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Each team asked to see the principal, or if the principal was off-campus, whoever was in charge. After explaining the reason for the visit, Jurors asked to speak to two relatively new teachers in private and one at a time. The same pre-determined questions were asked during each meeting. The goal was to assess teacher training and knowledge of child abuse reporting responsibilities when child abuse is suspected.

Facts

The requirements for the reporting of suspected child abuse are contained in Penal Code Sections 11164–11174.3, The Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act. The Act identifies, among others, all school personnel as “mandated reporters”. It requires that suspected child abuse be reported to the proper authorities within 36 hours of receiving information concerning the incident.

The procedures used by each of the schools, while differing in both content and format from school to school, provide guidelines for reporting suspected cases of child abuse to the authorities. Of the three schools visited, all had the State mandated reporting forms readily available. Two of the schools had reference materials also available in the classrooms.

Each teacher interviewed had received training early in the school year regarding the process for reporting cases of suspected child abuse. They knew where the abuse reporting instructions and forms were located at their school and they understood their mandated reporting responsibilities.

Findings

1. The Grand Jury found that the teachers, principals, and vice-principal interviewed had knowledge of what they should do in order to properly report any case of suspected child abuse.
2. Although the written procedures used by each of the schools varied, the materials provided the needed information that would guide a mandated reporter of suspected abuse through the reporting process.

Conclusion

The Grand Jury was satisfied with the knowledge exhibited by all of those interviewed. Based on those interviews, the Grand Jury concluded that these schools demonstrated an understanding of the proper reporting procedures under The Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act.

Request for Responses

None

Copies Sent To

- Jeremy Lyche, Principal
Twelve Bridges Elementary School
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Lincoln, CA 95648
- Michael Garrison, Principal
Rocklin High School
5301 Victory Lane
Rocklin, CA 95765
- Tracy Robinson, Principal
Quail Glen Elementary School
1250 Canevari Drive
Roseville, CA 95747
- Gayle Garbolino-Mojica
County Superintendent of Schools
Placer County Office of Education
360 Nevada Street
Auburn, CA 95603
- Western Placer Unified School District
Board
600 Sixth Street
Lincoln, CA 95648
- Rocklin Unified High School District
Board
2615 Sierra Meadows Dr.
Rocklin, CA 95677
- Dry Creek Joint Elementary School
District Board
9707 Cook Riolo Road
Roseville, Ca 95747

PLACER COUNTY EMERGENCY CALL CENTERS



City of Roseville Call Center



Photos by Win Gredvig

PLACER COUNTY EMERGENCY CALL CENTERS

Summary

Emergency call centers are typically accessed in the United States by dialing 9-1-1. These centers serve as the first point of contact between a pending emergency and local police, fire fighters, or health services. Advanced technology and human resource practices greatly impact the responsiveness and effectiveness of a 9-1-1 system—a system that often determines the outcome of life or death situations.

The 2008–2009 Grand Jury toured and evaluated the following dispatch call centers: Auburn, Lincoln, Rocklin and Roseville. Additionally, call centers within the Sheriff's Department located in Auburn and Tahoe City were inspected and reviewed.

Jurors found that all call center operations within Placer County reflect the changing technology in the industry. Currently, 9-1-1 calls originating from cell phones in California can be directly routed to local call centers. All call centers in Placer County plan to implement this service by the end of 2009. This technology is an important improvement from past years when 9-1-1 cell phone calls had to be routed through the California Highway Patrol (CHP). This enhanced communication technology is resulting in improvements in the way all emergency calls are handled and tracked.

Background

The Grand Jury may decide at its discretion to inquire into or investigate government programs it thinks would be of interest to the general public. The 2008–2009 Grand Jury sought to obtain an understanding of how call centers handle the transition from a landline system to one that accommodates the growing use of cell phone technology.

Investigation Methods

The Grand Jury contacted each call center manager and sent a follow-up confirmation letter making arrangements for a facility tour. Standard questions were posed in the confirmation letter to ensure responses could be gathered and assessed in advance of the inspection. During each visit, Jurors asked additional questions to assist in comparing operations across all call centers.

As a follow-up to information received from call center management, Jurors also conducted Internet research to obtain historical references.

Facts

General

Call centers in California are regulated by the State government through the California 9-1-1 Emergency Communications Office (CECO). By regulation, CECO is responsible for monitoring all emergency communication systems related to the delivery of 9-1-1 calls ensuring compliance with Federal and State standards. CECO also has the authority to audit and request data from any call center funded from the State. CECO is supported through surcharges applied to each landline and cell phone owner in California.

