



Disaster Preparedness

Before and After

Disaster Preparedness Committee

Richard Lorne Davis, Chair

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**A Report by an
Investigative Committee
of the Los Angeles County
2006-2007 Civil Grand Jury**

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS – BEFORE AND AFTER

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Los Angeles County has a population of approximately 10 million people, and in past years has experienced extensive devastation due to fires, floods, earthquakes and civil unrest. In view of the world political situation and the instability of other nations and insurgencies, the ongoing threat of terrorist attacks is also a matter of grave concern to the populace.

The Office Of Emergency Management (OEM) was established by Chapter 2.68 of the County Code, with responsibility for organizing and directing the preparedness efforts of the Emergency Management Organization of Los Angeles County. OEM is designated as the day-to-day Los Angeles County Operational Area coordinator for the entire geographic area of the County, which is home to 88 Cities and various other, unincorporated territories.

The 2005-2006 Civil Grand Jury, in the process of investigating the County's preparedness for disasters, prepared its Final Report entitled "Emergency Communication – Are We Ready". That Report contained a number of specific recommendations, to which OEM provided Responses as provided by law. Seven of those Recommendations were deemed feasible, and OEM indicated with specificity the actions it would be taking to implement its Responses.

METHODOLOGY AND PURPOSE

In conformity with its Continuity responsibilities, the 2006-2007 Civil Grand Jury formed an investigative Committee to look into disaster preparedness issues, and in particular, to address OEM's progress relative to its promised and/or proposed courses of action to be undertaken, along with any definitive timelines for completion. Attached hereto as Exhibit A is a list of 7 follow-up points of inquiry as to said pending projects, which was submitted to OEM in February, 2007. This list ultimately elicited responses from OEM, attached hereto as Exhibit B.

After reviewing Exhibit B, the Committee concluded from those Responses that only in the area of Ham radio operations did there appear to have been any real semblance of progress. In fact, there was little clarity as to just what had been accomplished since August, 2006, when OEM's Responses to the previous Final Report were generated; further, that any timetables for completion of promised action appeared to be non-existent.

The Committee concluded that a direct communication approach was needed under the circumstances, and a meeting was scheduled with the County CAO and OEM management. This meeting was for the express purpose of obtaining more definitive answers from OEM and a "real time" assessment for the completion of the seven recommended items in question.

Attached hereto as Exhibit C is an outline of the Committee's position with respect to said meeting which occurred on May 10, 2007, and which formed the basis for the Committee's questions. On that occasion, in addition to rather vague and inconclusive responses to most of our inquiries, certain supplemental documentation was promised by OEM, none of which has been received to date.

CONCLUSION

As suggested elsewhere herein, and as reinforced by said rather non-productive meeting, the Committee was left with the feeling that for all of OEM's appearances and representations to the contrary, that there has been and continues to be a serious and definite lack of any sense of urgency on the part of OEM in helping to prepare the County for contingent disasters occurring possibly sooner than later. All of these failures and lack of immediacy are of grave concern to the Civil Grand Jury and to the County it serves as a watchdog over Departments designed to serve and protect the interests of its citizenry.

Our research has shown that the City of Los Angeles, as a governmental entity, has a far more comprehensive grasp of the problems at hand, and has taken constructive actions to meet its responsibilities. The time for OEM to perform likewise is long past due.

The Civil Grand Jury, therefore, recommends that if OEM is to ever realistically function as a viable part of County government, it requires some stronger leadership in order to correct and/or to implement what needs to be done, and without delay. This is a matter of principles and not personalities, and the stakes are too high to ignore.

EXHIBIT A

FOLLOW-UP POINTS OF INQUIRY BY THE 2006-2007 CIVIL GRAND JURY
DIRECTED TO THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE
OFFICER REGARDING RESPONSES TO THE 2005-2006 CIVIL GRAND JURY'S
RECOMMENDATIONS IN ITS FINAL REPORT ENTITLED "EMERGENCY
COMMUNICATION – ARE WE READY"

1. (a) The Response to the 1st Recommendation concerning the reallocation of Staff resources and funds to the Office Of Emergency Management (OEM) to expand efforts that address resident preparedness reported that OEM will be adding 5 staff members in 2006, one of whom would be assigned to work on the Emergency Survival Program (ESP).

