

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF MADERA

MADERA COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
200 WEST FOURTH STREET / MADERA, CALIFORNIA 93637
(559) 675-7700 / FAX (559) 673-3302 / TDD (559) 675-8970

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April 26, 2011

The Honorable Mitchell C. Rigby
Presiding Judge
Madera County Superior Court
209 W. Yosemite Avenue
Madera, CA 93637

Subject: Response to the 2010-11 Grand Jury Report entitled "Fire Safety and Protection in Madera County – Fire Division Chief".

Dear Honorable Judge Rigby:

In accordance with Penal Code Section 933, the Madera County Board of Supervisors submits this response to the Recommendations in the 2010-11 Madera County Grand Jury Report on "Fire Safety and Protection in Madera County – Fire Division Chief" (See Attachment #1).

The following are the Grand Jury's recommendations in their Report, and the Board of Supervisors' response to the recommendations:

Grand Jury Recommendation

The Grand Jury recommends adequate resources for fire protection and safety be provided.

Grand Jury Recommendation

The Grand Jury recommends that the County should begin feasibility studies for upgrading and/or replacement of Fire Stations #1, #3, and #9. Station #1 should be made a priority.

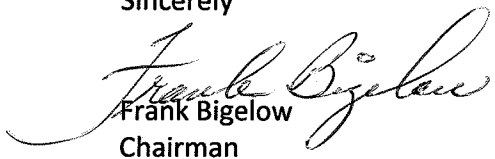
Grand Jury Recommendation

The Grand Jury recommends that volunteers be equipped with compatible radios.

Board of Supervisors' response to Grand Jury Recommendations

The response to of the Acting Fire Chief to the above Recommendations is considered appropriate and is submitted as the Board of Supervisors' response (See Attachment #2).

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frank Bigelow". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Frank Bigelow

Chairman

Madera County Board of Supervisors

Attachment

MADERA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

IN COOPERATION WITH
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION
CAL FIRE

14225 ROAD 28
MADERA, CALIFORNIA 93638-5715

OFFICE: (559) 675-7799
FAX: (559) 673-2085

March 25, 2011

TO: Darin McCandless
Risk Management Analyst

FROM: Bill Hodson, Madera County Acting Fire Chief
By: David Irion, Madera County Fire Division Chief

SUBJECT: Response to Grand Jury Report entitled "Fire Safety and Protection in Madera County – Fire Division Chief"

The Grand Jury Report on Fire Safety and Protection in Madera County – Fire Division Chief dated February 3, 2011 has three recommendations:

1. The Grand Jury recommends adequate resources for fire protection and safety to be provided.
2. The Grand Jury recommends that the County should begin feasibility studies for upgrading and/or replacement of Fire Stations #1, #3, and #9. Station #1 should be made a priority.
3. The Grand Jury recommends that volunteers be equipped with compatible radios.

The Fire Department is required to submit a written response per PC 933(c). Penal Code Section 933.05 requires the following:

"...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 implemented actions.
- (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, the 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 the explanation therefore."

Recommendation 1: The Grand Jury recommends adequate resources for fire protection and safety be provided.

Madera County has six fire stations with full time staffing. Five of these stations have 1-person staffing and one station has 2-person staffing (Station #8 Indian Lakes). The Fire Department relies heavily on Paid Call Firefighters to assist full time personnel with calls, however this is not ideal. The Fire Department would like to see increased staffing at all of the County stations to improve firefighter safety, training and service delivery to our customers, the residents of and the people traveling through Madera County. The Fire Department will continue to work with the Madera County Administration Office as well as the Madera County Board of Supervisors to accomplish this goal. However, the Fire Department is aware of the fiscal situation that Madera County is currently experiencing.

This recommendation will continue to be analyzed annually and will be accomplished when the funds are more readily available.

Recommendation 2: The Grand Jury recommends that the County should begin feasibility studies for upgrading and/or replacement of Fire Stations #1, #3, and #9. Station #1 should be made a priority.

Madera County Fire Station #1 Madera, #3 Madera Acres and #9 Rolling Hills are all in need of improvements and relocation. Station #9 Rolling Hills is not ideally located, undersized and on too small of a lot. This station would better serve the community if it was situated on a main thoroughfare instead of the neighborhood it's located in. Station #3 Madera Acres is undersized, in sub-par condition, close to a creek and the Fire Department is currently renting the facility and property. In 1986, a local water company agreed to rent a 10" x 40" mobile home to the Fire Department. The mobile home needs improvement and during recent flooding the water level in the nearby creek came up to the back porch. Station #1 Madera is 75-80 years old, undersized and not ideally located. This station was built in the 1930's and is now one of the many departments located on the Madera County government compound. With County workers and the public frequenting the compound, this makes emergency response increasingly difficult. Pisotresi Ambulance also shares the facility with the Fire Department. Madera County is in the process of trying to relocate Station #1 Madera. The site currently being discussed is southwest of the Highway 99 and Avenue 12 intersection.

The Fire Department would like to see all of these facilities relocated if possible, however we realize the fiscal situation that Madera County is currently experiencing. We will continue to provide excellent service throughout the County to the best of our ability, regardless of the facility we reside in. The Fire Department will continue to work with the Madera County Administration Office as well as the Madera County Board of Supervisors to accomplish this goal.

This recommendation will continue to be analyzed annually and will be accomplished when the funds are more readily available.

Recommendation 3: The Grand Jury recommends that volunteers be equipped with compatible radios

The Fire Department provides each Paid Call Firefighter (PCF) or volunteer with more than \$3,000 worth of firefighting equipment. Currently there are 175 PCFs in the Fire Department. A Minitor pager or Realm pager/handie talkie is provided to each PCF. This allows them to receive dispatches from the Emergency Command Center and those with the Realms can talk to each other on-scene. Each PCF engine has two Bendix King handie talkie radios allowing PCFs to talk to each other, on-scene Command staff and the Emergency Command Center. Ideally, the Fire Department would like to procure enough Bendix King handie talkie radios to be able to provide one for each PCF. These units, with extra battery packs and chargers, cost about \$1,000 each. All Fire Department radios are FCC approved and narrow-banded compliant.

The Fire Department has been successful at being awarded match grants in the past, however in recent years the Madera County Administration Office has not supported our requests for funds. The Fire Department has always had the option to go directly to the Board of Supervisors to request the match money, but hasn't done this considering the current fiscal climate. The Fire Department will continue to work with the Madera County Administration Office as well as the Madera County Board of Supervisors to accomplish this goal.

This recommendation will continue to be analyzed annually and will be accomplished when the funds are more readily available.