Since 1970, Californians have relied on a 9-1-1 landline system for fast, lifesaving responses from police, fire, and emergency medical services. This basic system was improved by providing the landline caller's address and telephone number on dispatcher monitors. It soon became evident that the increasing use of cell phones for 9-1-1 calls created the need for an enhanced system that handles emergency calls from cell phones. In 1993, the Federal government mandated that cellular carriers provide database information creating an enhanced 9-1-1 system that would be phased in over future years. An enhanced 9-1-1 system allows a dispatcher to identify the exact location of the cellular caller as well as the phone number.

Eventually all call centers in Placer County will assume responsibility for responding directly to all 9-1-1 calls whether made by a landline or a cell phone.

According to CECO, the ability for local jurisdictions to take 9-1-1 calls directly reduces response time and can save lives. Until recently, the CHP responded to all cell phone calls. CECO reports that in 2003 the CHP had average wait times of over 17 seconds for 9-1-1 service provided to the Sacramento Region. This exceeds the State goal of ten seconds. In the 2006 California State Auditor Report, it was noted that unfilled CHP dispatcher positions contributed to longer wait times and to significant overtime costs.

Of the approximately 23 million 9-1-1 calls received in California in 2007, 50% were from cell phones. According to CECO, as call centers assume responsibility for wireless calls, the public will greatly benefit from an improved response time.

Largely due to government regulations, there are certain factors and elements which are common to all call centers within Placer County. CECO has established the following mandatory standards for each California call center:

- Centers must have phone operating systems pre-approved.
- Centers must have an emergency procedure in the event of a community disaster and/or loss of the ability to process 9-1-1 calls.
- Ten seconds is the maximum amount of time in which 9-1-1 calls should be answered.
- Centers funded by the State must provide 9-1-1 call service 24 hours per day.
- Dispatchers must remain on the line with a caller until the response unit arrives.
- Dispatchers must pass the Peace Officer Standards and Training Basic Dispatcher Academy within one year of hire.

Placer County call centers are located within each city's police department and the Sheriff's Department. There are six call centers in Placer County: Auburn, Lincoln, Rocklin, Roseville, and the two facilities run by the Placer County Sheriff's Department operating in Auburn and Tahoe City. The City of Colfax and the Town of Loomis are linked to the Sheriff's call center for dispatch services.

Call centers in Placer County use Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD), a desk top screen which enables the dispatcher to see caller identification details. CAD allows the dispatcher to enter incident history, access records, and keep a running log of each incident to aid in report writing. Because of call volume and budgetary constraints, call centers in Placer County differ in the amount of equipment used and the capability to accept cellular 9-1-1 calls.

All Placer County call centers have a public outreach program to educate callers on the appropriate use of 9-1-1.

What follows is a discussion of individual call centers' unique features and operations:

City of Auburn

Staffing: The City of Auburn Call Center has six full-time employees and one part-time employee. Through an agreement, the City of Roseville answers calls on Saturday and Sunday during Auburn's non-operational hours.

Facility: The dispatch center has two stations with two monitors each. One monitor allows the dispatcher to enter incident information and the second monitor displays the CAD system. Currently, the City of Auburn does not accept cell phone calls. However, according to the City of Auburn Police Chief, the Auburn call center plans to begin accepting cell phone calls sometime in 2009.

Operations: If a dispatcher determines that the 9-1-1 call is an emergency, it is routed directly to the appropriate patrol officer. If the call is a medical emergency, the dispatcher will also contact an emergency medical service. All fire calls are transferred to Cal-Fire (formerly known as the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection). If incoming calls exceed the ability of the dispatcher to answer, the dispatch center will automatically transfer incoming calls to the Roseville Police Department or the Placer County Sheriff's Department.

City of Lincoln

Staffing: The City of Lincoln Call Center has a total of seven full-time employees.

Facility: The call center has four stations, each having four monitors. One monitor allows the dispatcher to enter incident information, the second accesses the CAD system, the third is a television monitor and the fourth is a security monitor for the Department's interior facility.

Operations: The call center dispatches fire, police, medical, and other emergency services. Medical calls are immediately dispatched to the City of Lincoln Fire Department. If dispatchers determine that the police may be of assistance, they have the discretion to have the officer respond.

According to call center management, the call center will begin accepting cell phone calls sometime in 2009. In the event that the numbers of incoming calls exceed capacity, calls are transferred to the City of Rocklin under an existing contractual agreement.

City of Rocklin

Staffing: The City of Rocklin Call Center has a total of twelve full-time positions.

Facility: The 9-1-1 system has recently been upgraded to receive 9-1-1 calls directly from cell phones. Using advanced Global Positioning System (GPS) technology, the dispatcher can view both topical and aerial maps to assist in the call assignment.

Operations: The call center dispatches fire, police, medical, and other emergency services. Once the dispatcher determines the nature of a call, it is assigned to the closest available patrol unit or appropriate resource.

Since it began accepting cell phone calls, the call center has seen a substantial increase in call volume.

