, with responsibility for the collection, evaluation, and documentation of information about the emergency and status of resources.
- Logistics, with responsibility for providing facilities, services, personnel, equipment, and materials.
- Administration/Finance, with responsibility for all financial, legal, and cost analysis aspects of the emergency and administrative aspects not handled by other functions.

City Managers usually serve as the EOC Director and department heads lead the four main EOC areas mentioned above. The Sonoma County Code of Ordinances designates the County Administrator as the director of emergency services and that person serves as County EOC Director.

REDCOM alerted the County Emergency Managers to the nature of the Tubbs fire at 11:30pm on October 8. The County EOC was activated at midnight by an emergency management coordinator who was assisted remotely by the County Emergency Services Manager and another coordinator on their drive back from a conference. The EOC was fully operational by 5:50am with their arrival.

The County EOC is under the Office of the County Administrator while the City of Santa Rosa EOC is under the Fire Department. The Santa Rosa Fire Chief called for the Santa Rosa EOC to be activated shortly after midnight and it was fully activated by 1:00am.

Training and written guidelines are provided in various ways. Many county and city departments conduct annual drills and most participate in the California Great Shake-Out. Training may not be mandatory. It is made available to all employees because county and city employees are mandated emergency service workers in a declared disaster or emergency.

During the hectic first night of the Tubbs fire, the three main emergency response players were the County EOC, the Santa Rosa EOC and the Sonoma County Sheriff’s Office. Important decisions were dependent on three-way discussions. This often impeded quick response or led to unintended consequences, such as all of Bennett Valley getting an evacuation notice rather than a more defined area.

The County Administration Office is not a 24 hours a day, seven days a week operation. There is little to no training specific to the County Administrator’s role in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Both the Santa Rosa Fire Department and the Sheriff are 24 hours a day, seven days a week operations. The Civil Grand Jury commonly heard the strong opinion that the County EOC would be better positioned in the Sheriff’s Office.

After areas around Cross Creek Road, Riebli Road, Michelle Way, and Skyfarm Drive became areas of active evacuation, the Santa Rosa Fire Marshall called for the evacuation of Fountaingrove and surrounding areas. Santa Rosa Police responded with a full contingent. There were often two to
three officers in a car because SRPD does not have enough police cruisers to give each officer a car.

The County and Santa Rosa EOCs then concentrated efforts into providing buses for care facilities, and refocusing law enforcement evacuation efforts on this more densely populated region. The EOCs provided information to the public through Nixle alerts, social media, and frequent public meetings.

Assistance was requested from the whole northern California region so that fire and law enforcement mutual aid flowed into the area. The EOCs were busy with logistics such as opening shelters, arranging fuel for arriving fire units, and shelter and food for mutual aid personnel.

The City of Sonoma's Police Chief activated its EOC at 3:00am on October 9. The City of Sonoma contracts with the County Sheriff for police services. This official has dual city and county duty, leading to more efficient communication. Fire services are provided through a joint powers agreement with Valley of the Moon. The North Bay Incident Management Team, an organization of retirees with emergency response background, provided valuable assistance to the small City staff (47 people) available for EOC duty.

The City of Sonoma has a population of 11,000 and covers four square miles. It is the primary center and resource for the area from Kenwood south to the Sonoma Raceway. This area was largely cut off from the outside for the first few days, with Stage Gulch Road the only reliable connection. The city proper was threatened late in the first week when the northwest corner was evacuated for a short time. The City of Sonoma EOC used Facebook extensively for public communications in addition to local radio and TV stations. Six Spanish-speaking National Guardsmen were requisitioned to communicate with Spanish speakers in the area.

**Mutual Aid**

A system of Mutual Aid provides first responders with additional resources when a City or County doesn’t have enough resources to deal with a large emergency. California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) has an Emergency Management Mutual Aid Plan (EMMA), the purpose of which is to "...provide emergency management personnel and technical specialists to support the disaster operations of affected jurisdictions during an emergency."

- **Fire Mutual Aid**

Sonoma County has 43 individual fire districts that are functionally independent. The Civil Grand Jury often heard the opinion that a differently organized county fire system would be better able to respond to complex emergencies. The existing system evolved from an earlier, more rural county. The effectiveness of this structure needs to be re-examined with respect to responding to large-scale emergencies. A fire emergency is the most common event in which local responders rely on assistance from neighboring fire districts. In the initial hours of the fires, northern counties were unable to provide assistance since they were fighting fires and were asking for assistance themselves.
Many units in Sonoma County had already responded to mutual aid requests from Napa County and were unavailable to fight fires back at their own doorsteps. Fire assistance requests are routed to the Alameda County Fire Department, which handles Mutual Aid requests for 16 coastal counties from Monterey to the Oregon border. Sonoma County requested 170 fire engines during the night of October 8. Ninety five were sent. Marin County independently sent additional engines.

The California Fire Chiefs Association recommends that counties and the state develop a proactive system rather than a reactive system. The current reactive system sends resources after an emergency is already happening. A proactive system would pre-position resources during high alert times and be better prepared for a timely response.

*Marin County sent additional engines to the North Bay that were not reflected in the state data
**This engine came from a 3-county region, including Madera County

Source: California OES
Law Enforcement Mutual Aid

As defined in the California OES and SEMS, the Law Enforcement Guide for Emergency Operations calls for assistance to be routed to the Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Coordinator for Region II. This region extends from Monterey County to the Oregon border. No police force is required to send more than 50% of their officers. The Santa Rosa Police Department reported that 230 officers from out of the area responded.

The National Guard played a critical role policing entrances to burned-out neighborhoods. At one point, there were 900 National Guard soldiers staffing 50 checkpoints in unincorporated Sonoma County and in Santa Rosa.

Management Mutual Aid

Several EOCs reported that management aid was vital to keep the EOC functioning after several days of 24-hour coverage by city staff. Management mutual aid provides assistance in the four functions that keep the EOC operating. The immediate need for public safety personnel and equipment decreased as overall management and recovery needs increased. The City of San Rafael sent public information officers, building inspectors and planners to the Santa Rosa EOC. The North Bay Incident Management Team of retired emergency professionals volunteered to assist the Sonoma City EOC management.

Local government must use SEMS in order to be eligible for possible state or federal reimbursement. Cal OES EMMA (Emergency Management Mutual Aid), as part of SEMS, is a plan to provide emergency management resources during emergencies. Cal OES website reported that on October 9, the State Operations Center was activated to support emergency management coordination and mutual aid requests.

The EMMA plan objective requires that requests follow the EMMA mutual aid channels. However, responses to the requests for management mutual aid were ineffective because they were slow to respond.

Communication Challenges

All of the EOCs, as well as the Santa Rosa Fire Department and Police Department, reported frustration at the lack of timely, correct information during the hectic first night of October 8 and afterward.

The three-way communication between County EOC, Santa Rosa City EOC, and the Sheriff’s office was necessary to verify data. However, it significantly slowed the issuing of alerts. Additionally, in at least one instance, an important CAL FIRE message left on a cell phone voicemail was missed as first responders were dealing with so many immediate demands.

The observations and actions of one individual led to the full-scale evacuation of Fountaingrove. These observations and actions compensated for the lack of strategic oversight as the Tubbs fire
moved from the County unincorporated area into the city limits of Santa Rosa.

The official means of communication from the County EOC to the City EOCs was a county-initiated conference call, initially twice a day and later daily. Several sources reported this did not meet the needs of City EOCs, but instead often served as data collection for the County.

In order to get more timely, relevant and specific information, city EOCs supplemented their information by other means. They resorted to sending individual staff to pick up physical handouts at the CAL FIRE Incident Command Center at the Fairgrounds. They relied on an official liaison and informal sources with more access to county staff, and used the public Satellite Infrared Tracking data to follow fire hotspots.

The County EOC also reported difficulty getting up-to-date information from the Incident Command Center and found it necessary to send messengers to get information.

The SEMS protocol does not easily allow for direct communication within professional networks. Many interviewees stressed the importance and value of good professional relationships. Firefighters in Sonoma County have a well established network of relationships on which they rely for information and assistance. City Managers also acknowledge that their professional networks help in communication and effectiveness. Strong professional collegiality between members of the Santa Rosa Police and Fire departments were also crucial in key moments.

After the Firestorm

The Santa Rosa Police Department and the Sonoma County Sheriff’s Office stopped people from going into burned areas. The Santa Rosa Police Department then enforced a curfew in order to ensure safer access and to have better control over potential looting in areas where resident access was allowed.

As the fire shifted, the wind remained a difficult factor; new areas burned and more areas needed to be evacuated. Mutual aid added 230 officers to assist the Santa Rosa Police Department with the "12 on, 12 off" shift schedule and the increased need for traffic and access control.

As the fires moved with changing conditions, City and County EOCs issued mandatory evacuations. When CAL FIRE assumed the lead, they took over responsibility for evacuation orders. CAL FIRE typically operates in sparsely populated areas. Pressure from citizens to re-enter their no-longer-threatened homes offered a new challenge. Their return to evacuated areas proceeded slowly because:

○ Police, Sheriff, and National Guard resources were needed elsewhere
○ Firefighters were concentrating on the ongoing fires
○ Repopulation needed to be well-defined and have safe access

Evacuations and Shelters

The Red Cross historically provides shelter management. They arrived late because
they were finishing operations elsewhere in the state. In Santa Rosa, the initial designated shelter was the Finley Center. It reached capacity by 3:45am on October 8. The Veteran’s Building in Santa Rosa was open by then to accept more evacuees.

