

Stanislaus County Fire Authority

Business Plan

2010-2011

The Stanislaus County Fire Authority is a joint powers agreement established in November 2005 by the fire agencies in Stanislaus County to make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on the expenditure of the Less Than County Wide fire tax, and to establish a cooperative relationship among the parties to the agreement for the provision of these contracted services.

OVERVIEW:

Issues of mutual concern to the fire agencies of Stanislaus County were identified and through a work-group process, the Fire Authority came together for the following purposes:

- Facilitate cooperation among the Fire Agencies and the County related to the allocation and use of the Less Than County Wide Fire Tax.
- Provide a forum for discussion and study of countywide problems of mutual interest.
- Identify, inventory, and comprehensively plan for solutions to countywide problems requiring multi-jurisdictional cooperation.
- Facilitate cooperation among the Fire Agencies and the County for specific purposes, interrelated actions, and for the adoption of common policies with respect to issues and problems which are common to the parties.
- Develop countywide plans and policies for growth and development.

The following agencies are signatory to the joint powers agreement:

Burbank Paradise Fire District
Denair Fire Protection District
Keyes Fire District
Mountain View Fire Protection District
City of Oakdale
City of Patterson
Stanislaus Consolidated Fire District
City of Turlock
Westport Fire District
West Stanislaus Fire District

City of Ceres
Hughson Fire District
City of Modesto
City of Newman
Oakdale Fire Protection District
Salida Fire District
Stanislaus County
Turlock Rural Fire District
Woodland Avenue Fire District
Cal Fire – Santa Clara Unit

The Stanislaus County Fire Authority Board is comprised of a representative from each agency where the Less Than Countywide Fire Tax is collected, along with the City of Modesto, the City of Turlock, and Cal Fire-Santa Clara Unit. Each individual agency

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adopted a resolution to approve the Joint Powers Agreement in order to participate. Each representative is entitled to one vote. As outlined in the Joint Powers Agreement, the Stanislaus County Fire Warden's Office is the administering agency. The Fire Authority may designate any representative of a member agency to serve as Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary.

The membership of the Stanislaus County Fire Authority adopted formalized Board Policies and Rules of Procedure. These documents provide a framework for the Fire Authority to conduct business.

A quorum of at least one half of the member agencies is required for the Fire Authority to take action. A two-thirds majority of those members present are required to approve all fiscal matters, including the use of the Less Than County-Wide Fire Tax, but not including expenditures of less than \$500.

On an annual basis, the Fire Authority identifies service priorities, performance expectations and funding allocations for those services identified as critical to the fire agencies in Stanislaus County. Then, based on available funding, the group targets achievable service levels. During the process, there are services that have been identified as desirable, but funding constraints do not allow for those services.

It is the intent and purpose of the Fire Authority to achieve the most efficient and effective use of the Less Than County Wide Tax revenues, and to seek partnerships to advance our ability to provide fire and emergency services in Stanislaus County.

Due to a downturn in property taxes, the budget presented in the 2009-2010 Business Plan was modified. Additionally, with the State's suspension of Proposition 1A, approximately \$90,000 was borrowed from this fund by the State. These two factors prompted the Fire Authority to evaluate service levels. In an effort to maintain an acceptable fund balance through the contract periods, the Fire Authority voted to eliminate the Special Operations program as of January 15, 2010. This program was prioritized as 6th of the six services provided and was the last program to be put into place.

July 2010 marks the beginning of the fifth year of service contracts. During the 2010-2011 Fiscal Year, current services will be evaluated and new contracts will be developed.

This report will outline the contracted services in place, and the expectations for the 2010-2011 year.

CONTRACTED SERVICES:

The following services are will be contracted through Stanislaus County under the recommendation of the Fire Authority through 2010-2011.

Service:	Provided By:	Contract Period:
Fire Prevention	Stanislaus County Fire Warden's Office	July 1, 2006 - June 30, 2011
Fire Investigation	City of Modesto Fire Department	July 1, 2006 - June 30, 2011
Fire Communications Coordination	Salida Fire Protection District	December 1, 2006 - November 30, 2011
Fire Training Coordination	Salida Fire Protection District	February 1, 2007 - January 31, 2012
Administration and Financial Management	Stanislaus County Fire Warden's Office	November 1, 2005 - Open
Emergency Medical Services Coordinator	City of Modesto	July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011

Each service has identified expectations that were adopted by the Fire Authority. Contracts were recommended through a formal process adopted by the Fire Authority Board. The County Board of Supervisors entered into a formal five year contract with each outside provider agency.

Within several categories there is a desire to expand the service by allocating additional funding in future years, however, with current economic conditions, objectives have been modified to include maintaining service levels with reductions in revenues.