City of Roseville

Staffing: The City of Roseville Call Center has a total of twenty-one full-time employees and four supervisors.

Facility: The call center is equipped with ten stations, each containing six monitors. Two monitors are connected to the 9-1-1 system, two are CAD, one is an administrative computer, and the final monitor is a television. Dispatchers explained that had they been able to view what thousands of callers were describing during the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the television would have been an invaluable aid.

Operations: Roseville dispatchers communicate directly with patrol officers until they arrive at the incident location. When staff takes a call determined to be a medical emergency, the center has the ability to simultaneously call for a police officer and emergency medical assistance. Roseville began accepting cellular calls in 2008. Over half of the calls originated from cell phones.

The call center participates in Project Lifesaver International (PLI), a non-profit organization founded by public safety officers. PLI utilizes electronic technology to locate missing persons. The technology is available free of charge to those afflicted with Alzheimer's disease, autism, or have other special needs. Patients are outfitted with an electronic bracelet which has a unique radio frequency. This program allows a caregiver

to call 9-1-1 where victim information and location is immediately accessed. If needed, a patrol officer is dispatched to retrieve the individual. The average search time of a missing person without PLI is approximately 3 ½ hours. With PLI it is, on average, less than thirty minutes. The program is funded completely through grants. Monthly maintenance is provided by Police Department volunteers.

Placer County Sheriff's Call Center

Staffing: The Sheriff's call center in Auburn has eighteen full-time dispatchers and two dispatcher trainees. The Sheriff's call center in Tahoe City has a staff of four dispatchers.

According to the center's Lieutenant, the center has higher than desired staff turnover due to difficulty getting trainees through the training process. Center management re-evaluated the training program and implemented an in-house Basic Dispatcher and Basic Fire Dispatch Academy for trainees prior to their on-the-job training. Since then, there has been a significant increase in the successful pass rate for trainees.

Facility: The Placer County Sheriff's new call center in Auburn has twelve stations, each with four monitors. Two are dedicated to CAD, the third is the phone/caller monitor and the fourth is the radio/officer monitor. Two stations have a fifth monitor dedicated to an Electronic Tracking System. To assist law enforcement, the Electronic Tracking System uses a specialized computer chip that aids in solving burglaries and tracking items of interest.

The facility in Tahoe City (Burton Creek) is a substation that contains the same monitor configuration as the call center in Auburn. However, it does not have an Electronic Tracking System.

Operations: The Sheriff's Department uses two types of dispatchers — call takers and radio dispatchers. Call takers are the initial public contact. They determine the appropriate response required and hand off the call to the radio dispatcher. The radio dispatcher will listen in and make the direct contact with a patrol officer.

The call taker will maintain contact with the caller until the deputy, medical or fire unit arrives. According to the center's management, this is common practice in high volume call centers.

In August 2008, the Sheriff's Department started receiving 9-1-1 calls directly from cell phones.

The center's management indicated that the completion of an in-depth dispatch study is anticipated in 2009. The results of the study will set the course for future policies and plans within the center.

Findings

1. The Grand Jury found that all Placer County call centers are adapting to the increased impact of cell phone technology on dispatch operations. Budget constraints have slowed but not stopped the conversion to this technology.
2. All call centers appear to be dedicated to making 9-1-1 emergency communications more efficient.

Conclusions

1. The technological changes required by all call centers to directly receive 9-1-1 calls originating from cell phones are in a state of transition. Call centers within Placer County have developed comprehensive and effective dispatch operations despite budgetary limitations.
2. The Grand Jury commends the dedication of call center employees who make life and death decisions every day.

Request for Responses

None

Copies Sent To

- Edward Bonner, Sheriff, Coroner, Marshall
Placer County Sheriff Department
2929 Richardson Drive
Auburn, CA 95603
- Valerie Harris, Chief of Police
Auburn Police Department
1215 Lincoln Way
Auburn, CA 95603
- Placer County Board of Supervisors
175 Fulweiler Avenue
Auburn, CA 95603
- Auburn City Council
1225 Lincoln Way
Auburn, CA 95603

- Brian Vizzuzi, Chief of Police
Lincoln Police Department
770 Seventh Street
Lincoln, CA 95648
- Mark Siemens, Chief of Police
Rocklin Police Department
4080 Rocklin Road
Rocklin, CA 95677
- Mike Blair, Chief of Police
Roseville Police Department
1051 Junction Blvd.
Roseville, CA 95678
- Lincoln City Council
600 Sixth Street
Lincoln, CA 95648
- Rocklin City Council
3970 Rocklin Road
Rocklin, CA 95677
- Roseville City Council
311 Vernon Street
Roseville, CA 95678