- **Sonoma Valley**

Residents from Glen Ellen and Kenwood evacuated toward Santa Rosa and the City of Sonoma. At 7:45am on October 9, eastbound traffic out of Santa Rosa on Highway 12 was stopped so that all lanes could be used for westbound evacuation traffic. The designated evacuation center in Sonoma Valley is the Sonoma Veteran’s building, but since that was threatened by fire, the Sonoma Valley High School opened at 4:00am for evacuees. Later the Sonoma Veteran’s Building, Adele Harrison Middle School and fifty acres of campground with RV services at the Sonoma Raceway were available for evacuees. More than 700 people were sheltered.

The Sonoma Developmental Center required special care to accommodate the needs of its population. Accelerated by necessity, the residents were evacuated to Altimira Middle School, the Sonoma Middle School and to an institution in Dixon.

The Juvenile Detention Center located off Pythian Road evacuated forty youth and nine staff members to Solano County.

The City of Sonoma EOC used the Sonoma County Volunteer Management Center to organize the large number of volunteers. The EOC also provided food (donated by local restaurants) for 700 people and up to 100 mutual aid personnel.

- **Rohnert Park**

The Rohnert Park EOC responded to approaching flames on the morning of October 9 with evacuation of their northeast sections G and H. The city-designated shelter was the Burton Center. Local businesses also offered shelter.

- **Petaluma**

The Petaluma EOC was activated in the Day Room of the Petaluma Police Building and before dawn, the Luchessi Center and Veteran’s Memorial Building in Petaluma opened for shelter. The Sonoma Marin Fairgrounds in Petaluma opened along with several smaller shelters. By the end of Monday, Petaluma was sheltering over 1,000 people. Because the Red Cross arrived late, volunteers and extensive community support provided most of the shelter help.

- **Santa Rosa Hospitals**

Kaiser (130+ patients) and Sutter (80+ patients) Hospitals began evacuation around 4 am and were largely completed by 9:00am October 9. Patients were taken to Santa
Rosa Memorial Hospital and the Kaiser Hospital in San Rafael. Those patients requiring medical support were taken by ambulance; buses provided transport for other patients.

Heavy southbound traffic on Highway 101 impeded evacuations. Ambulances and other emergency vehicles were forced to use the shoulders.

- Calistoga to Mark West

Evacuations along the main path of the Tubbs fire began just ahead of the rapidly moving fire. Residents often relied on police and sheriff deputies for transport. Most people headed south, to Petaluma and beyond.

- Fountaingrove and Coffey Park

Evacuees from Fountaingrove and Coffey Park added to the evacuee flow. As the morning progressed, evacuees from these areas went to Analy High School in Sebastopol and shelters in Petaluma.

- Shelter Comments

The Finley Center filled quickly. Traffic in that area was jammed. According to officials, if the fire continued south from Coffey Park, Finley Center would also need to be evacuated.

**Notification Systems**

- Non-Technical Notifications

  A large percentage of people were alerted by:

  - The strong smell of smoke and visible flames
  - Police and Fire Sirens and loudspeakers
  - Emergency personnel knocking on doors
  - Neighbors knocking on doors
  - Neighbors using their car horns and megaphones

  Emergency managers praise the community involvement and neighborhood awareness since they were critical in providing notification and helping to get people out of danger.

- SoCoAlert

  The SoCo alert system is a commercial product that provides mass notifications and alert messages to residents in a geographically specific area.
The database supporting SoCoAlert includes both explicit sign-ups and data from other sources, such as registered landlines. If the original alert call has less than a 60% connection rate, second and third calls are made to the non-connecting numbers.

- **Nixle**

Sonoma County authorities also use this privately operated service for issuing warnings and alerts. Residents can access these messages on a website or subscribe for text notifications. The subscription process requires the user to specify which geographic region and which types of information will be accepted. This was not a widely subscribed service at the onset of the fires.

- **IPAWS/WEA**

IPAWS (Integrated Public Alert and Warning System) is a service operated by FEMA to issue warnings. WEA (Wireless Emergency Alert) is an IPAWS service for texting messages to cell phones.

IPAWS/WEA target cell phone towers in a specified geographic area for each public safety message. The cell tower computer directs the specified text message to all cell phones serviced by that cell tower. The cell service provider is not required to send out those messages. The County Emergency Management team reviewed this system and made recommendations to upper management that implementation deficiencies spoke against its use.

The California OES (Office of Emergency Services) report requested by the County Administrator gives an in-depth analysis of the three alert systems. (See bibliography).

**After Action Reviews**

After a disaster, a critical step for jurisdictions is to review the event with a qualitative review of actions taken in response to the emergency. An After Action Review is the method that city and county departments use to analyze and document what happened and how those responsible for responding to the event can do it better. Each emergency entity conducts its own After Action Review. Their After Action Reports take time and resources to complete. Therefore, After Action Reports are not available to this Civil Grand Jury in time to incorporate those reviews in this report.
FINDINGS

F1. The County Emergency Operations Center faced numerous challenges early in its set-up, affecting efficiency.

F2. The emergency notification systems in use did not reach the most people in the quickest time.

F3. Due to demands for immediate tactical emergency response, emergency oversight and management were overwhelmed.

F4. Information flow from County Emergency Operations Center to City Emergency Operations Centers was not adequate in meeting the needs of City Emergency Operations Centers.

F5. Sound judgment and extraordinary efforts by individual emergency responders reduced the risk of more serious loss in Santa Rosa.

F6. The County Sheriff’s Office and Santa Rosa Police Department were immersed in intense emergency actions which led to a lack of critical communication.

F7. Lack of strategic communication and information on evacuation routes and shelter sites led to increased risk and confusion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury recommends that:

R1. The Board of Supervisors reassign the Sonoma County Emergency Operations Center to be under the management of a response entity that operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, such as the Sheriff’s Office and that this reassignment be made by December 31, 2018. (F1, F3, F4, F6, F7)

R2. The County Administrator revise the County Emergency Operations Plan in collaboration with all City Managers to incorporate lessons learned from this emergency, by December 31, 2018. (F1, F2, F3, F4, F6, F7)

R3. The Board of Supervisors incorporate findings from all Emergency Operations Centers’ After Action Reports into the revised County Emergency Operations Plan, by December 31, 2018. (F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7)

R4. The Board of Supervisors strongly support revisions to the State of California Fire Mutual Aid as cited by the California Fire Chiefs Association, by December 31, 2018. (F3, F5)
REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal code section 933.05, the grand jury requires responses as follows:

- Sonoma County Board of Supervisors (R1, R3, R4)
- Sonoma County Administrator (R2)

The governing bodies indicated above should be aware that the comment or response of the governing body must be conducted subject to the notice, agenda, and open meeting requirements of the Brown Act.

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City of Sonoma Emergency Operations Plan November 2015

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Responses to 2004/2005 Grand Jury Report
APPENDIX A

Imminent Fire Warning for Fountaingrove October 9 at 1:41am. The Santa Rosa Fire Marshall was called to a two-alarm fire on 6th Street on October 8 at 10:40pm. At the same time, he was called to the St. Helena CAL FIRE command center. When the Fire Marshall completed his role at the 6th Street fire, he began his drive up 101 and out Mark West Springs Road toward St. Helena. Due to the intense fire, he was unable to get past Safari West on Porter Creek Road.

Fire and law enforcement activities were intense in the Mark West area as emergency personnel raced to evacuate citizens ahead of the unpredictable, quickly advancing flames. The Fire Marshall noted that no units were turning into the Cross Creek area, but were heading with sirens blaring to Mark West. So he probed the area up Cross Creek and found spot fires and flying embers. He activated his siren and loudspeaker to rouse residents and called in the first evacuation to SRPD (and an SRPD Lieutenant) for Cross Creek, St. Andrews and Skyfarm at around 1:00am.

He then proceeded toward Fountaingrove and called in SRPD to block residents from driving north into an active fire area. At this time fire was spreading into Fountaingrove, but no organized emergency response had been activated. He consulted with his supervisor for guidance on calling for the evacuation of such a large area including Fountaingrove. He used his best judgment in taking the advice to “go big” if needed. This evacuation area was bounded by Mark West Springs Road, Brush Creek Road, Mendocino Avenue/Old Redwood Highway, and the southern border of Montecito Heights. The SRPD Lieutenant who was alerted by the first (Cross Creek) evacuation request went to Fountaingrove and witnessed fire on the south side. He also called in an alert and began evacuations immediately.
APPENDIX B

A Disaster Waiting to Happen.

Conclusions from the 2004/2005 Sonoma County Grand Jury Report:

The County has adopted the SEMS approach to developing disaster recovery plans. The County signed an agreement in 1997 to assist all of the principal cities with their SEMS-based plans. The plans as assembled are inconsistent in content and with each other. Some of the plans are seriously out of date, and in none of the plans is there evidence of post "9/11" updating. It is difficult to believe that the events of September 11, 2001 did not cause significant reviews of disaster plans. It is even more difficult to believe plan revisions would not have been indicated as a result of such reviews.

The smaller cities have the least complete and (typically) the oldest plans, and are relying far too much on the County EOC to "rescue" them in the event of a disaster within their own boundaries. Consider the heavy dependency in the county on a minimal number of North/South, East/West access roads, and it is not difficult to imagine the central EOC having major problems in assisting a disaster in for example, Cloverdale or Sonoma.

The small cadre of mid-level staffers involved in the design and drafting of the plans demonstrated a good deal of understanding and enthusiasm; the same could not be said for their managers and supervisors. Some of that may just be the way such plans are developed. The grand jury's fear is that in the event of a major disaster too much recovery dependency will be placed on these staffers. Most of the senior management and elected officials interviewed were well-distanced from, and in some cases ignorant of salient pieces of the plans.