FIRE AUTHORITY GOALS:

The following goals were adopted and reaffirmed by the Fire Authority membership:

- Ensure an open environment that provides respectful and professional responsiveness to our community and agency partners.
- Adopt integrated, collaborative, and multi-disciplinary planning to ensure that our community and agency partners are served in an equitable, efficient and effective manner.
- Provide the highest quality of fire, life safety and all risk services through collaborative community and agency partnerships in the areas of fire prevention, fire investigation, training, finance/administration, fire communications and special operations.
- Improve the stability and sustainability of revenue sources to support and enhance the fire, life safety and all risk services on a countywide basis.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

The strategy of the Stanislaus County Fire Authority is to represent the interests of all member agencies by focusing on organizational goals of both the Fire Authority and individual agencies. The following strategies were reaffirmed by the membership:

- Expand and foster mutually beneficial relationships with internal and external fire agencies
- Enhance relationships between fire districts, cities, County agencies, and identified stakeholders
- Achieve a unified voice and strengthen the fire service to meet future challenges
- Be the spokesperson/organization for fire and emergency services countywide?
- Support, develop, and sponsor a comprehensive countywide fire service study
- Provide strategic direction, leadership, and influence to coordinate professional standards
- Encourage member agencies to develop and adopt defined service levels based upon the standards of cover process
- Initiate and support efforts that assist in funding the fire service
- Improve financial stability of the existing programs and services
- Explore financial opportunities
- Develop / maintain analysis and reporting systems that allow effective monitoring of financial performance

ACTION PLAN:

The action plans are defined in an effort to meet the adopted strategies stated above. The Fire Authority recommended contracts for priority services, which are available to all agencies.

The following pages outline the provider's plans, based on the service priorities and expected funding, for the 2010/2011 fiscal year.

Funding the Fire Authority's programs for the fiscal year 2010-2011 is dependant upon the projected Less Than County Wide Fire Tax, projected fire prevention fees, the anticipation of a general fund contribution by Stanislaus County and a continued use of the remaining fund balance. With current economic conditions and the uncertainty of property tax revenues, it has been necessary for the Fire Authority to evaluate service levels. One service provided, Special Operations was discontinued in 2010. In the future, services will be evaluated and re-prioritize the services provided in the next contract cycle.

Securing and protecting the identified funding, while developing and negotiating new contracts are the focus of the Executive Committee in the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

2010-2011

FINANCE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

Funding

\$75,000

In the 2010-2011 fiscal year, the plan for Finance/Administrative Support Services is to support the Fire Authority by providing oversight of the contracts and the funding available for the services identified by the Fire Authority as priorities; work on the development of new contracts; address issues affecting the fire districts; and seek opportunities to provide for regional solutions to common challenges. Support for the Fire and Rescue Operational Area Coordinator is provided through this program which allows assistance to individual agencies as well as the mutual aid system as a whole.

The plan assumes that the funding level will continue at expected levels, with the planned 4% cost of living increase suspended. However, with current economic conditions, those assumptions may change. Should there be reduction in revenues, there will be reduction in service levels. The programs priorities are to:

- Administer the budget within the County guidelines and process and report to the Fire Authority
- Oversee contracts and contract payments
- Develop new contracts for services
- Provide administrative support to the Fire Authority with agendas, board reports, minutes, conflict of interest statements, and information updates on Fire Warden web-site
- Administer MDC program including billing of participating agencies and processing of all related maintenance contracts and invoices
- Assist fire agencies with financial information, human resources, and administrative issues as requested
- Continue to seek opportunities to fund regional equipment
- Support contracted service providers
- Ensure that Fire Authority members are updated through annual report, business plan, and budget documents
- Attend Executive Committee meetings
- Communicate with county CEO staff and Board of Supervisors regarding the goals, priorities, needs and expectations of the Fire Authority
- Provide support to the Fire and Rescue Operational Area Coordinator
- Hold quarterly meetings for fire district Finance/ Administrative Managers to address mutual concerns and issues
- Administer special projects to support the fire service in Stanislaus County

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2010-2011

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES COORDINATOR

Funding not to exceed

\$40,000

On May 6, 2010 the Fire Authority voted unanimously (with two members abstaining from the vote) to contract with the City of Modesto for the services of its Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Coordinator. This position has been used widely throughout the fire service in Stanislaus County. In order to document the terms of the arrangement, and share the costs accordingly, the City requested joint funding for the position through the Fire Authority. The City agreed to cover greater than 50% of the cost of the position, with the County, through the Fire Authority, contracting to cover the rest of the cost. This contract is unique in that the Fire Authority did not provide a Request for Proposal, due to the fact that there was no other agency with such a resource available.