(b) The inquiries are as follows: (i) Whether the 5 new staff members are in place; (ii) Who has been assigned ESP responsibilities, (iii) What are the details of such Program, and (iiii) What are the duties of the other 4 new staff members.
2. (a) The Response to the 2d Recommendation regarding the employment of social marketing approaches to design and acquire necessary resources for a strategy for the preparation of County residents for emergencies reported firstly, that OEM had applied for a \$250,000 grant from Homeland Security (HS) to fund a marketing campaign to promote emergency preparedness, expected in November, 2006, and secondly, that OEM was working jointly with the City of Los Angeles to develop proposal details to identify the appropriate firm(s) for this project.

(b) The inquiries are as follows: (i) Whether the HS grant was received, (ii) Whether the joint efforts of the County and City have resulted in finalization of the proposal described, and (iii) Whether any firm has been designated for working the proposal, and if so, which one(s).
3. (a) The Response to the 3d Recommendation regarding the allocation of staff resources and funds to prepare basic information materials in other languages to supplement Public Health (PH) messaging, and the entry into translation contracts requiring a 4-hour turnaround of message translation in a PH emergency situation, reported that OEM was working to develop a Joint Information Center (JIC) for the public's benefit.

(b) The inquiries are as follows: (i) Whether the JIC is currently a functioning entity, (ii) Whether PH is presently involved in the message translation project, and (iii) If so, to what extent.
4. (a) The Response to the 4th Recommendation regarding the establishment and pursuit of policies and procedures to encourage employees to have emergency plans and supplies in place for their families reported firstly, that the Department Emergency Coordinator (DEC) and the Building Emergency Coordinator (BEC) routinely receive and pass on to employees and their organizations information

EXHIBIT A

regarding emergency plans, and secondly, that routine emergency drills and postings of emergency preparedness information were done County-wide.

(b) The inquiries are as follows: (i) Whether the routine described is currently in operation, (ii) Whether the routines have been changed, altered or otherwise amended, and (iii) If so, to what extent.

5. (a) The Response to Part (b) of the 5th Recommendation regarding assistance to animal owners in an emergency situation reported that the Los Angeles County Animal Care And Control Department (ACACD) was the lead agency in routinely providing animal care information, including emergency animal evacuations.

(b) The inquiries are as follows: (i) Whether there exists a documented standard operating procedure concerning the above matters, (ii) Whether it has been amended since the last Response on this subject, and (iii) How the ACACD disseminates this type of information to the public.

6. (a) The Response to the 6th Recommendation regarding Citizen Volunteers who provide assistance to neighbors and emergency responders reported that OEM was negotiating a contract with UCLA to develop an informational Website for Community Emergency Response Team volunteers..

(b) The inquiries are as follows: (i) Whether the UCLA contract has been finalized, (ii) Whether a Volunteer registration list has been developed and is in use, (iii) The general response by Volunteers to so register, and (iiii) The training programs in place for registered volunteers.

7. (a) The Response to the 7th Recommendation regarding incentives to ham radio operators to become involved in emergency response activity reported that the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) was the lead agency on alert, with numerous programs involving ham radio operators, and that OEM was to confer with LASD to explore the feasibility of using these civilian assets.

(b) The inquiries are as follows: (i) Whether there has been any development over the past year which encourages ham radio operators to become involved with the emergency communications process, (ii) What incentives have been offered to them, and (iii) What has been the general response by ham radio operators to become a part of disaster response operations.



DAVID E. JANSSEN
Chief Administrative Officer

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EXHIBIT B

March 29, 2007

Civil Grand Jury
Criminal Courts Building
210 W. Temple St., Room 11-506
Los Angeles, CA 90012

ATTN: Robert E. Sax, Foreperson

Board of Supervisors
GLORIA MOLINA
First District

YVONNE B. BURKE
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Third District

DON KNABE
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

2006-2006 GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT FOLLOW-UP

This correspondence is in response to your request for follow-up information on recommendations listed in the 2005-2006 Grand Jury Final Report. There has been considerable progress made on those recommendations. We appreciate your continued interest, commitment and support of the County's disaster preparedness efforts.

1. **INQUIRIES:** (i) Whether the 5 new staff members are in place; (ii) Who has been assigned ESP responsibilities, (iii) What are the details of such Program, and (iiii) What are the duties of the other 4 new staff members.