In almost every case, procedures from law enforcement, as they related to their role in an emergency, or a disaster within their own infrastructure, were provided to the grand jury as a secondary offering, in some cases not a direct match to the question the grand jury had asked. The jury is left with a very real impression that law enforcement is relying too much on a disaster simply being just another (maybe larger) critical incident, for which their personnel are trained. Too often law enforcement quoted street disturbances, or Russian River floods, as examples of their emergency-handling prowess. The jury does not believe that either of these examples is a good basis for a major (unexpected) disaster plan.

The grand jury has no expectation that all of the personnel involved in a disaster recovery will actually work from the plan manual. However, the spasmodic, in some cases zero, use of checklists misses a great opportunity to put effective planning into action at times of great personal stress and confusion. SEMS certainly encourages use of checklists. After-action reports from major disasters elsewhere also stress the value of checklists.

The senior management commitment to the various disaster plans, at the Board of Supervisors level, County Administrator; the city council level, the city manager level, and the public safety level, is demonstrably inconsistent and does not bode well should the county experience a major disaster.
THE EVACUATION AND SHELTERING OF ANIMALS DURING THE FIRESTORM OF OCTOBER 2017

SUMMARY

In October of 2017 the citizens of Sonoma County watched in horror as large swaths of our community burned. News reports highlighted the terrifying evacuations and escapes of many households. Additional news reports, town hall meetings, government and community agencies continue to highlight the struggles of the families who lost everything and the almost incomprehensible task of rebuilding homes and lives in the face of such devastation.

There has been less reporting on the plight of companion and other animals that were also impacted by the firestorm. Hundreds were evacuated and sheltered during the fires. The Civil Grand Jury chose to investigate how these events unfolded and report on the effectiveness of the planning, preparedness and implementation of animal disaster response.

For this report, the Civil Grand Jury studied the evacuation and sheltering of small companion animals and horses in Santa Rosa and the surrounding rural area. Other communities throughout Sonoma County also faced the challenge of safely evacuating their animals and we acknowledge their efforts and successes. Unfortunately, it is not possible to know the total number of pets and large animals that died during the firestorm.

The Civil Grand Jury investigation focused on Sonoma County Animal Services, a division of the County’s Department of Health Services; and the Sonoma County Event Center at the Fairgrounds, a quasi-governmental agency; and their respective roles during the firestorm. The investigation also considered the roles of mutual aid responders, non-governmental animal organizations including the Humane Society of Sonoma County, the Sonoma County Horse Council, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the California Veterinary Medical Association and many dedicated community volunteers. The Civil Grand Jury recognizes that staff and volunteers responded heroically to the call to action and provided critical resources during the emergency. Many worked tirelessly throughout the fires to ensure that as many animals as possible could be brought to safety.

The investigation uncovered some deficits. The Fairgrounds had no disaster plan or staff disaster preparedness training in place prior to the firestorm, and this led to some confusion and disorder in the early phase of the animal sheltering operation. Animal Services was well-prepared for most emergencies but lacked some critical resources, including an adequate alternative source of power, fire protection equipment, and functioning radios for mutual aid staff. Additionally, the structure of the County Emergency Operations Center and the related Health Services Department Operations Center created inefficiencies in Animal Service’s ability to respond.
The County lacks a comprehensive animal emergency response plan that identifies a lead department to coordinate the response to an emergency. Following the fires, Animal Services, the Fairgrounds and several non-governmental animal organizations have begun to develop formal protocols for a county-wide animal disaster response. Dedicating staff time and financial resources to animal disaster preparedness through planning, training and practice are essential elements in preparing for the next emergency.

GLOSSARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DHS</td>
<td>Department of Health Services, County</td>
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<tr>
<td>AERP</td>
<td>Animal Emergency Response Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>EOC</td>
<td>County Emergency Operations Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOC</td>
<td>Department of Health Services Emergency Operations Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>EOP</td>
<td>County Emergency Operations Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEMS</td>
<td>Standardized Emergency Management System</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIMS</td>
<td>National Incident Management System</td>
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<tr>
<td>CVMA</td>
<td>California Veterinary Medical Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAC</td>
<td>Mobile Animal Clinic</td>
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<tr>
<td>FEMA</td>
<td>Federal Emergency Management Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICS</td>
<td>Incident Command System; also name of FEMA disaster training courses</td>
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<td>MOU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
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BACKGROUND

This is a self-initiated investigation by the 2017-2018 Civil Grand Jury. The safety and value of animals warrant attention and response during an emergency. Animals play a significant role in the quality of life in Sonoma County, providing both companionship and income to their owners. Animal owners as a population are at greater risk during an emergency, as they often will not evacuate unless their animals can leave with them. A study of risk factors for “evacuation failure” was conducted and reported in 2001 for Yuba County, California, following a flooding emergency. It found that the risk of evacuation failure increases with increasing numbers of pets.

"Particularly relevant to the evacuation of pet owners is the strength of the human-animal bond, the perceived risk to the owners and their pets, the time and resources needed to evacuate animals, and facilities for the housing of evacuated animals...If owners anticipate being separated from their pets or being turned away from public shelters because of their pets, they may refuse to evacuate...The more pets a household owned, the higher the risk of household evacuation failure...." 

A 2014 report by Sonoma State University conducted for the Sonoma County Horse Council stated:

“Sonoma County is home to 26,000 equines. The equine industry generates $613 million annually for Sonoma County businesses, supports over 7,700 jobs, and provides over $11 million in annual local tax revenues for Sonoma County governments from..."
direct spending on equine ownership totaling $464 million. There are ripple effects on Sonoma County that add to the equine industry’s local economic footprint.”

METHODOLOGY

The Civil Grand Jury interviewed representatives from the following organizations:

- Sonoma County Animal Services
- Sonoma County Events Center at the Fairgrounds
- Sonoma County Department of Health Services City of Sonoma
- Sonoma County Horse Council – A non-profit organization founded in 1993 to promote the health and well-being of horses, and to support horse-related activities in Sonoma County.
- Humane Society of Sonoma County – Founded in 1931, “[a] locally-founded, donor-supported non-profit organization dedicated to bringing people and companion animals together.”
- Private citizens
- Newspaper articles, web articles, radio shows, and other public media

Additional organizations researched included:

- California Veterinary Medical Association – One of the largest veterinary medical associations in the nation. Founded in 1888, it is based in San Francisco. Their Medical Reserve Corps is a volunteer group of veterinarians that responds to requests for help with animals when disasters strike.

- American Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals – A national non-profit organization, founded in 1866 on the belief that animals are entitled to kind and respectful treatment from humans, and protection under the law.

- Forgotten Felines – A local non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and improving the lives of feral cats.

DISCUSSION

SONOMA COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES

The Sonoma County Department of Health Services (DHS) is comprised of three major divisions: Behavioral Health, Public Health and Administration. The Public Health Division oversees six separate programs, one being Animal Services. Services are provided over a large geographical area, including all unincorporated areas of the County, and through contracts with the City of Santa Rosa and Town of Windsor. The annual budget for 2017-18 was $6.5 million, with the majority of the funds allocated from the County General Fund. Animal Services accepts community donations of cash and materials, which can be used to supplement their budget and help cover costs.
Animal Services is divided into three operational units: the Field Services Division, the Animal Shelter, and Administration. When Animal Services was first established, there were two field supervisors to administer the Field Services Division.

Following a county reorganization in 2010, Animal Services was transferred from the county Department of Agriculture to the Department of Health Services (Figure 1). At that time one field supervisor position was eliminated. During the fires, there were thirty-five full-time staff positions budgeted but only thirty-one staff members available to respond during the firestorm. The department is left short-handed when there are vacancies, vacations, or medical leave because there are no replacement staff.

**Emergency Planning and Training**

Animal Services was well-prepared for most emergencies. They had a disaster response plan in place, called the *Animal Care and Control Division Animal Emergency Response Plan for Official Declared Emergencies (AERP)*, dated December, 2011. This Plan has been revised periodically over the years as Animal Services gained further experience through their participation in various emergency responses such as the Valley Fire in Lake County in 2015, and the periodic floods on the lower Russian River, most recently in 2016.

Sonoma County Animal Services was also in the process of developing an *Animals in Disaster Service Worker Volunteer Program* intended to support Sonoma County by coordinating non-governmental organizations and the private business sector to build, sustain and improve the capability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural or man-made disasters that affect animals.

In addition to the AERP, Animal Services contracted with a consultant from UC Davis to assist in developing an addendum to the County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) titled *Animals in*...
Disaster Response Plan, an “Annex” to the EOP. The document was in an updated draft form and, although not formally approved, was successfully implemented during the firestorm. Its purpose is to assist local jurisdictions in planning for animal evacuation and sheltering before disasters happen in the County. It would standardize protocols and practices throughout Sonoma County government, direct the overall coordination of resources, and identify key players and resources. It would also ensure consistency with the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS), used nationwide for disaster planning. Completion of the Annex is expected by the end of 2018.

The Animal Services management was fully trained and experienced in emergency response. Managers had completed the “Introduction to NIMS” and “Introduction to the Incident Command System” courses (IS-700 and ICS-100,) offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and more advanced FEMA courses as well (Fig. 2). Many line staff were not yet fully trained. With no official time set aside for them to attend ICS training classes, staff is left to find the time in the midst of their regular duties, or do it on their own time. As part of the annual county training, Animal Services participates in the Great California Shake-Out Earthquake Drills, held state-wide every October 18.

Field Officers carry additional responsibilities and often work in conjunction with law enforcement and firefighters when responding to service calls. Under section 830.9 of the Penal Code, “Animal control officers are not peace officers but may exercise the powers of arrest of a peace officer as specified in Section 836 and the power to serve warrants as specified in Sections 1523 and 1530...” including the use of firearms. Specialty training for these powers is required for the Field Officers.

