

**Grand Jury Report
RESPONSE FORM**

RE: Report Titled: : *Emergency Communication – Consolidation is Imperative*

Report Dated: June 3, 2010

Response Form Submitted By:

Chris Dewey, Chief of Police
300 Seminary Avenue
Ukiah, CA 95482

Response MUST be submitted, per Penal Code §933.05, no later than: August 3, 2010

I have reviewed the report and submit my responses to the FINDINGS portion of the report as follows:

- I (we) agree with the Findings numbered:
1 to 9
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the Findings numbered below, and have **attached, as required**, a statement specifying any portion of the Finding that are disputed with an explanation of the reasons therefore.

I have reviewed the report and submit my responses to the RECOMMENDATIONS portion of the report as follows:

- The following Recommendation(s) have been implemented and **attached, as required**, is a summary describing the implemented actions:
1, 3
- The following Recommendation(s) have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, **attached, as required** is a time frame for implementation:

GRAND JURY REPORT
RESPONSE FORM
PAGE TWO

The following Recommendation(s) require further analysis, and attached as required, is an explanation and the scope and parameters of the planned analysis, and a time frame for the matter to be prepared, discussed and approved by the officer and/or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed: (This time frame shall not exceed six (6) months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury Report)

2

The following Recommendations will NOT be implemented because they are not warranted and/or are not deemed reasonable, attached, as required is an explanation therefore:

I have completed the above responses, and have attached, as required the following number of pages to this response form:

Number of Pages attached: 1

I understand that responses to Grand Jury Reports are public records. They will be posted on the Grand Jury website: www.co.mendocino.ca.us/grandjury. The clerk of the responding agency is required to maintain a copy of the response.

I understand that I must submit this signed response form and any attachments as follows:

First Step: E-mail (word documents or scanned pdf file format) to:

- The Grand Jury Foreperson at: grandjury@co.mendocino.ca.us
- The Presiding Judge: grandjury@mendocino.courts.ca.gov
- The County's Executive Office: ceo@co.mendocino.ca.us

Second Step: Mail all originals to:

Mendocino County Grand Jury
P.O. Box 939
Ukiah, CA 95482

Printed Name: CHRIS DEWEY

Title: CHIEF OF POLICE

Signed: 

Date: 6/22/2010

Mendocino County Grand Jury Report

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION CONSOLIDATION IS IMPERATIVE

Ukiah Police Department Response

Narrative Summary of Required Responses to Grand Jury Findings:

None Required

Narrative Summary of Required Responses to Grand Jury Recommendations:

#1 – All agencies are working through monthly 911 meetings to study consolidation opportunities and costs.

#2 – Because of funding limitations, the suggested 3 year time-line might be overly aggressive. Most consolidations have proven to cost more to each agency, rather than becoming cost saving opportunities, because single agencies have more control over annual costs than cooperative agreements.

As the law enforcement agencies in Mendocino County move forward to study consolidated dispatching services, it will become increasingly important that agency costs are accurately projected and budgeted in our planning. If costs prove to increase to each agency, while agencies lose control over on-going costs, there may be less incentive to move towards consolidated services.

#3 – The Ukiah Police Department agrees that the grand Jury should continue to monitor the progress of consolidated services, and any cost savings to our communities these consolidation may be able to provide, and the on-going use of the County's Microwave Transmission System.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION CONSOLIDATION IS IMPERATIVE

A REPORT ON COUNTY EMERGENCY DISPATCH

JUNE 3, 2010

Summary

The 2009-2010 Grand Jury, (GJ), has determined that the general public needs to be informed of Mendocino County's, (County), law enforcement efforts to improve emergency communications. In June, 2007, the County received a proposal from an independent communication firm for E911 Dispatch Center Consolidation, in response to Homeland Security's attempt to improve law enforcement communications nationwide. Local law enforcement supports the concept. A dispatch center consolidation is being spearheaded by the County's Law Enforcement Administrators Association, (LEAA). The National Emergency Communication Plan, (NECP), published in 2008, recommended the creation of a multi-faceted approach to strengthen emergency communications by focusing on technology, coordination, governance, planning, and training at all levels of government.

Costs, funding, location, construction, and governance have yet to be determined for this project. Consideration has also been given to our state-of-the-art main microwave tower, located in the Ukiah area, regarding its current and potential use.