The Office of emergency Management (OEM) has not yet hired a staff member to work on the Emergency Survival Program (ESP). However, a Job Opportunity Bulletin has been released by the Department of Human Resources to solicit applicants for the position. It is anticipated that this vacancy will be filled in the very near future. The OEM Public Information Officer (PIO), who is the former ESP manager, continues to handle the ESP responsibilities in the interim.

The primary duties of this position are to: a) serve as the Program Manager for the Emergency Survival Program (ESP) public education campaign; b) develop and coordinate public education and outreach strategies, plans, processes and procedures; c) develop communications products and activities such as newsletter articles, and public service announcements; d) provide leadership for the 15-county ESP Coordinating Council with respect to the development and coordination of all ESP related materials; and e) coordinate the work activities of the ESP Funding, Marketing, and Publications Subcommittees.

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2. **INQUIRIES:** The inquiries are as follows: (i) Whether the HS grant was received, (ii) Whether the joint efforts of the County and City have resulted in finalization of the proposal described, and (iii) Whether any firm has been designated for working the proposal, and if so, which one(s).

OEM was successful in acquiring \$250,000 in State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) funds to conduct a marketing campaign to promote emergency preparedness. OEM has met with the City of Los Angeles on numerous occasions to collaborate on this project. A Strategic Planning Workshop between OEM and the City of Los Angeles was held on March 7-9, 2007 to continue these discussions.

In addition, CBS Outdoor has been chosen as the marketing firm that will be utilized to launch this campaign. OEM is in the process of finalizing a Delegated Authority Agreement (contract) and expects to complete this process within the next few weeks.

3. **INQUIRIES:** The inquiries are as follows: (i) Whether the JIC is currently a functioning entity, (ii) Whether PH is presently involved in the message translation project, and (iii) If so, to what extent.

A location for the Joint Information Center (JIC) has not yet been identified. However, OEM has been in meetings with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) to identify an appropriate facility. OEM and LASD have conducted site visits to other permanent JIC facilities in Utah and Oregon and are planning a visit to the State's JIC in Sacramento to help them better understand what will be required to obtain, equip and staff such a facility.

OEM, with the assistance of a paid consultant, LASD and other Public Information Officers (PIOs) within the County, has amended the County's Emergency Public Information Plan (EPI), to include JIC protocols and procedures. A series of Team Training Workshops for County PIOs were held in September and November 2006. Two more sessions will be held in May and June 2007. The processes and procedures for establishing a JIC were discussed at these workshops.

Public Health advised that they do not have a blanket contract for translation services in place. They do have a process for such services, but it may take up to 24 hours. Public Health routinely works with OEM in translating and disseminating public education material on disaster preparedness.

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4. **INQUIRIES:** The inquiries are as follows: (i) Whether the routine described is currently in operation, (ii) Whether the routines have been changed, altered or otherwise amended, and (iii) If so, to what extent.

The Department Emergency Coordinators (DEC) and Building Emergency Coordinators (BEC) programs are ongoing. OEM is in the process of updating the BEC Manual, in coordination with County Fire. The manual should be updated by May 2007.

Additionally, OEM, in coordination with the DECs, is developing a BEC Train the Trainer program to ensure the efficient and sustainable delivery of this training.

5. **INQUIRIES:** The inquiries are as follows: (i) Whether there exists a documented standard operating procedure concerning the above matters, (ii) Whether it has been amended since the last Response on this subject, and (iii) How the ACACD disseminates this type of information to the public.

There is currently no documented Standard Operating Procedure regarding animal response and rescue. However, the Los Angeles County Animal Care and Control Department, in conjunction with OEM and Veterinary Public Health are currently developing a countywide emergency response plan and supportive standard operating procedures for animal response and rescue. Current efforts at distributing emergency preparedness materials throughout the County include: Los Angeles County Animal Care and Control distributes emergency preparedness brochures for horse owners through County shelters; Los Angeles County Veterinary Public Health distributes emergency preparedness brochures for pet owners throughout the County at various dog parks and health fairs; OEM is currently revising a bulletin on pet preparedness and plans to distribute it countywide through its Emergency Survival Program (ESP).

6. **INQUIRIES:** The inquiries are as follows: (i) Whether the UCLA contract has been finalized, (ii) Whether a Volunteer registration list has been developed and is in use, (iii) The general response by Volunteers to so register, and (iiii) The training programs in place for registered volunteers.

