

This document is an extract of a larger publication.

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Recommendations

1. Board members should become educated on standard procurement practices and procedures.
2. The board should revise its purchasing policy to include competitive bidding and other standard safeguards for the following:
 - professional services
 - medical equipment or supplies
 - insurance
 - public utility services
3. Board members should not relinquish their responsibilities to nonelected individuals.
4. Board members should be aware of their responsibilities as a Special District’s Board member, including knowledge of the Brown Act. Literature or training on the Brown Act should be available to board members.
5. Minutes of board meetings should be thorough and accurate as to the identity of persons speaking, directors’ identities and issues discussed. Minutes and tape recordings of all meetings should be properly retained.
6. Tape recordings made at the direction of the district by directors, employees or consultants of public meetings should be considered public record.
7. The board should adopt by-laws or policies for governing the Central Fire Protection District.

Response Required

Entity	Recommendations	Respond Within
Central Fire Protection District Board of Directors	1 – 7	90 Days

Review of Santa Cruz County Fire Protection Services

Background

Santa Cruz County is protected by fire protection services strategically located throughout the county. Their primary functions are providing fire protection, first responder emergency medical services, hazardous materials response and public fire safety education. In addition, they provide a supporting foundation for community services and local social activities. (See map and chart)

There are ten fire protection districts in Santa Cruz County, with independent governing bodies. They provide services to Capitola, Scotts Valley and the unincorporated areas. The City of Santa Cruz, the City of Watsonville and the University of California have their own fire departments. This report excludes the University of California since it is under the jurisdiction of the State of California.

The fire protection districts are:

1. Aptos-La Selva Beach
2. Aromas Tri-County
3. Ben Lomond
4. Boulder Creek
5. Branciforte
6. Central (includes the City of Capitola)
7. Felton
8. Pajaro Valley
9. Scotts Valley (the City of Scotts Valley and surrounding area)
10. Zayante

The County of Santa Cruz Fire Department and the Pajaro Dunes Fire Department (County Service Area #4) provide the balance of the fire protection for Santa Cruz County. These two fire departments contract with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDFFP) to operate their fire stations.

All fire protection services are funded primarily by property taxes.

The CDFFP operates thirteen fire stations in Santa Cruz County. These stations are staffed by either career CDFFP firefighters, volunteer firefighters from the local area, or a combination of career and volunteer firefighters. Fifty-five seasonal CDFFP firefighters are added during the summer fire season. The CDFFP's main mission is wildland fire control. These stations respond to such fires around the state and assist with countywide emergency incidents.

The CDFFP, in conjunction with the California Youth Authority, operates a Conservation Camp on Empire Grade Road that supplies additional emergency personnel to assist the CDFFP, County Fire Department and other fire protection departments in the county.

**Santa Cruz County
Fire Protection Services
For the year ended June 30, 2000**

Fire Protection Services Supplied by:	Revenue	Salaries & Other Expenditures	Salaries as a % of Revenue	Paid Staff	Reserve Paid	Volunteers	Total Staff	Square Miles
<i>City Fire Departments</i>								
Santa Cruz *	4,916,029	4,496,155	91%	53.0	0.0	0.0	53.0	11
Watsonville *	2,873,703	2,587,131	90%	32.0	30.0	0.0	62.0	12
<i>County Fire Districts</i>								
Aptos/La Selva	4,911,627	3,818,311	78%	39.0	0.0	0.0	39.0	15
Aromas/Tri-County	13,614	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Ben Lomond	430,431	175,736	41%	2.5	0.0	26.0	28.5	7
Boulder Creek	519,931	193,267	37%	1.5	0.0	31.0	32.5	21
Branciforte	420,880	256,900	61%	4.0	0.0	20.0	24.0	7
Central Fire	7,006,792	5,347,777	77%	59.0	26.0	0.0	85.0	21
Felton	417,732	169,740	41%	2.0	0.0	28.0	30.0	7
Pajaro Valley/ Salsipuedes	1,192,465	916,013	77%	6.0	21.0	0.00	27.0	51
Scotts Valley	3,308,268	2,375,705	72%	28.0	25.0	0.0	53.0	22
Zayante	342,204	133,532	39%	4.0	0.0	31.0	35.0	15
<i>County Fire Departments</i>								
County Fire Dept.	2,103,381	1,270,767	60%	39.0	0.0	116.0	155.0	250
Pajaro Dunes Fire	533,419	410,330	77%	5.0	8.0	0.0	13.0	2
Total County	28,990,476	22,151,364	76%	275.0	110.0	252.0	637.0	441

* For a city fire department, the revenues is assumed to be the same as the department's expenses.

** This is a three county fire district. The majority of its revenues come from other counties.

Scope

The 2000-01 Grand Jury reviewed the fire protection districts, the County Fire Department and the Pajaro Dunes Fire Department (County Service Area #4).

In the scope of this review, the members of the 2000-01 Grand Jury toured and conducted interviews at

- Nine of the County's fire protection districts
- Two County Fire Department stations
- Pajaro Dunes Fire Department (County Service Area #4)
- California Youth Authority Conservation Camp on Empire Grade Road