SONOMA COUNTY EVENT CENTER AT THE FAIRGROUNDS

The Sonoma County Event Center at the Fairgrounds (Fairgrounds) is a 501(c) (3) non-profit event business, and is also a quasi-governmental agency. The Fairgrounds receives no funding from the County to operate and maintain the property. Instead, revenues come from building and grounds rentals, as well as parking fees and food and beverage sales, from the County Fair and other events. The organization is governed by a fifteen-member Board of Directors appointed by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, with twenty-seven full-time staff headed by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO reports to the Fairgrounds Board of Director and works with the County’s General Services Department. There are approximately thirty temporary workers, but during the Sonoma County Fair as many as 600 temporary staff are hired.
Emergency Planning and Training

The Fairgrounds is in the event business, and they responded to the evacuation and sheltering of animal as a large event. Their staff frequently deals with animals through agriculture-related events such as FFA and 4-H activities, the County Fair, and horse racing. They commonly deal with large crowds, and can quickly set up and remove the contents of large buildings. However, Fairgrounds staff do not generally play an active role in the care of animals.

Although there had been attempts in the past to develop a written emergency plan, the Fairgrounds did not have one when the fires struck, and there was no requirement for emergency training for the staff. Additionally, the Fairgrounds did not have a formal plan for the evacuation of the Fairgrounds’ site itself, should it be threatened or damaged in an emergency, nor was there a formal plan identifying alternative evacuation sites for animals should the Fairgrounds be unavailable during a disaster.

THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE

"Where are we supposed to go with all our animals? Have they opened the Fairgrounds?"

911 Caller to REDCOM at 10:45pm on October 8, 2017

Animal Services

The staff began to arrive around 1:00am on October 9 as the Tubbs Fire advanced within two miles of the Animal Services facility on Airport Boulevard. The county-issued phones and computers were not working due to the power outage caused by the firestorm. This limited the amount of information immediately available.

There were ninety animals housed at the Animal Services shelter facility the night the firestorm broke out. The staff took action to prepare these animals for transfer since an unknown number of animals would soon arrive. Using their personal cell phones, which worked intermittently, the staff contacted shelters in nearby counties that quickly responded. All animals that could be moved were safely transported out of the area without issue.

The shelter employees worked out of their cars and service trucks, or sat at outdoor tables. Staff used personal cell phones that were charged in their cars. Animal Services had a “disaster trailer” for use in the field during emergencies, and it contained a small generator that they could use. It was designed to power a small trailer and could only produce enough energy to allow the shelter workers to function. It would take three days to get a sufficiently powerful generator brought in and full power restored. Power to the area would not be restored by PG&E until the following week.

Animal Services Field Officers had communication with law enforcement and fire personnel
through their county-issued radios. During the first two days, the Sheriff and Fire Departments along with the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) passed along the service requests for Animal Services assistance. On normal service calls, Field Officers are at risk for accident or injury from animals. During the October firestorm, field officers were escorted behind the fire lines by law enforcement without the protection of fire safety gear to perform various rescues. Normal operations would typically have thirty to fifty calls a day, but by the third day of the firestorm Animal Services was receiving over 300 calls a day. From October 10 to November 10 the total number was over 3,600 calls, compared to 1,700 calls during the same period in 2016. From the first day of the firestorm, the shelter was open twenty-four hours a day.

The Animal Services Field Officers received an increasing number of requests to conduct welfare checks on animals that had been left behind in evacuated areas as it was safer for the animals to shelter in place. Food (provided by donations) and water were transported to the evacuated homes, rural barns and pastures. Because of limited space at the Animal Services’ shelter to store the donations, the County Department of Agriculture/Weights & Measures opened their nearby building for use. The close proximity of the building and supplies proved to be an invaluable asset to the rapid response of the Field Officers.

The County Emergency Operations Center was activated at midnight on October 9 and Animal Services initially reported to this command center. However, when the Department of Health Services’ (DHS) emergency response activities are too large or complex to be managed at the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), DHS opens a Department Operations Center (DOC) to coordinate their department’s response. This process was begun in the early hours of October 9, and staff began to arrive at approximately 6:00am.

Animal Services was required to report to the DOC and lost direct access to the EOC. The change in reporting structure added difficulty in receiving up-to-date information, delayed resource requests during these critical hours, and slowed or impeded Animal Services’ emergency response.

This organizational structure complicated Animal Services’ emergency response in a few ways:

- The additional layer of review that all Animal Services resource requests had to go through led to misunderstandings. Clarity and urgency were lost, and some requests went unfilled.

- Equipment and supply needs could not be ordered directly or purchased nearby; requests were forwarded to Department of Health Services to do the ordering. This led to delays both in ordering and delivery. Items were often delivered to the Department of Health Services office and had to then be transported to Animal Services.

- The 2014 Department of Health Services Emergency Action Plan did not address Animal Services. However, there was a Site-Specific Addendum that adds the Animal Services physical plant facility and staff but contains no direction for field personnel or evacuation of animals other than if there is a fire in the building.

- All DOC members are required to take the ICS training classes offered through FEMA. At the
time of the firestorm, more than half of the DOC members had not completed this training

The Fairgrounds

The 2017 Harvest Fair had just ended on Sunday evening, October 8. The staff and workers at the Fairgrounds had disassembled the exhibits in both Finley Hall and Grace Pavilion. On October 9, 2017 at 12:30am the Fairgrounds received a phone call from an official in Napa County seeking stall space for horses being evacuated from a growing fire in Napa County. The CEO agreed to open the stall area and accept the animals.

At 2:00am County General Services relayed a request from the Emergency Operations Center to open the Fairgrounds for animals being evacuated from the wildfires spreading through Sonoma County. The Fairgrounds management called in all available staff. The Fairgrounds staff prepares and maintains the facilities but do not generally have a direct role in the care of animals. However, the Fairgrounds management and staff were responsive to the needs of the owners and volunteers who cared for the animals.

Following the emergency notification, Fairgrounds management made sure the gates were open for the arrival of animals. Aston Gate #7 at the south end of the Fairgrounds was the entry point for animals, as well as the large firefighting and support vehicles. Beginning around midnight on the first night of the fire, evacuated animals of all kinds began to arrive. The majority were horses, but alpacas, donkeys, goats, chickens, llamas, sheep, rabbits and cattle also arrived. The initial chaos threatened to make the Gate a chokepoint.

Record keeping of horse and owner consisted of strips of duct tape placed on the animal with a scrawled name and phone number. Owners and volunteers with horse trailers courageously evacuated animals, some making multiple trips to the fire-threatened areas as the calls for help came in. Social media, phone and text trees, and email were all utilized to best identify where horses needed to be moved.

During the early chaos on Monday morning, volunteers from the Sonoma County Horse Council took over the admission of horses. The Council remained in this leadership role throughout the firestorm. Intake of other animals, large and small, was handled by other non-governmental organizations with assistance from Fairgrounds volunteers and temporary staff.

Initially, evacuees were temporarily able to keep their family pets close by while staying at the Fairgrounds. However, American Red Cross policy forbids pets in most shelters. When the Red Cross took over operations in Grace Pavilion, no pets were allowed in the facility. Small animals were moved to Finley Hall, which was designated as a shelter for people with pets. The Animal Services Mobile Animal Clinic (MAC) and Forgotten Felines MAC were parked by the Veterans Building. The pets housed in the MACs could be visited by their families staying at the Fairground’s shelter.

Animal Services Field Officers were sent to various shelters to assess the animal need. Upon arrival, veterinarians from the California Veterinary Medical Association were dispatched to the Fairgrounds and other shelter sites to assist with animal care. Businesses and community
members donated more than sufficient amounts of animal feed, bedding and other supplies. The Fairgrounds staff had radios, which remained in operation. Cell service, as at the Animal Shelter, was intermittent to nonexistent, largely due to loss of cell towers. By the fourth day of the firestorm, a temporary cell tower had been erected and full service was restored. The Fairgrounds never lost power.

Mutual Aid

Animal Services called for Mutual Aid on Tuesday, October 10. The first mutual aid agencies to arrive came from Marin County and the City of Petaluma that same day. Among the mutual aid agencies that quickly responded to the call were the animal agencies of Alameda, Lake, and San Mateo counties; and the cities of Modesto, Palo Alto, Petaluma, Pleasanton, Rohnert Park, and San Francisco.

Mutual aid responders provided much-needed assistance in the field, although Animal Services scheduled them for day shifts only. Based on their experience fighting the Valley Fire, Animal Services believed it was unsafe to ask Mutual Aid personnel to provide coverage at night due to the destruction of many street signs, lights and landmarks plus an insufficient knowledge of the geographic area. Animal Services Field Officers were able to communicate with law enforcement and fire personnel through their county-issued radios. However, when Animal Services picked up a bank of additional radios for Mutual Aid staff from the Sheriff’s Department, the radios were not operational. This complicated communication even further.

Animal Organizations, Community Volunteers, and Donations

Early on, Animal Services realized that they would need as much assistance as they could get, and reached out to other animal organizations. In spite of the fact that there were no Memoranda of Understanding or formal plans for collaboration, these organizations responded without hesitation.

