

# **Stanislaus County Fire Authority**

## **Business Plan**

### **2009-2010**

The Stanislaus County Fire Authority is a joint powers agreement established in November 2005 by the fire agencies in Stanislaus County to administer the Less Than County Wide fire tax and 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	City of Ceres
Denair Fire Protection District	Hughson Fire District
Keyes Fire District	City of Modesto
Mountain View Fire Protection District	City of Newman
City of Oakdale	Oakdale Fire Protection District
City of Patterson	Salida Fire District
Stanislaus Consolidated Fire District	Stanislaus County
City of Turlock	Turlock Rural Fire District
Westport Fire District	Woodland Avenue Fire District
West Stanislaus Fire District	Cal Fire – Santa Clara Unit

The Stanislaus County Fire Authority Board is comprised of a representative from each agency that pays into the Less Than Countywide Fire Tax and the City of Modesto, the City of Turlock, Stanislaus County and the Cal Fire. Each individual agency adopted a resolution to approve the Joint Powers Agreement

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Adopted 6/4/09

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; however the membership may substitute any other agency to serve in this capacity. 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.

The Fire Authority identified 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 targeted achievable service levels. During the process, there were services that were identified as desirable, but funding constraints forced those services lower on the list of priorities.

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.

As of the date of this report, the service contracts are beginning their fourth of five years. As the organization looks forward to new challenges and opportunities facing the fire service, service levels and priorities will be evaluated.

**CONTRACTED SERVICES:**

The following services are currently contracted through Stanislaus County under the recommendation of the Fire Authority:

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
Special Operations Coordination	Stanislaus County Fire Warden's Office	May 1, 2007 - April 30, 2012

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 providing 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 by the Fire Authority membership and reaffirmed in 2008:

- 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 in 2008:

- 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 contracted for six 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 2009-2010 fiscal year.

Funding the Fire Authority's programs for the fiscal year 2009-2010 is dependant upon the projected Less Than County Wide Fire Tax, projected prevention revenues, and the anticipation of a general fund contribution by Stanislaus County. With current economic conditions and the uncertainty of property tax revenues, it will be necessary for the Fire Authority to evaluate service levels for the future, and re-prioritize the services provided in the next contract cycle.

**2009-2010**

**FINANCE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES**

**Funding**

**\$137,191**

In the 2009-2010 fiscal year, the Finance/Administrative Support Services plan is to support the Fire Authority and the fire agencies throughout Stanislaus County by providing oversight to the funding that the County provides for the services identified by the Fire Authority, and to respond to the requests and needs communicated by the individual agencies. 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, however, with current economic conditions, those assumptions may change with the County budget. 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
- 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 weekly/ monthly 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

## **2009-2010**

### **FIRE COMMUNICATIONS**

#### **Funding**

**\$146,769**

The Fire Communications Coordinator will continue to assist the fire agencies throughout Stanislaus County in 2009-2010 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. 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 two and a half years of experience. The original plan document identified additional staff to achieve the goals and objectives of this program. 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 2009-2010 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
- Continue to implement the existing 2008 AFG Regional Communications Grant
- Provide recommendations for standardized radio equipment
- Recommend IT systems countywide

**2009-2010**

**FIRE INVESTIGATION SERVICES**

**Funding**

**\$528,175**

The 2009-2010 Fire Investigation action plan assumes that the funding level from Less Than Countywide Tax will continue at expected levels with the addition of a 4% cost of living increase. This funding will allow the Modesto Fire Department to continue providing the same level of service while meeting 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.



**2009-2010**

**FIRE PREVENTION SERVICES**

**Funding**

**\$590,554**

The 2009-2010 Fire Prevention action plan assumes that the funding level for the program will continue at expected levels, with the planned 4% cost of living increase. 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

**2009-2010**

**SPECIAL OPERATIONS**

**Funding**

**\$159,509**

The 2009-2010 Special Operations action plan is to continue to develop information gathered with respect to local resources and standards and provide a resource to the fire agencies in Stanislaus County in the area of specialized services. The plan assumes the funding will continue at level projected in original business plan.