Method

The GJ interviewed staff at the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office, (MCSO), Ukiah Police Department, (UPD), and Willits Police Department, (WPD). The GJ visited the Ukiah Emergency Services Call Center, which also performs emergency dispatch for the Ft. Bragg Police Department, (FBPD). The GJ also reviewed the *Mendocino County Feasibility Study for E911 Dispatch Center Consolidation*, (6/28/2007), and reviewed prior GJ reports on the County microwave tower utilization.

Background

The LEAA Board has been looking into consolidating emergency communication systems/911. The GJ was concerned that discussions and preliminary reports regarding a proposed consolidated emergency communication system was at a standstill. The GJ purpose was to investigate and bring to the public the current status of the proposed 911 consolidated communication system for the County. One concern is whether the consolidated emergency system could be implemented within the previously proposed 3-year timeframe.

The National Emergency Communication Plan, (NECP), published in July, 2008, recommended the creation of a multi-faceted approach to strengthening emergency communications nationwide. Focus will be placed on technology, coordination, governance, planning, and training at all levels of government. Global emergencies brought to the forefront by the media, including terrorist activities, as well as local County emergencies, have reinforced the need for consolidated emergency services communications for public safety.

It should be noted that agencies other than County, i.e., CAL FIRE and California Highway Patrol, (CHP), and State agencies could be involved in this project.

Findings

1. A grant of \$2.5 million from Homeland Security for communication software has been obtained by MCSO. The MCSO is sharing the software with other County law enforcement agencies.
2. Additional proposals are being reviewed by the LEAA and UPD to determine a plan that would best serve the County in going forward with this project.
3. These issues need to be addressed:
 - sources of funds, i.e. grants/homeland security, Federal and State funds,
 - donation of County property in lieu of matching funds for Federal and/or State funding,
 - location of facility,
 - construction of new facility or renovation of an existing facility,
 - comparison of costs between the existing emergency communication systems and a new consolidated system,
 - governance of the new system, i.e., Joint Powers Authority, (JPA),
 - comparison of present and future costs of each community's participation,
 - involvement of City and/or County personnel and their union/employment contracts.
4. CAL FIRE and CHP are State funded agencies that may choose to be involved in the consolidated system now or in the future.
5. Elected officials of the State and Federal government have shown interest in this project.
6. The proposed consolidation will include reverse 911 capabilities, allowing the communication center to automatically notify areas of the County of impending or existing emergencies.
7. A contract exists between UPD and FBPD for emergency calls and dispatching. Costs are based on the volume of calls.
8. The County's present state-of-the-art microwave tower is not being fully utilized. Leasing space to cell phone companies, or others, would provide revenue for the new consolidated 911 system.
9. The potential use of the Global Positioning System, (GPS), to identify exact location of calls, officers, and emergency vehicles will be an integral part of this consolidation effort.

Recommendations

The Grand Jury recommends that:

1. the FBPD, UPD, WPD, and the MCSO determine the cost of the project and their share of the cost. (Findings 2-3, 5, 7, 9)
2. the FBPD, UPD, WPD, and the MCSO set a timeframe within the previously suggested three-year parameter for implementation of this consolidated emergency system plan. (Finding 2)
3. the GJ continue monitoring the consolidated 911 system project and usage of the microwave tower. (All Findings)

Discussion

The goal for our County should be seamless communication between agencies. Homeland Security launched an outreach initiative to ensure that state and local agencies work toward emergency management communication goals. Our legislators may become involved in their effort to position Mendocino County as a "showpiece" for consolidated emergency communications.

As suggested in a *Sierra Sun* article, 10/27/09, "agencies should identify overlapping requirements, responsibilities, and expenses that could be shared with other local jurisdictions". The following need to be addressed concerning expanded usage of the microwave tower:

- County needs for expansion in the near future;
- impact of other access sold on the tower to generate additional revenue;
- if access is sold to cell phone companies, will they require their own back-up-system?

Required Responses

Mendocino County Sheriff (All Findings, All Recommendations)

Fort Bragg Police Chief (All Findings, All Recommendations)

Ukiah Police Chief (All Findings, All Recommendations)

Willits Police Chief (All Findings, All Recommendations)

Requested Responses

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors (All Findings, All Recommendations)

Mendocino County Chief Executive Officer (All Findings, All Recommendations)

California Highway Patrol Ukiah District Commander (All Findings, All Recommendations)