Animal Services first contacted the Humane Society of Sonoma County at 5:30am that Monday. Upon learning of the firestorm, the California Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA), contacted Animal Services to have them officially request CVMA help. Once requested, CVMA dispatched their Medical Reserve Corps of at least thirty veterinarians. The CVMA veterinarians came on a rotating basis to set up and operate an emergency medical facility where injured pets could be treated. The National American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals dispatched their Mobile Animal Clinic (MAC) which consisted of a tractor-trailer and twelve staff. This MAC was parked near the animal shelter at the Sonoma County Airport.
The Humane Society of Sonoma County was a critical local resource. Animal Services first reached out to the Humane Society on Monday, October 9 as part of their effort to resettle the shelter animals to make space for evacuated animals. The non-profit agency aided Animal Services by administration of a website for over 600 lost and found pets. The Humane Society shelter received a total of 124 animals, including transfers, surrenders and strays.

One species requiring special evacuation and care were hobby and decorative fish. Animal Services reached out to the koi community and they responded with volunteers, instructions, feeding and six 350-gallon tanks. UC Davis provided help in catching, transporting and treatment. The rescued fish were housed in the nearby Weights and Measures building.

Local businesses, animal organizations, and community members donated more than 50,000 pounds of pet food as well as medical and other supplies for the care and sheltering of the animals. Animal Services estimated that more than $250,000 in cash donations also came in during the firestorm. The Fairgrounds also received generous donations of food and equipment for the sheltered horses and other animals.

**COLLABORATION AND DEDICATION TO SUCCESS**

Almost every animal brought to the Animal Shelter was returned to the owner; only a few pets died from their injuries while being sheltered. By a month after the firestorm, Animal Services had returned to normal. A total of forty mutual aid personnel had come to assist Animal Services. Marin County, which was the first agency to respond to the initial mutual aid call, was also the last to leave on October 31.

The Fairgrounds sheltering operation was closed on October 23 as the number of large animals dwindled. In total, the Fairgrounds had sheltered approximately 500 evacuated large animals, 300 of which were horses. Small animals and pets had been housed in numerous shelters serviced by Animal Services, including forty to fifty dogs and cats at the Veterans Building shelter, sixty to eighty at the Finley Building at the Fairgrounds, and forty to fifty at the Finley Center on College Avenue.

Horses and other large animals at the Fairgrounds were returned to their homes after the danger passed. However, many barns and fences were destroyed, resulting in some animals being moved to locations away from the fires, such as west Sonoma County and Marin.

The investigation uncovered some deficits in the animal emergency response planning and preparedness that could have informed a more cohesive and perhaps more successful response to the fires. In spite of this, Animal Services, the Fairgrounds, the dedicated community organizations and countless volunteers came together through their collaborative efforts to save and shelter animals. Their rapid and often heroic contributions made a difference.
WHAT’S NEXT

Some non-governmental organizations provided extensive and critical support to the evacuation and sheltering of animals. However, reimbursement for their services may be more complicated because no Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) between the government agencies and non-governmental organizations were in place prior to a disaster.

"Pre-disaster planning should place a high priority on facilitating pet evacuation through pre-disaster education of pet owners and emergency management personnel."

Yuba County, California Report 2001

Prior to the October fires there had been some preliminary discussions between County Emergency Services, the Fairgrounds and the Sonoma County Horse Council regarding animal evacuations. Since then, Animal Services has been working with the Fairgrounds and other animal shelter and rescue organizations to create a defined team of responders for animal evacuations as well as some additional protocol. Projected goals include providing training to Fairgrounds staff on the care and sheltering of large numbers of animals during an emergency; developing Memoranda of Understanding with non-governmental animal shelter and rescue organizations; and providing the Animals in Disaster Service Worker Volunteer Program training. Animal Services budget constraints may limit their ability to fully respond when faced with the next emergency or disaster, which is sure to come.

Health Services is working to implement a new tracking system to ensure that mandatory Incident Command System training is completed by all appropriate Department Operations Center staff and managers. A trained, certified and organized pool of local volunteers and staff is critical, especially before Mutual Aid can respond.

FINDINGS

F1. The County of Sonoma lacks a comprehensive animal emergency response plan that identifies Animal Services as lead department to coordinate the response to the emergency. The Animals in Disaster Response Plan, an Annex to the (County) Emergency Operations Plan of Animal Services was intended to accomplish this, was in revised draft form at the time of the firestorm, and was implemented effectively.

F2. The lack of an alternative power source at the Animal Services facilities, and the malfunction of radios for the use by mutual aid agencies, hampered communication and operations throughout the emergency.

F3. Animal Services’ emergency response was hindered by its assignment to Health Services’ Department Operations Center instead of the County Emergency Operations Center. The Department of Health Services lacked a
plan to ensure that Department Operations Center members completed the required Incident Command Center training.

F4. The lack of a formalized Emergency Response Plan and training for the Fairgrounds led to some confusion and disorder in the early phase of the animal sheltering operation.

F5. Without formal Memoranda of Understanding between the County and non-governmental organizations, reimbursement of costs by FEMA may be more difficult.

F6. Following the firestorm, Animal Services, the Fairgrounds, and non-governmental agencies have begun to develop formal protocols for animal disaster response, including alternate animal evacuation sites should the Fairgrounds be unavailable. Animal Services has plans to improve the volunteer program to train and certify animal disasters volunteers which will enhance animal rescue capabilities.

F7. Animal Services is a first responder that operates 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, works in conjunction with law enforcement, and exercises the powers listed under California Penal Code 830.9 including the use of firearms. Animal Services management was fully trained and experienced in emergency response, but much of Animal Services staff lacks Incident Command System training.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury recommends that:

R1. The Board of Supervisors designate Animal Services as the lead agency for Animal Emergency Planning and Response for Sonoma County, and the County Administrator assign an Animal Services representative to the Emergency Operations Center, by December 31, 2018. (F1, F3)

R2. The Department of Health Services Director ensure that Animal Services has adequate power, safety and communication equipment available for emergency use by December 31, 2018. (F2)

R3. The Animal Services Director finalize both the draft Animals in Disaster Response Plan, an Annex to the (County) Emergency Operations Plan and the draft Animals in Disaster Service Worker Volunteer Program by December 31, 2018. (F1, F6)

R4. The Board of Supervisors and the County Administrator implement an emergency response and training plan for the Fairgrounds, including annual disaster training for regular and temporary staff, by December 31, 2018. (F4)
R5. The Board of Supervisors and the County Administrator enter into Memoranda of Understanding with non-governmental organizations that play a role in animal disaster emergencies by December 31, 2018. (F5)

R6. Training standards should be enforced by ensuring that the Animal Services Director require that all field officers complete Incident Command System and fire safety courses with an emphasis on animal emergencies, and the Director of the Department of Health Services ensure that all Department Operations Center members complete the mandatory Incident Command System, by December 31, 2018. (F3)

R7. The Board of Supervisors and County Administrator analyze the current placement of Animal Services under the Department of Health Services, and determine if Animal Services should be reassigned to an agency that operates 24 hours a day, by December 31, 2018. (F7)

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05, the Civil Grand Jury requires responses as follows:

R1, R4, R5, R7    Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
R1, R4, R5, R7    Sonoma County Administrator
R2, R6    Sonoma County Department of Health Services Director
R3, R6    Sonoma County Animal Services Director

The governing bodies indicated above should be aware that the comment or response of the governing body must be conducted subject to the notice, agenda and open meeting requirements of the Brown Act.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Sonoma State University June 2014 “The Economic Impact Of Equestrian Activities In Sonoma County, Center for Regional Economic Analysis, School of Business and Economics”


- American Journal of Epidemiology April 2001 “Human and Pet-related Risk Factors for Household Evacuation Failure During a Natural Disaster”

- Sonoma County Animal Services, December 2017 “Animals in Disaster Response Plan—An annex to the Emergency Operations Plan”

- Disaster Research Center at University of Delaware: 1998 “Major Criteria For Judging Disaster Planning & Managing & Their Applicability In Developing Societies”


- Sonoma County Department of Health Services: 2017 “Organization Chart”


- Sonoma County Animal Services: “Budget 2016-2017”; Budget 2017-2018”

- Sonoma County Animal Services: February 2018 “Total Calls Per Date and Hour”

- Sonoma County Animal Services: 2016 “Memorandum of Understanding with American Red Cross”

- Sonoma County Department of Health Services: 4/24/2018 “DHS Disaster Completion Tracking-DOC”

- Governmentjobs.com/careers/Sonoma/classspecs: 2017 “Animal Services Field Officer I & II”


- Sonoma County Board of Supervisor: October 24, 2017 Meeting Agenda Item Summary Report: Mutual Assistance Agreement

- Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury: 2007 Final Report “Sonoma County Employees - Waiting to Be Trained for Disaster”

- California Penal Code: Chapter 4.5. Peace Officers [830-832.18]; Stats 1968, Ch. 1222; Sections 836, 1523, 1530

- Sonoma-county.org: September 2013 “DSW/Emergency Management Training”

- Sonoma County Horse Council: December 2017 “The Horse Journal Winter 2018”


- Dr. Ted Stashak, DVM, February 2018 “SCH Experience: Large Animals Evacuation Center Sonoma County-Fairgrounds”

- KQED Radio: October 8, 2017 911 Caller to REDCOM
OVERALL PROGRESS AT PERMIT SONOMA CONTRIBUTES TO THE REBUILD EFFORT

SUMMARY

Permit Sonoma, formally known as the Permit & Resource Management Department (PRMD), was the subject of two Civil Grand Jury Investigations in 2012-2013 and 2014-2015. The purpose of this investigation is to determine progress on the recommendations made in those reports and to determine if Permit Sonoma is ready to assist owners who lost property in unincorporated areas of the County during the firestorm of October 2017.

Permit Sonoma is a consolidated land use, planning and development permitting agency for land and structures in those areas outside the nine incorporated cities in Sonoma County. In those areas, land development, construction, or reconstruction, are reviewed, permitted and inspected by them. This includes wells, septic systems, and environmental concerns.