Coordination of EMS was identified early on by the Fire Authority as a desired service. The following performance expectations were developed:

- Recommend and assist with the development of goals and objectives of the fire service with respect to EMS
- Develop and implement EMS programs by compiling and evaluating operations and activities, recommend improvements and modifications, prepare reports on activities
- Coordinate the training for the cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated external defibrillator (AED) programs for requesting fire agencies
- Review and update the exposure control program for the fire agencies in the county including drafting policies and procedures, reviewing OSHA mandates, provide training, and reviewing exposure follow up reports
- Represent fire agencies on the Dispatch Quality Assurance Committee to develop guidelines for lift assists, paramedics request for fire, improved communications and provide monthly reports to Fire Authority
- Provide oversight of the Infection Control Program including the development of policies and procedures in compliance with federal and OSHA standards for fire agencies

2010-2011

FIRE COMMUNICATIONS

Funding

\$141,124

The Fire Communications Coordinator will continue to assist the fire agencies throughout Stanislaus County in 2010-2011 by supporting and enhancing the many systems that provide critical communications capabilities. The action plan assumes that the funding level will continue at expected levels, with the expected 4% cost of living increase suspended. The coordinator will continue to focus on programs that were identified as priorities through the performance expectations, as well as those issues that have become apparent through the past three and a half years of experience. The original plan document identified additional staff to achieve the goals and objectives of this program, however, that is not possible with current funding. During the time this program has been functioning, it has become very apparent that there are demands well beyond what one person can provide. During the 2010-2011 year, the following services will be provided:

- Represent fire service in CAD development
- Represent county fire agencies on SR911 Operational Technical Advisory Committee (OTAC)
- Represent the fire service in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) map development for Stanislaus County.
- Represent Stanislaus County fire agencies in statewide communications groups (CALSIEC and Statewide COML)
- Lead the Communications Advisory Committee as well as the MDC Workgroup (Combined with CAC in '07)
- Continue to work towards establishing radio interoperability within Stanislaus County
- Work towards implementing frequency narrow-banding of all fire frequencies within Stanislaus County
- Provide recommendations for standardized radio equipment
- Recommend IT systems countywide
- Work on the development and implementation of a county-wide fire records management system

2010-2011

FIRE INVESTIGATION SERVICES

Funding

\$507,861

The 2010-2011 Fire Investigation action plan assumes that the funding level from Less Than Countywide Tax will continue at the same level with the planned 4% cost of living increase suspended for another year. This funding will allow the Modesto Fire Department to provide investigation services and meet the following objectives:

- Determine origin and cause of fires in compliance with NFPA 921 guidelines.
- Provide documentation and assistance to law enforcement agencies for follow up of criminal fire investigations.
- Provide documentation and assistance to District Attorney's office regarding criminal fire investigations.
- Provide documentation and assistance to private fire investigators and insurance industry representatives regarding civil fire investigations.
- Establish an effective training program for chief and company officers to conduct preliminary fire investigations and initial origin and cause determinations following NFPA 921 guidelines.
- Establish effective lines of communications with other agencies to promote information sharing.
- Provide training for fire investigation staff to increase their skills and proficiency in the field of fire investigation.
- Continue to provide a monthly report to the Fire Authority that outlines the number of fires investigated, case status, dollar loss, and number of arrests by jurisdiction.
- Actively participate in the Stanislaus County Arson Task Force.

2010-2011

FIRE PREVENTION SERVICES

Funding

\$573,133

The 2010-2011 Fire Prevention action plan assumes that the funding level for the program will continue at expected levels, with the planned 4% cost of living suspended. This funding, will allow the following objectives to be addressed:

- Continue cooperation and communications between the Fire Marshal and Fire Districts regarding impacts of new development projects
- Develop a Service Level Agreement
- Assist districts with fire prevention needs assessment to determine appropriate service level option from Service Level Agreement.
- Maintain state mandated inspection program
- Increased target hazard and business inspection programs
- Continuously evaluate local fire and life safety codes and ordinances as they apply to current and proposed projects
- Active involvement in the code hearing process to ensure that Stanislaus County fire agencies may have input in the next code adoption cycle
- Continue with cooperative vegetation/ force clean program with the districts
- Continue implementation of a fire records management system for enhanced reporting processes and fee tracking
- Continue training program to increase knowledge and proficiency of Fire Prevention Specialists
- Continue to advocate a new business license process for the unincorporated area of the County that includes a fire prevention component
- Enhance partnerships with business community, groups and county departments
- Analyze fire prevention fees for cost recovery data
- Develop a countywide static rural water supply recommendation except for SRA