The original UCLA contract to create the volunteer website has been signed and completed. However, an amendment to further develop the website is pending. The amendment provides for the following functions:

- Funding to create a website user's manual
- Hosting and maintenance of the website
- Training of staff to utilize and further enhance the site
- Assist with publicity to increase public usage

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The volunteer website database will contain a roster of Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members who voluntarily register with the system. Those who are interested in CERT training can also locate training opportunities near their home. The website also facilitates in matching potential volunteers with appropriate agencies which will facilitate matching volunteer skills and/or location with the appropriate agency or function.

7. **INQUIRIES:** The inquiries are as follows: (i) Whether there has been development over the past year which encourages ham radio operators to become involved with the emergency communication process, (ii) What incentives have been offered to them, and (iii) What has been the general response by ham radio operators to become part of disaster response operations.

Volunteer Ham radio operators are registered as Disaster Service Workers and organized and led under the LASD Disaster Communications Service (DCS). DCS operators have been included in regular LASD and OEM training and exercise programs. OEM includes recognition of DCS as an available emergency resource in its briefings to agencies and officials. DCS has received equipment upgrades including:

- The addition of a new mountain top repeater
- New ID Cards
- The repair of mountain top repeaters
- Radio and Emergency Alert System upgrades at all Sheriff Stations
- A new cache of commercial grade hand-held radios for use in emergencies and specials events
- New Command Post vehicles

DCS has also increased their cooperation with the American Red Cross and supports their evacuation centers and shelters as needed. DCS conducts monthly drills and issues certificates of recognition for volunteer service.

If you have any further questions or comments regarding this matter, please contact Michael J. Brooks at (323) 980-2261.

Sincerely,



DAVID E. JANSSEN
Chief Administrative Officer

DEJ:MJB:jl

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EXHIBIT C

Outline for Committee Meeting (Disaster Preparedness) with County CAO on 5/10/07.

Preamble: With all due respect, the Committee believes from the answers dated March 29, 2007, given in response to our written follow up inquiries, submitted February 14, 2007, as to the progress made by OEM with respect to its responses given in August, 2006 to the 2005-06 Civil Grand Jury's Final Report, that there appears to be a clear lack of any sense of urgency in accomplishing what was essentially promised, namely:

1. That 5 new staff members would be hired in 2006 (for which funding was available) to work the Emergency Survival Program. As of March 07, none have been hired; why not?
2. To what use has the \$250,000 grant from Homeland Security been put? In 2006, OEM was already working with the City of Los Angeles to develop a social marketing program, being a strategy for the preparation of county residents for emergencies. As of March 07, OEM had met with the City on numerous occasions and even held a strategic planning workshop on March 7-9, 2007 which evidently produced an agreement to continue discussions which apparently had been going on for quite some months. What is the present status?
3. In August 06, OEM stated it was working on a Joint Information Center. In March 07, OEM stated it had not yet found a location for the project. Why not?
4. In August 06, OEM responded regarding emergency plans and supplies for county employees. In March 07, OEM said this project was in process and that a manual on the subject was to be completed by May 07. Has this been done yet?
5. In its final report of 2006, a recommendation was made regarding assistance to animal owners in an emergency situation. The response thereto advised that the L A County Animal Care and Control Department was the lead agency in providing information on animal issues and was routinely involved as a member of emergency planning groups; that animal evacuation was a part of many emergency response and evacuation plans. The Committee's follow up inquiry in February 07, asked whether there existed any documented standard operating procedure dealing with this subject. In March 07, OEM responded that there was currently no documented SOP regarding animal response and rescue but that a plan was being currently developed. How long is this expected to take, bearing in mind that after Katrina some Federal legislation dealt with this subject.
6. In August 06, OEM stated it was "currently" negotiating a contract with UCLA to develop a registration and informational web site for CERT volunteers. In March 07, OEM responded that a UCLA contract had been signed and completed but that an amendment thereto was pending. When will this be finalized?
7. With regard to the recommendation and response concerning the utilization of Ham operators, in August 06, OEM advised that the CAO and the Sheriff were active participants on a steering committee and every effort would be

made to develop a county wide solution to utilize these communication asset
In response to the Committee's follow up inquiries as to any develop over th
past year which encourages Ham operators to become involved with the
emergency communications process, in March 07, OEM covered equipment
upgrades but failed to respond to the inquiry concerning the incentives offer
to Ham operators and what their general response has been to the call to
become part of disaster response operations. Concerning the itemization of
upgraded equipment, the Committee would like to know whether the
equipment items listed are currently operational.