Permit Sonoma has made sustained and substantial changes, and has become a more professional, customer-based organization. For example, it has improved its website to assist customers in navigating the permitting process. As a result of this change, the amount of time it takes from application submittal to final approval has been reduced. Industry representatives report positive feedback from customers that supports the Civil Grand Jury’s observations that the changes Permit Sonoma has made have been beneficial and helpful.

Permit Sonoma was already operating at maximum capacity when the firestorm swept through the County. In order for this agency to continue day to day operations, West Coast Code Consultants, Inc., under contract to the County, established the Resiliency Permit Center to issue permits quickly for fire burned homes in unincorporated fire damaged areas. These two agencies work together to meet the needs of citizens seeking permits to build and rebuild. This collaboration has reduced the red tape of rebuilding and expedited the permitting process for fire burned properties.

A variety of factors outside the responsibility of Permit Sonoma and the Resiliency Permit Center are impacting the rebuild process. There is a shortage of available construction workers and materials. Residents continue to have issues with insurance companies and the costs associated with upgrades required by code.

The Civil Grand Jury recognizes that positive changes have occurred in the operations and functioning of Permit Sonoma. The firestorm brought into sharp focus the fact that Permit Sonoma alone would be unable to meet the needs of the fire survivors and the rebuilding of their homes. The Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury recommends that Permit Sonoma and the Resiliency Permit Center continue to build on this positive collaboration and on lessons learned from the firestorm in order to be better prepared for the next emergency.
GLOSSARY

**Permit & Resource Management Department:** This is Sonoma County’s consolidated land use agency. It is often referred to as “PRMD,” renamed Permit Sonoma.

**Sonoma County Incorporated Areas:** Includes Cloverdale, Cotati, Healdsburg, Petaluma, Rohnert Park, Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, City of Sonoma, and Town of Windsor. Coffey Park and parts of Fountaingrove are within Santa Rosa city limits.

**Sonoma County Unincorporated Area:** Includes all areas not within the nine incorporated cities. Portions of the Mark West-Wikiup neighborhoods are in unincorporated areas of the County.

**West Coast Code Consultants, Inc.:** This agency operates the Resiliency Permit Center under contract to Sonoma County. It works as an extension to state and local building departments. They specialize in providing plan review, and they offer a range of professional inspection services to city, county, state and federal agencies.

**Resiliency Permit Center:** Works with Permit Sonoma to focus on permits and property management for Sonoma County fire victims and their rebuilding efforts.

**Code enforcement:** As building standards are upgraded and made safer by the state, they are put into the building codes. New building projects must adhere to these new standards.

**United Stated Geological Survey (USGS):** Created by an act of Congress in 1879. The USGS serves the Nation by providing reliable scientific information to describe and understand the Earth; minimize loss of life and property from natural disasters; manage water, biological, energy, and mineral resources; and enhance and protect our quality of life.

BACKGROUND

Previous Civil Grand Juries investigated and reported on operations and customer service complaints in PRMD. The Civil Grand Jury reports from 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 discuss this in detail. The firestorm had the potential to exacerbate problems that had plagued PRMD for years. The current Civil Grand Jury wants to verify progress made and determine if PRMD is ready for future challenges.

METHODOLOGY

The Civil Grand Jury:

- Interviewed and observed members of Permit Sonoma and the Resiliency Permit Center.
- Attended public meetings presented by members of Permit Sonoma and the Resiliency Permit Center.
- Reviewed Permit Sonoma’s website.
- Reviewed internal documents of Permit Sonoma.
- Interviewed members of the construction industry including North Coast Builders Exchange.
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this report is to determine if Permit Sonoma has made progress in implementing the recommendations made by previous Civil Grand Juries. The Civil Grand Jury wants to determine if Permit Sonoma is rebuild-ready for residents who lost property and homes in unincorporated areas of the County during the firestorm of October 2017.

Dramatic changes that are notable and sustainable have been observed by members of the Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury. Permit & Resource Department Management (PRMD) has been changed to Permit Sonoma, a more professional and customer-based organization. Industry representatives note increased professionalism and better customer service.

Permit Sonoma is a large and complex department of the County government. It is a consolidated land use, planning and development permitting agency for land and structures outside the nine incorporated cities in Sonoma County. Land development, construction and reconstruction in those areas are reviewed, permitted and inspected by them. Wells, septic systems, and environmental concerns and other areas not listed here are also within the scope of Permit Sonoma. Fire recovery, in the context of this report, does not include incorporated areas such as Coffey Park and some Fountaingrove neighborhoods.

Within the scope of Permit Sonoma’s mandate to serve the public, employees hold 18 different professional licenses. Some of these include: Soil & Water Geology, Architectural, Code Enforcement Engineering, Surveyor, Large Machinery and electrical and plumbing licensing.

The department has 160 employees, including permanent, extra help and temporary personnel. Its total budget is about $27 million, and approximately 20% of its funding comes from the County General Fund. The balance of its funding comes from licenses, permits, and charges for services, including inspections of projects in process.

Permit Sonoma issues a total of 72 different types of permits, and in 2013 about 13,000 permits were issued. By the end of 2018, it is projected that 20,000 permits will be issued. Permit Sonoma reports that before the firestorm, most of its customers were single family homeowners, and much of its business was and is granting permits for upgrades to homes built in the 1940s and 1950s. These older homes need a variety of upgrades such as new roofs, upgraded electrical panels and septic systems, and remodeled bathrooms and kitchens.

Permit Sonoma has developed a comprehensive checklist for all types of permit applications. These checklists are now available online at Permit Sonoma’s website. Builders and contractors can use them to efficiently prepare their permit applications. In the past, securing a permit could be an unwieldy process complicated by internal structural and personnel problems as well as by the lack of relevant technology. These problems added time and cost to the project.

The new changes have resulted in a decrease in time from permit application to the granting of the permit. This process used to take months, and now takes weeks. The Permit Sonoma website provides easily accessible public information. Within this website, there is a dashboard with current wait times and other useful information about the most commonly requested permits.
Below are some substantial and sustained changes that were initiated and in place prior to the October fires:

- Web-based services enhance efficiency for customers of Permit Sonoma.
- A recently launched “dashboard” is embedded on the website. It shows monthly permit data regarding the time needed to go from application submission to issuance. Permits included are: building permits, grading permits, encroachment permits, and well and septic permits.
- Short videos instruct the general public on the types of projects that require permits.
- Pre-permit checklists and appointments are provided to ensure projects are expedited and approval-ready when submitted.
- Commonly used forms are available online.
- Apps for smart phones allow contractors and residents to schedule inspections, manage projects, and move through the process more efficiently.
- Workshops are designed to provide information to the public on a variety of construction related topics.
- Peak-hour information is posted so that customers may visit Permit Sonoma during slower hours, reducing wait times. (See the Appendix)

Residents who want to learn more about the permit process can attend workshops or view Permit Sonoma’s YouTube videos. These resources provide information to contractors and residents that can help them to better navigate and maneuver through the permit process.

Prior to the fires, Permit Sonoma was operating at its maximum capacity and had incorporated the positive changes listed above. To anticipate the workload created by the rebuilding in fire damaged areas, and to maintain the positive changes in Permit Sonoma, an outside consulting agency, West Coast Code Consultants, Inc., was contracted by the County of Sonoma to provide building services to fire survivors.

The Resiliency Permit Center is staffed by West Coast Code Consultants, Inc., which issues permits for construction on burnt property only. This company reviews plans, issues permits and conducts inspections in unincorporated fire zones, thus streamlining the permit process.

The Resiliency Permit Center works under and closely with Permit Sonoma. They are contracted to provide five public workshops on the permit process for rebuilding. This allows Permit Sonoma to continue day to day business in planning, permitting and inspecting, while issuing permits for non-residential structures and property burned in the firestorm.

These workshops are:

- 3 Design & Development Rebuilding Meetings
- 2 Rebuilding Community Meetings, one in Sonoma Valley

The Permit Resiliency Center, in conjunction with Permit Sonoma, is adding additional workshops for fire rebuilders as needed.

West Coast Code Consultants, Inc. observed and adopted customer service strategies and protocols unique to Permit Sonoma. From the first day of operations, the Resiliency Permit Center was able to incorporate the positive customer-based culture they observed. The Resiliency Permit Center’s goal is to streamline
the permit process for builders, provide customer service, and rebuild safely. While the Resiliency Permit Center provides direct services to rebuilders, Permit Sonoma provides historical data and local expertise to speed the permit process.

Staff of Permit Sonoma and the Resiliency Permit Center work collaboratively to provide answers to project-specific questions. These include how to expedite the process, reduce fees, and use the pre-permit interview process. Permit Sonoma had this practice in place before the firestorm and continues to offer it after the fires. Permit Sonoma reports that 80% of its clients who use the pre-permit interview process are able to make necessary changes before actually applying for permits.

The Resiliency Permit Center opened for business on February 13, 2018. In the first month of operation, personnel report that they saw approximately 200-300 clients per week and held 10 - 12 pre-permit meetings per day with homeowners and contractors. Applicants can have their new plans reviewed for code errors and minor errors are corrected by staff immediately. More substantial changes are outlined in a follow-up letter sent within three days. Therefore, errors are corrected prior to applying for permits, expediting the process.

Permits are issued under strict state guidelines, and building codes have changed dramatically since many homes were originally built. Rebuilders are required to have plans that meet the current code. Recent and substantial code changes complicate the rebuild process. Rebuilding a house exactly as it was before the firestorm may not be possible because new code changes can increase costs and mandate plan changes.

