



Stanislaus County Fire Authority

Business Plan 2014-2015

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 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 issues of mutual interest.
- Identify, inventory, and comprehensively plan for solutions to countywide issues 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 Fire Warden
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 fire agency listed above. Each individual agency 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.

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.

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 support services through collaborative community and agency partnerships in the areas of fire prevention, fire investigation, fire communications, finance/administration, and training within available funding.
- 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

- Provide strategic direction, leadership, and influence to coordinate professional standards
- Initiate and support efforts that assist in funding the fire service
- Improve financial stability of the existing programs and services
- Explore financial opportunities

ACTION PLAN:

The action plans are defined in an effort to meet the adopted strategies stated above.

The following pages outline specific plans, based on the service priorities and expected funding, for the 2014/2015 fiscal year.

Funding for the Fire Authority's programs for the fiscal year 2014/2015 is dependent upon the projected Less Than County Wide Fire Tax, and projected fire prevention fees. With current economic conditions and the uncertainty of property tax revenues, it has been necessary over the past several years for the Fire Authority to re-evaluate service levels.

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.

It has been the goal of the Fire Authority to provide services commensurate with funding levels. Adjustments are based on available funding and agreed to by the service providers to ensure a sustainable program.

During the 2014-2015 fiscal year, the Stanislaus County Fire Authority will continue to hold quarterly meetings for updates on services provided. Regular sub-committee meetings to address issues specific to each service are held on a regular basis or as requested.

In May of 2014 the leadership of the Fire Authority met with each fire agency and discussed existing programs and expectations. The input received indicated that training was highly desired as an additional program, if funding became available. It was further suggested that the Less Than County-Wide Fire Tax be used to pay the county fire agencies' share of the Regional Fire Training Center agreement.

Approval of this Business Plan is occurring less than 30 days prior to the start of Fiscal Year 14/15, so there has been limited time to research and recommend major program changes. Therefore, specific plans for fire prevention, fire investigation, administration/finance and communications remain consistent with the prior year's plan. Additionally, beginning on July 1, 2014 a transitional period will occur as the responsibility and oversight for services is returned to the Stanislaus County Fire Warden's Office. Over the next six months Fire Authority leadership will seek options and prepare to make future recommendations of prioritized services and expectations.

It has been recommended that the Fire Authority consider future service level and expectation revisions in January instead of in June of each year. This will allow for program changes to occur at the start of a fiscal year, July 1st, after approval from the Fire Authority is obtained at mid-year.

2014-2015

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

Funding

\$175,900

In 2014-2015, Finance & Administrative Support will continue to be administered through the County Fire Wardens Office and manage the Less Than Countywide Fire Tax budget. This service coordinates the meetings, agendas, required filings; distributes reports provided by the service providers to all of the participating agencies; addresses issues affecting the fire districts; and seeks 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. Maintenance for equipment purchased by the County and used regionally such as the mobile air unit and the fire mobile command post are funded through the Support Services budget, as are all cost of administering the property taxes for this fund.

The programs priorities are to:

- Administer the budget within the County guidelines and processes and report to the Fire Authority
- Provide administrative support to the Fire Authority with agendas, board reports, minutes, conflict of interest statements, and information updates on Fire Warden website
- Administer MDC and Fire RMS programs 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
- Ensure that Fire Authority members are updated through annual report, business plan, and budget documents
- 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
- Administer special projects to support the fire service in Stanislaus County
- Coordinate quarterly meetings to address mutual concerns and issues
- Research options and make recommendations for a cooperative purchasing program
- Seek options to take advantage in regional grants that will support and enhance the fire service within Stanislaus County.

2014-2015

FIRE TECHNOLOGY & COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

Funding

\$150,000

Fire Technology & Communications Services will continue to assist fire agencies throughout Stanislaus County in 2014-2015 by supporting and enhancing the many systems that provide critical communications capabilities through the County Fire Wardens Office. The service will continue to focus on programs that are identified by the fire agencies within Stanislaus County. During the time this program has been functioning, it has become very apparent that there are demands well beyond what staff can provide. As a result of increased demands to support infrastructure, radio, mobile data computer, CAD, and specific agency requests, personnel will be seeking opportunities to collaborate and achieve further efficiencies. During the 2014-2015 year, the following services will continue to be provided:

- Represent fire agencies on SR911 technical issues
- Lead the Countywide Communications Advisory Committee (CAC)
- SR911 fire service representative for CAD
- Represent the fire service in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) map development for Stanislaus County.
- Represent Stanislaus County fire agencies in statewide communications groups (CALSIEC, Bay Area Radio Users Group- BAYFROG, and Statewide COMT and Capital Bay Planning Area)
- Represent the fire service as the lead of the regional mobile data computer project
- Continue to work towards establishing radio interoperability within Stanislaus County
- Assist fire agencies with grant writing for their communications needs
- Annually provide updated radio frequency loads for specific mobiles and portables
- Monitor technology trends and recommend system improvements
- Provide recommendations for standardized radio equipment
- Recommend IT systems countywide
- Provide administration and technical support for the regional records management system (RMS)
- Coordinate dispatch center to dispatch center training and communications
- Manage and support NetMotion and RMS servers for regional systems