A SURVEY OF CEMETERY DISTRICTS WITHIN PLACER COUNTY

Auburn Cemetery

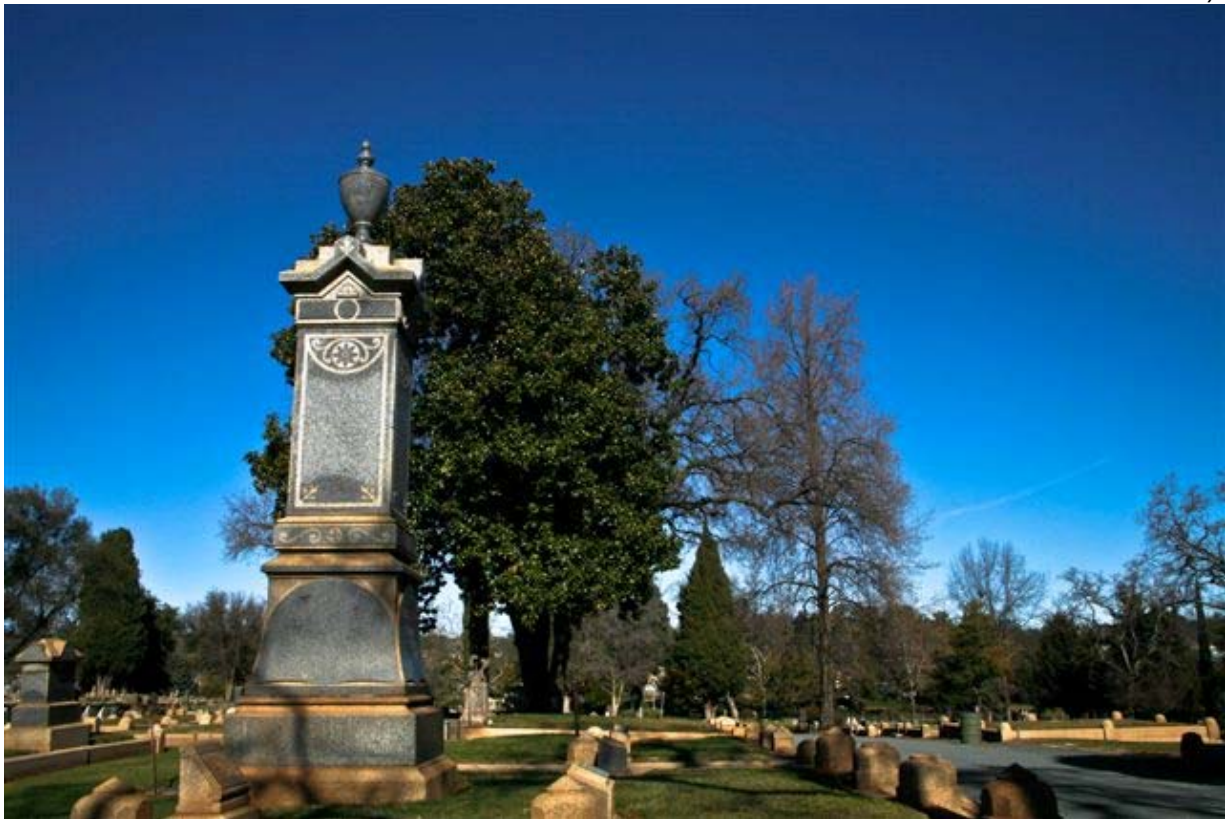


Photo by Win Gredvig

A SURVEY OF CEMETERY DISTRICTS WITHIN PLACER COUNTY

Summary

Placer County's six public cemetery districts are assets belonging to its citizens. The Grand Jury found that these districts appear to be managed and operated well. They are positioned to serve the County's needs well into the future.

Background

An important function of the Grand Jury is to inform the public about the quality and range of the services being provided to them by various city and county agencies. Many times these services go unnoticed by the public or are not appreciated for the value they provide. Each year, the Grand Jury examines certain agencies to determine how well they are operating and learn whether they are encountering any issues that would benefit from public disclosure and scrutiny. Publishing the results of those examinations can then enlighten the public about how well they are being served.

Placer County's public cemetery districts had not recently been reviewed for this purpose. Accordingly, the 2008–2009 Placer County Grand Jury decided to conduct such a review of these districts in order to inform the public about the operations, management and general conditions of cemetery districts in Placer County.

Investigation Methods

The Grand Jury sent letters to each cemetery district operating in Placer County to request information and documentation covering a broad range of subjects dealing with their operations and practices. The Jury sent follow-up letters to clarify some of the financial information received.

The Grand Jury conducted on-site tours of four cemeteries: the Colfax District Cemetery, the Lincoln Cemetery, the New Auburn Cemetery and the Roseville Cemetery. These tours included in-depth discussions with cemetery managers on a variety of topics.