Permit Sonoma has anticipated one of many bottlenecks for residents rebuilding. The State requires soil samples so that the configuration of the building pad and foundation on a site can be determined. Because Sonoma County has very few soil sampling firms, this hinders and substantially delays the rebuild process as homeowners wait for this requirement to be done.

In the Mark West-Wikiup area, USGS maps and all previous soil sampling done at the time of original construction has been made available to determine geologic shift. The Mark West-Wikiup area experiences little geologic shift over time, and Permit Sonoma has adjusted the sampling requirement. Instead of two or three samples per lot, Permit Sonoma is allowing two or three samples per 50 lots, saving rebuilders time and money. This modification couldn't be offered to some homeowners, such as those in the Fountaingrove area, because of geologic shifts often found in hilly terrain.

Economic factors outside the control of County agencies might affect the decision of residents to rebuild. Rebuilt homes must adhere to upgraded codes, which can add as much as an additional 20% to the cost of rebuilding. Homeowners may find they are underinsured for the cost of rebuilding their home.

The shortage of a qualified and/or licensed workforce impacts rebuilding. Local contractors prefer to use local subcontractors with whom they have built professional, reliable relationships. These relationships allow contractors to better estimate construction and materials’ costs, and can result in savings which may be passed on to homeowners.

The changes initiated by Permit Sonoma over the past several years have created a more user friendly and efficient department. The establishment of the Resiliency Permit Center, operating under Permit Sonoma, has expedited the permitting process for fire survivors. These agencies work together to assist the residents of Sonoma County in the rebuilding for our community.
APPENDIX

Permit Center Peak Hours

Below is a listing of the peak hours visitors to the Permit Center should expect to experience the longest wait times. Generally the shortest wait times will occur in each morning at the opening for business, except Wednesdays, which typically have the longest wait times throughout the day. Permit applications with plans are not accepted after 3:00 PM.

Monday  Permit Center hours are 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM.

Peak Hours

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM -- Medium wait time
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM -- Low wait time
12:00 PM - 2:00 PM -- Medium wait time
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM -- Low wait time
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM -- Medium wait time

Tuesday  Permit Center hours are 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM.

Peak Hours

8:00 AM -12:00 PM – Low wait time
12:00 PM - 2:00 PM – Medium wait time
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM – Low wait time
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM – Medium wait time

Wednesday  Permit Center hours are 10:30 AM - 4:00 PM.

Peak Hours

10:30 AM -1:00 PM – High wait time
1:00 AM - 3:00 PM – Medium wait time
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM – High wait time

Thursday  Permit Center hours are 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Peak Hours

8:00 AM – 12:00 PM – Low wait time
12:00 PM - 2:00 PM – Medium wait time
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM – Low wait time
3:00 PM -  4:00 PM – Medium wait time

Friday  Permit Center hours are 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Peak Hours

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM – Low wait time
12:00 PM - 3:00 PM – Medium wait time
3:00 PM – 4:00 PM – High wait time
FINDINGS

F1. Permit Sonoma made substantial and sustained changes prior to the firestorm.
F2. Permit Sonoma’s improved website assists customers in navigating the permit process.
F3. Permit Sonoma has streamlined and improved the permit process with emphasis on increasing customer satisfaction.
F4. The Resiliency Permit Center, which operates under Permit Sonoma, has been set up to expedite the permitting process for fire burnt properties.
F5. Permit Sonoma and the Resiliency Permit Center responded quickly and effectively to the needs of firestorm victims while maintaining the improved day to day operations in Permit Sonoma.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury recommends that:

R1. Permit Sonoma continue to build on the successful changes noted in this report. (F1, F2, F3, F4, F5)

R2. Permit Sonoma and the Resiliency Permit Center continue to collaborate for the benefit of Sonoma County residents and fire survivors and apply the lessons learned from this emergency for future individual or large emergencies. (F4 and F5)

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal code section 933.05, the Grand Jury requires responses as follows:

- Director, Permit Sonoma (R1 and R2)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Permit Sonoma Website: https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Permit-and-Resource Management/
- Contractors State License Services: http://www.cslb.ca.gov/About_Us/Library/Licensing_Classifications/B_-_General_Building_Contractor.aspx
- Resiliency Permit Center: sonomacounty.ca.gov
- West Coast Code Consultants Incorporated: www.wc-3.com
- Santa Rosa maps of incorporated and unincorporated areas: http://www.sonomacounty.org/prmd/gisdata/map_gallery.htm
RESPONSES TO THE
2016-2017 CIVIL GRAND JURY REPORTS
Providing Continuity by Following Through on Previous Investigations

SUMMARY
The 2017-2018 Civil Grand Jury has reviewed the responses to the investigations and recommendations made by the 2016-2017 Civil Grand Jury. In addition to a review of responses to the 2015-2016 investigations, the 2016-2017 Civil Grand Jury issued 8 investigative reports. Although respondents did not adopt all recommendations in those reports, their responses comply with the requirements of the Penal Code.

BACKGROUND
The Civil Grand Jury system in California exists to promote effective and efficient local government. The Civil Grand Jury is empowered by the Penal Code with broad investigative powers to provide oversight to county and city government, and special districts within Sonoma County, bringing positive change in the best interest of all residents.

These investigations result in a published report to the residents of the county. These published reports contain facts and findings that lead to recommendations for improvement. Governing bodies are required to respond to the findings and recommendations in a form and within time limits that are set out in the Penal Code.

Succeeding grand juries review those responses and determine if they meet the requirements of the Penal Code. Continuity is established from one Civil Grand Jury to the next by this review. The seated Civil Grand Jury may evaluate responses for adequacy and determine if appropriate steps have been taken to implement recommendations or if further investigative action is required.

METHODOLOGY
The Civil Grand Jury reviewed the responses and evaluated them for compliance with the governing sections of the Penal Code.

DISCUSSION
According to the Penal Code, agencies and government entities are required to respond to findings in grand jury reports and the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following:

(1) The respondent agrees with the finding.

(2) The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefor.

According to the Penal Code, as to each grand jury recommendation, the responding person or entity shall report one of the following actions:

(1) The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implementation action.
(2) The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a time frame for implementation.

(3) The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a time frame for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This time frame shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.

(4) The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefor.

The summary of the responses to the 2016-2017 Civil Grand Jury recommendations is set out in the table in Appendix A. In some cases, the respondent indicated that “Recommendation has or shall be partially implemented.” The Civil Grand Jury concluded that these responses were in compliance even though they did not strictly conform to the Penal Code.

FINDINGS

F1. The 2016-2017 Sonoma county Civil Grand Jury issued 25 recommendations requiring responses from 22 different County agencies or governing boards.

F2. All the responses received were in compliance with the requirements of the Penal Code.

RECOMMENDATIONS

NONE

REQUIRED RESPONSES

NONE

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- California Penal Code 933.05
- Complete responses are available on line at http://sonoma.courts.ca.gov/

SEE TABLES ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES FOR SUMMARIES OF THE RESPONSES RECEIVED
### 2016-2017 GRAND JURY RESPONSE SUMMARY CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOMMENDATIONS</th>
<th>RESPONDENT</th>
<th>PENAL CODE COMPLIANT</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
<th>2017/2018 GJ OBSERVATIONS</th>
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<td><strong>DETENTION FACILITIES INSPECTION</strong></td>
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<td>R1. The Probation Department provide the Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury a copy</td>
<td>Sonoma County Probation Department</td>
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<td>of the report and analysis on recidivism as soon it is completed.</td>
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<td>R2. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors continue to provide adequate funding</td>
<td>Sonoma County Board of Supervisors</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The Board commends the Department’s efforts to</td>
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<td>in support of the Probation Department’s goals and should fund a Data Analyst</td>
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<td>position if requested by the Probation Department.</td>
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| **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TRUANCY**                                                   |                                            |                      |                                                 |                           |
| R1. The Santa Rosa City Schools’ truancy program be modeled after the Petaluma | Santa Rosa City Schools Superintendent    | Yes                  | There are resources under Project Sail that    | R1 will be implemented.   |
| City Schools’ program to reflect an emphasis on truancy prevention.            |                                            |                      | look at model programs that will review best  |
| R2. A Santa Rosa City Schools’ action plan for the implementation of these      | Petaluma City Schools Superintendent      | Yes                  | practices used by Petaluma City Schools be     | R2 has been implemented.  |
| best practices used by Petaluma City Schools be completed by the beginning of  |                                            |                      | completed by the beginning of the 2017-2018   |                           |
| the 2017-2018 school year.                                                     |                                            |                      | school year.                                   |                           |
| R3. Santa Rosa City Schools require that all staff who interact with          | Santa Rosa City Schools Superintendent    | Yes                  | The Director of Attendance will be fully      | R3 will be implemented.   |
| students attend the truancy training programs offered by Sonoma County Office  |                                            |                      | trained (beginning with today’s meeting, 8/11/2017 with the Program Manager for KKIS) to facilitate staff training who will interact with students during the first semester 2017-2018 school year. |
| of Education (SCOE). Implementation of this recommendation should begin no    |                                            |                      |                                                 |                           |
| later than the first semester of the 2017-2018.                                |                                            |                      |                                                 |                           |
| R4. The Petaluma and Santa Rosa School Districts seek additional grants to     | Petaluma City Schools Superintendent      | Yes                  | Petaluma City Schools is continuing its       | R4 has been implemented.  |
| continue the Keep Kids in School (or its equivalent) case management program   |                                            |                      | relationship with Keep Kids in ... School and |                           |
| in Sonoma County Schools.                                                      |                                            |                      | is in its first year of a two year contract.  |                           |
|                                                                                |                                            |                      | In addition, Petaluma has agreed to be part of|                           |
|                                                                                |                                            |                      | the program and evaluation for Keep Kids in   |                           |
|                                                                                |                                            |                      | School that will study the efficacy of the    |                           |
|                                                                                |                                            |                      | program.                                       |                           |
| R5. Santa Rosa City Schools develop a budget and plan by the end of January   | Santa Rosa City Schools Superintendent    | Yes                  | SRCS has met this recommendation as a recipient of the Sail grant. The KKIS grant expires December 2017, however funding will continue by Sonoma County Probation through the 2017-2018 school year. | R4 has been implemented.  |
| 2018 to hire an adequate number of case managers to work with truants and     |                                            |                      |                                                 |                           |
| their families.                                                                 |                                            |                      |                                                 |                           |

**Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury**

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**Final Report 2017-2018**
### 2016-2017 GRAND JURY RESPONSE SUMMARY CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOMMENDATIONS</th>
<th>RESPONDENT</th>
<th>PENAL CODE COMPLIANT</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
<th>2017/2018 GJ OBSERVATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DECLARATION OF HOMELESSNESS EMERGENCY</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>R1 By September 30, 2017 the City of Santa Rosa should commit to continue to renew the Declaration of Homeless Emergency every 30 days, at least through Winter of 2017-2018.</td>
<td>Santa Rosa City Council</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Pursuant to Section 8630 requires that the City Council terminate the local emergency “at the earliest possible date that conditions warrant.” The City Council therefore cannot, at this time, commit to renewal of the declaration through the winter of 2017-2018. Staff intends, however to recommend continued monthly renewal of the declaration of local homeless emergency for so long as conditions warrant.</td>
<td>R1 will be implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2 The City of Santa Rosa should formally engage the County to implement the multifaceted Tool Box approach.</td>
<td>Santa Rosa City Council</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Both jurisdictions have adopted the Housing First strategy outlined in the document. In addition, the County has implemented the recommendation that allows the County to invest in affordable housing within Santa Rosa City Limits. County and City staff are also working to implement other components of the Tool Box, primarily the facilitation of policy discussion to secure a resource for affordable housing production.</td>
<td>R2 will be implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3 The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors should commit to making the Chanate site available for homeless services until its sale is completed and should solicit proposals from the local homeless service entities for managing the facilities.</td>
<td>Sonoma County Board of Supervisors</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>At the August 11, 2015 meeting, the Board of Supervisors adopted the findings and recommendations of the Facilities Ad Hoc Committee, including a finding that “the hospital buildings are unsuited to reuse due to the state of disrepair, and high cost to modernize.” There are several studies attached to that item supporting this finding.</td>
<td>R3 will not be implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4 The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors should commit to making at least a portion of the parking area at the Veterans Building available for CHAP.</td>
<td>Sonoma County Board of Supervisors</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>This will not be implemented because the Veterans Building is rented out to local residences and groups to host a variety of activities. The parking at the site meets the requirements for these uses and must remain available for the users of this facility.</td>
<td>R4 will not be implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5 By September 30, 2017, the City of Santa Rosa should develop an action plan to work more preemptively with local residents to welcome homeless services.</td>
<td>Santa Rosa City Council</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The City is actively engaged in education and outreach to the community regarding homeless services. The City maintains a webpage dedicated to the City’s programs and initiatives to address homelessness and participates in public presentations to inform the community about homeless services. A joint effort between Santa Rosa’s Office of Community Engagement and the City’s Homeless Encampment Pilot Program is underway to seek proposals for affordable housing at the former Water Agency property on College Avenue.</td>
<td>R5 has been implemented.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### COMPOSTING

<table>
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<tr>
<td><strong>R1</strong> When entering into long-term agreements, The Board of Supervisors require independent audits be done every three to five years to ensure the terms remain fair to all parties to the agreement.</td>
<td>Sonoma County Board of Supervisors</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Recommendation R1 has not been implemented and will be implemented in the future.</td>
<td>The County will assess requiring independent audits for compliance of long term agreements as part of the annual review of the County’s Services Agreement Policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R2</strong> The County review and reinforce its internal policies for reviewing contracts, operations, and interagency cooperation.</td>
<td>Sonoma County Board of Supervisors</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Recommendation R2 has been implemented and will continue to be implemented in the future.</td>
<td><strong>R2</strong> has been implemented and will continue to be implemented in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Director of Department of Transportation and Public Works, and Executive Director of Sonoma County Waste Management Agency (SCWMA)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R3</strong> The Board of Supervisors and SCWMA make it a high priority to bring composting back to Sonoma County.</td>
<td>The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors and Sonoma County Waste Management Agency</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The BOS and SCWMA make it a high priority to bring composting to Sonoma County</td>
<td><strong>R3</strong> has been implemented and will continue to be implemented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### GROUND WATER SUSTAINABILITY

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<tr>
<td><strong>R1</strong> Continue to work cooperatively in order to finalize and approve the JPA (Joint Powers Authority) by the State mandated June 30, 2017 deadline.</td>
<td>The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors and Joint Powers Authority</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The governing bodies of the JPAs should be aware that the comment or response of the governing body must be conducted subject to the notice, agenda, and open meetings of the Brown Act.</td>
<td>See page 17 of the Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury 2016-2017 Final Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R2</strong> Specifically instruct through their JPA agreements that the three Groundwater Agencies pool technical resources and staff in order to avoid costly duplication.</td>
<td>The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors and Joint Powers Authority</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The JPAs contain the following provisions regarding coordination: “WHEREAS in order to promote efficiency in sharing of resources, the Members individually and collectively, encourage coordination between GSAs in Sonoma County.”</td>
<td><strong>R2</strong> has been implemented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

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<tr>
<td>R1 Director of EHS, Division Director, Department Director and Human Services Analyst should develop a plan to fill currently vacant position no later than December 31, 2017 and provide that plan to the 2017-2018 Civil Grand Jury.</td>
<td>Director of Environmental Health and Safety, Division Director, Department Director, and Human Resources Analyst</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The Department has worked with County Human Resources Department to develop recruitment plans for each vacant position and will continue to work with County Human Resources Department to fill future vacancies positions as quickly as possible.</td>
<td>R1 will be implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2 Director of the Public Health Division should meet with SSU’s Chair of the Environmental Studies Department to recommend a curriculum that would lead directly to REHS certification no later than December 2017 and provide a summary of the outcome of those meetings to the 2017-2018 Civil Grand Jury.</td>
<td>Director of the Public Health Division</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The Department of Health Services Director, Public Health Director and the Director of Environmental Health will request an initial meeting with Sonoma State University President to review opportunities for collaboration on workforce needs across the Department and to request the University President’s support to pursue a conversation with the Environmental Studies Department regarding Registered Environment Health Specialist certification.</td>
<td>R2 will be implemented</td>
</tr>
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### MATERNAL, CHILD, AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH

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<tr>
<td>R1 To avoid a rise in financial and social costs associated with ACES, The Director of Department of Health Services should develop a plan for maintaining or increasing adequate staffing levels of MCAH Public Health Nurses. It is recommended that the improvements be implemented no later than October 31, 2017; and it is requested that information on the plan be submitted to the Sonoma Civil Grand Jury by that date.</td>
<td>The Director of Department of Health Services</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>The Department of Health Services continually assesses our current delivery models and options for expanding and strengthening the impact of all of our programs, including the home visiting program within available resources. The preparation of a meaningful plan does not change the market factors that impact our Public Health Nurse recruitments, and would only serve to add additional burden on limited resources.</td>
<td>The Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury did not receive a plan for maintaining or increasing adequate staffing levels of MCAH Public Health Nurses from the Department of Health Services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2 Because the prevention of ACEs deserves to be among the highest budget priorities of the Public Health Division in Sonoma County, the Board of Supervisors should provide increased funding to MCAH.</td>
<td>The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>This recommendation has not been implemented and may be considered for implementation in the future.</td>
<td>R2 has not been implemented</td>
</tr>
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### SALES TAX LIMITATIONS

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<tr>
<td>No Recommendations were made by the 2016-2017 Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury</td>
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Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury

The Grand Jury provides oversight to county, city, government and special districts within Sonoma County.
The mission of the Civil Grand Jury is to promote positive change in the best interest of all residents.

How to Submit a Complaint to the Civil Grand Jury
The Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury is an investigative body which deals with complaints falling within its jurisdiction. The Civil Grand Jury may examine all aspects of County and City government, public schools, detention facilities and special districts. the Civil Grand Jury may review and investigate these government operations based on complaints or concerns received from citizens of Sonoma County. All complaints and communications with the Civil Grand Jury are confidential, as are their deliberations. Complaint forms are online at www.sonomagrandjury.org. Complaints may be submitted to the Grand Jury:

**by phone:** 707-565-6330  
**by fax:** 707-565-6328  
**by mail:** P.O. Box 5109, Santa Rosa, CA 95402  
**by email:** gjury@sonoma-county.org

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Consider Becoming a Grand Juror

Grand Jury services is a tremendously rewarding experience, providing citizens with a meaningful and independent voice in local government. Sonoma County Civil Grand Jurors play a distinct and vitally important role in government. Jurors have broad oversight powers to investigate and influence positive change within the County, its cities, special districts and the many organizations that collectively constitute our local government.

Application forms to become a Sonoma County Civil Grand Juror are available online at SonomaCourts.ca.gov or in person at the:
Office of the Sonoma County Courts
600 Administration Drive, Room 106
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
707-521-6501

Each spring Judges of the Superior Court interview prospective Grand Jurors from the applicant pool. In June, jurors are selected at random for a one year term.

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A copy of the full text of this report is available at any county library or online at www.sonomagrandjury.org