2010-2011

FIRE TRAINING

Funding

\$168,455

The Fire Training Coordinator will continue to assist the fire agencies throughout Stanislaus County in the 2010-2011 fiscal year by supporting, coordinating and enhancing the training opportunities offered to local agencies. The action plan assumes that the funding level will continue at the same level as last year, with the expected 4% cost of living increase suspended. The coordinator will continue to focus on programs that were identified as priorities through the performance expectations, as well as those issues that have brought to the Fire Training Advisory Committee. The following services will be provided:

- Assist local training officers in maintaining federal, state and local mandates
- Further develop countywide training program in response to identified needs
- Offer enhanced regional training events
- Further develop and maintain training standardization throughout the county
- Continue to work proactively to meet the training needs of all agencies
- Strengthen partnerships both locally and with statewide organizations to broaden training curriculum
- Create partnerships with state training officer groups and increase networking opportunities
- Develop and maintain a cadre of local and regional instructors
- Enhance training opportunities to meet CICCIS requirements in accordance with NWCG and State CICCIS
- Represent fire agencies as liaison to the RFTC and the MJC Fire Science Program
- Develop coursework to assist in establishing a countywide incident command team

Stanislaus County Fire Authority
Budget Worksheet Narrative
June 2010

The following budget projection worksheet projects revenues, expenses, and use of fund balance through 2011-2012, the end of all the contract periods.

At the time the Fire Authority was formed, the County Fire Service Fund, through property taxes, had experienced significant growth on an annual basis for several years. The property tax revenue projections to fund the five year contracts for services were conservative; however, the unprecedented decline in property values and the downturn in the economy necessitated a revision in projections. The following assumptions were used in developing the 2010-2011 proposed budget:

- Projected property taxes were reduced by 6%
- The County General Fund Contribution for 2010-2011 has been reduced by 10%
- Projected Fire Prevention Fees have been reduced by 10%
- The use of fund balance was projected at approximately \$211,000

The following measures have been put in place to reduce costs:

- The 4% annual inflation factor specified in the contracts has been suspended
- The Admin./Finance support contract has been reduced through the elimination of the stipend paid to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman's agencies, and the reclassification of the position in the Fire Warden's Office
- The Special Operations program was eliminated

The contract costs and the County costs applied to this fund are shown in the expense section. The net affect to the fund balance is outlined at the bottom of the page.

Over the next year, the Fire Authority will evaluate the services currently being provided, and revisit the priorities identified by the membership for recommendations for adjustments.

**Stanislaus County Fire Authority
Projected Budget Worksheet**

	2009-2010 4th QTR Projections	2010-2011 Projections	2011-2012 Projections
REVENUES		8% reduction	
Property taxes	\$ 980,851.00	\$ 985,193.00	\$ 985,183.00
Intergovernmental	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 16,000.00
Fire Prevention Fees	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 135,000.00	\$ 135,000.00
Misc Reimbursements	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00
County Match 9% cut	\$ 291,000.00	\$ 264,810.00	\$ 240,977.10
Total Revenues	\$ 1,455,851.00	\$ 1,419,003.00	\$ 1,395,160.10
Total Expenses	\$ 1,693,439.00	\$ 1,671,573.00	\$ 1,742,035.92
	\$ (237,588.00)	\$ (252,570.00)	\$ (346,875.82)
EXPENSES		No increases	4% increase
Fire Prevention	\$ 573,133.00	\$ 573,133.00	\$ 596,058.32
Investigations * 6/30/2011	\$ 507,861.00	\$ 507,861.00	\$ 528,175.44
Communications * 12/1/2011	\$ 141,124.00	\$ 141,124.00	\$ 146,768.96
Training *2/1/2012	\$ 168,455.00	\$ 168,455.00	\$ 175,193.20
Finance Admin	\$ 31,914.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 78,000.00
EMS Coordinator	\$ -	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00
Special Operations	\$ 115,279.00	\$ -	\$ -
Total Contracts	\$ 1,537,766.00	\$ 1,505,573.00	\$ 1,564,195.92
Intergovernment	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 18,000.00
Other expenses	\$ 137,673.00	\$ 148,000.00	\$ 159,840.00
Total Other County Costs	\$ 155,673.00	\$ 166,000.00	\$ 177,840.00
Total Expenses	\$ 1,693,439.00	\$ 1,671,573.00	\$ 1,742,035.92

***Contracts Projected out to 2011-2012 for budgeting**

	Use of Fund Balance	Ending Fund Balance
Beginning Balance 7/1/09	\$ 1,106,843.00	
Year end 09-10	\$ (237,588.00)	\$ 869,255.00
Year End 10-11	\$ (252,570.00)	\$ 616,685.00
Year End 11-12	\$ (346,875.82)	\$ 269,809.18

Assumptions:

9% cut in County General Fund support

No increases in contracts in 10-11

4% increase in contracts in 11-12

Reduction in Administrative Support position