2014-2015

FIRE INVESTIGATION SERVICES

Funding

\$330,000

Fire Investigation Services will be provided in 2014-2015 through the Modesto Fire Department, covering the needs and requests of all agencies within Stanislaus County. Continued coordination with law enforcement and the District Attorney's office will remain a priority. During the 2014-2015 year, the following services will continue to be provided:

- 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 and deliver an effective training program for chief and company officers throughout the County to conduct preliminary fire investigations and initial origin and cause determinations following NFPA 921 guidelines.
- Establish effective lines of communications with partner agencies to promote information sharing.
- Provide training for fire investigation staff to increase their skills and proficiency in the field of fire investigation.
- Provide a quarterly 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.
- Facilitate regular meetings for all county fire agencies to discuss issues and concerns related to fire investigations

2014-2015

FIRE PREVENTION SERVICES

Funding

\$535,000

In 2014-2015 Fire Prevention Services will support fire agencies within Stanislaus County through the County Fire Wardens Office. The services provided will continue to be at the basic level, as was originally proposed for fire prevention. 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
- Participate in the environmental review committee
- Provide plan review
- Provide services to support the one-stop shop program at the county offices
- Maintain state mandated inspection program
- Assist in 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 the use of the fire records management system for enhanced reporting processes and fee tracking
- Continue training program to increase knowledge and proficiency of Fire Prevention Specialists
- Enhance partnerships with business community, groups and county departments
- Analyze fire prevention fees for cost recovery data
- Maintain the countywide rural water supply recommendation except for SRA
- Facilitate regular meetings for all county fire agencies to discuss issues and concerns related to fire prevention

2014-2015

TRAINING PROGRAM

Funding

\$53,000

A Training Program has been proposed in Fiscal Year 2014-2015. Many of the fire agencies in the county have been signatory to the Regional Fire Training Center (RFTC) agreement through a sub-contract for the past 20 years. Each fire agency within Stanislaus County routinely participates in programs, meetings and class extensions offered through the RFTC. Modesto Junior College (MJC) has prioritized the fire service program and is anticipating some new programs. In the future, agencies that are signatory to the RFTC agreement will become eligible for reimbursement back to the individual fire agencies. In the past the county fire agencies' portion of the RFTC agreement was paid individually by each signatory agency. With the approval to use Less Than County-Wide dollars to fund the county fire agency portion of the contract, each agency will not need to individually budget for reimbursement. Listed below are goals outlined by MJC.

**Regional Fire Training Center
3 Year Center Vision and Targets**

Training and Education Targets by the MJC Regional Fire Training Center

1. GOAL 1:
 - a. Maintain the delivery of MJC Fire Academies
 - b. Offer courses in support of the Fire Science Certificate and A.S. Degree
 - c. Offer courses to support the Emergency Medical Services
2. GOAL 2:
 - a. Offer an active schedule of California State Fire Marshal approved classes
 - b. Enhance Distance Education Capabilities (i.e. online and hybrid courses)
 - c. Expand Fee Based classes offered by the RFTC and Community Education
3. GOAL 3:
 - a. Expand Safety Training Venue for Community & Local Industries (i.e. Manufacturing OSHA Training, OES – CIMS/NIMS/IES, etc.)
4. GOAL 4:
 - a. Organize a Fire Science Safety Conference
5. GOAL 5:
 - a. Improve Priority Registration for Employees of JPA Fire Authority Members seeking to complete their Associate Degree
6. GOAL 6:
 - a. Update Lecture Rooms with Smart Classroom Technology
 - b. Repair Simulator to Working Conditions

Stanislaus County Fire Authority
Budget Narrative
June 2014

The following budget projection worksheet projects revenues and expenses for 2014-2015

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 last five years have seen an overall reduction to property taxes and the services that are provided through this funding. This year a 4% increase is projected.

In past years the Fire Authority members have stated that the services provided must be commensurate with the revenues received. The 2014-2015 Budget has achieved that objective.

Over the next year the priorities identified by the membership, and services being provided will continue to be evaluated.

2014-2015 Budget Projections
Less Than County-Wide

	2013-2014		2014-2015	
	Budget	+/-	Budget	
<u>Projected Revenues</u>				
Less Than County-wide	\$ 1,037,050	\$ +4%	\$ 1,078,500	
Fire Prevention Fees	\$ 132,715	\$	\$ 150,000	
Misc. Reimbursements	\$ -0-	\$	\$ -0-	
Intergovernmental	<u>\$ 15,400</u>	\$	<u>\$ 15,400</u>	
Total	\$ 1,185,165		\$ 1,243,900	
<u>Projected Expenses</u>				
Finance & Admin Support, Equipment Maintenance And County Charges	\$ 169,554		\$ 175,900	
Fire Prevention	\$ 535,420		\$ 535,000	
Technology & Communications	\$ 149,133		\$ 150,000	
Fire Investigations	\$ 331,058		\$ 330,000	
Training (RFTC)	<u>\$ -0-</u>		<u>\$ 53,000</u>	
Total	\$ 1,185,165		\$ 1,243,900	