- Continue to identify the Special Operations components and operate as a liaison to the various special operations committees, teams and programs
- Identify Standards and training requirements for all special operations fields using NFPA and FIREScope as resources
- Develop special operations guidelines and procedures for confined space rescue and hazardous materials for the Fire Authority to approve and the fire agencies to adopt
- Develop and coordinate train the trainer courses for all awareness levels.
- Act as a technical resource to all fire agencies and assist in the delivery of special operations on a regional platform
- Manage the development, implementation and maintenance of operational agreements for all special operations programs
- Act as a technical expert under a unified command and function as part of the incident management team either at scene or in the Emergency Operations Center
- Seek funding opportunities supporting equipment, training and operational needs
- Develop MOUs for placement and use of County owned equipment to support the fire service

**2009-2010**

**FIRE TRAINING**

**Funding**

**\$175,193**

The Fire Training Coordinator will continue to assist the fire agencies throughout Stanislaus County in the 2009-2010 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 expected levels, with the expected 4% cost of living increase. 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 2009

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

At the inception of the contracts, County Fire Service Fund, through property taxes, had experienced significant growth on an annual basis for several years. The revenues to fund the contracts for services were based on conservative projections and a small use of fund balance over the life of the contracts. However, the unprecedented decline in property values has necessitated a downward revision in the projections. At this time, the County General Fund Contribution for 2009-2010 has remained at the 2008-2009 level of \$291,000. We have projected this same number out for the next 3 years, however, this is subject to change.

The contract costs, including the 4% inflator, 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 need to evaluate the services currently being provided, and revisit the priorities identified by the membership for recommendations for adjustments.

**Fire Authority  
Budget Projection Worksheet**

	2008-2009 Projections	2009-2010 Projections 6% reduction	2010-2011 Projections 0 reduction	2011-2012 Projections 2% increase
<b>REVENUES</b>				
Total Tax Revenue	\$ 1,218,781.00	\$ 1,147,311.33	\$ 1,147,311.33	\$ 1,170,257.56
Fire Prevention Fees	\$ 160,000.00	\$ 160,000.00	\$ 160,000.00	\$ 160,000.00
Subtotal Taxes and Fees	\$ 1,378,781.00	\$ 1,307,311.33	\$ 1,307,311.33	\$ 1,330,257.56
County Match	\$ 291,000.00	\$ 291,000.00	\$ 291,000.00	\$ 291,000.00
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 1,669,781.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,598,311.33</b>	<b>\$ 1,598,311.33</b>	<b>\$ 1,621,257.56</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,824,261.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,896,607.66</b>	<b>\$ 1,968,840.34</b>	<b>\$ 2,050,462.81</b>
Use of Fund Balance	<b>\$ (154,480.00)</b>	<b>\$ (298,296.33)</b>	<b>\$ (370,529.01)</b>	<b>\$ (429,205.25)</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Investigations * 6/30/2011	\$ 507,861.00	\$ 528,175.00	\$ 549,302.00	\$ 571,274.00
Communications * 12/1/2011	\$ 141,124.00	\$ 146,769.00	\$ 152,640.00	\$ 158,746.00
Training *2/1/2012	\$ 168,455.00	\$ 175,193.00	\$ 182,201.00	\$ 189,489.00
Fire Prevention	\$ 567,840.00	\$ 590,554.00	\$ 614,176.00	\$ 638,743.00
Special Operations	\$ 153,374.00	\$ 159,509.00	\$ 165,889.00	\$ 172,525.00
Finance Admin	\$ 131,914.00	\$ 131,914.00	\$ 131,914.00	\$ 131,914.00
<b>Total Contracts</b>	<b>\$ 1,670,568.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,732,114.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,796,122.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,862,691.00</b>
Intergovernment	\$ 103,867.00	\$ 112,176.36	\$ 117,785.18	\$ 127,207.99
Other expenses	\$ 49,826.00	\$ 52,317.30	\$ 54,933.17	\$ 60,563.81
<b>Other County Costs</b>	<b>\$ 153,693.00</b>	<b>\$ 164,493.66</b>	<b>\$ 172,718.34</b>	<b>\$ 187,771.81</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,824,261.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,896,607.66</b>	<b>\$ 1,968,840.34</b>	<b>\$ 2,050,462.81</b>

\*Contracts Projected out to 2011-2012 for budgeting

	Annual Projected Loss	Ending Fund Balance
6/30/2008		\$ 1,217,532.00
6/30/2009	\$ (154,480.00)	\$ 1,063,052.00
6/30/2010	\$ (298,296.33)	\$ 764,755.67
6/30/2011	\$ (370,529.01)	\$ 394,226.66
6/30/2012	\$ (429,205.25)	\$ (34,978.59)