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SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY URGES RURAL FIRE DISTRICT TO CONSIDER CONSOLIDATION

The county's rural fire district should consider consolidation, the San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury said in a report released today.

The Grand Jury's recommendation came after an investigation of the Mokelumne Rural Fire District that uncovered evidence of inadequate oversight of administrative duties, evidence the state's open meeting law, the Ralph M. Brown Act, was being violated, improper practices by the District's board of directors, and poor leadership.

The Grand Jury spent months interviewing witnesses, attending meetings, reviewing District agendas and Board minutes, and examining the operations of other rural fire. The Grand Jury's recommendations are meant to increase the efficiency of all rural fire districts, spend taxpayer money more effectively, and provide better fire protection to residents of the county's rural fire districts.

Only the Grand Jury foreman is allowed to comment publicly about Grand Jury investigations.

Eight rural fire districts named in the report in addition to the county's Local Agency Formation Commission are required to submit responses to specific findings and recommendations in the report. Those responses must be sent to the Presiding Judge of the San Joaquin County Superior Court within 90 days.

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San Joaquin County Grand Jury



It's Time to Come Together Consolidate the Eight 2014-2015 Case No. 1401

Summary

The 2014-2015 Grand Jury examined the Mokelumne Rural Fire District (MRFD). Jurors found several operational inadequacies after receiving a complaint alleging illegal activities, political misconduct, and bargaining in bad faith. The Grand Jury found evidence to support some of the complainant's allegations. In addition, the jury found evidence of violations of the Ralph M. Brown Act, inadequate oversight of administrative duties, improper practices by the board of directors and ineffective leadership.

Other rural fire districts were inspected to gain an understanding of how they are operating in comparison to Mokelumne Rural Fire District. The Grand Jury found that several districts are suffering financial stress. Some have entered into various service agreements with each other so they can continue to operate without jeopardizing the protection and safety of the public.

The Grand Jury found:

- Mokelumne Rural Fire District administrative and fiscal operations were ineffective
- Mokelumne Rural Fire District administrative operations were fiscally irresponsible
- Other fire districts are having financial problems; they find it necessary to enter into various agreements with each other to stay solvent
- The subject of consolidation has been considered

The Grand Jury recommends consolidation of fire protection districts at the sub-regional level and with expanded territory consisting of:

- Waterloo-Morada Fire District
- Mokelumne Rural Fire District
- French Camp-McKinley Rural Fire District
- Montezuma Fire Protection District
- Linden-Peters Fire District
- Clements Rural Fire District
- Woodbridge Fire District
- Liberty Fire District

Glossary

CalPERS	California Public Employees' Retirement System
Consolidation	The merger of two or more special districts creating a single entity
Fire Engineers	Also known as Firefighters
Good ol' boys	A group of people operating in a relaxed or informal manner, strong loyalty to family and friends
Joint Powers Agreement	A contract between special districts in which the special districts agree to perform services, cooperate with, or lend its powers to that special district
JRUG	Joint Radio Users Group
LAFCo	Local Agency Formation Commission
Municipal Service Review (MSR)	A LAFCo service review of independent special districts and other entities within San Joaquin County
MRFD	Mokelumne Rural Fire District
NORCO	North County Automatic Aid Agreement – a prearranged emergency response plan between fire districts with no need for mutual aid request
Ralph M. Brown Act	Also known as the Brown Act – laws governing open meetings for public bodies

Shared Services Agreement

A resource-sharing contract enacted between two business entities that have agreed to come together and share a common resource in order to benefit from shared resources to save on very critical resources

SOI

Sphere of Influence

Background

The Mokelumne Rural Fire District was formed in 1947. The District provides fire protection, suppression and prevention, inspection, plan check, water rescue, urban search and rescue, and emergency medical services. The District's service boundary is approximately 64 square miles and is located in northern San Joaquin County between the Mokelumne River and Live Oak Road. The District serves the communities of Lockeford and Victor. The majority of the District is designated for agriculture and includes various wineries. The MRFD is bounded by five other County rural fire districts including Liberty, Clements, Linden-Peters, Woodbridge, and the City of Lodi Fire Department. Since 1984 Lodi has annexed more than 373 acres and removed this territory from MRFD. Currently, the City of Lodi's Sphere of Influence (SOI) boundary encompasses about 151 acres or 0.7 percent of MRFD's total territory.

The MRFD has a five-member governing body. Board members are elected at large and serve four year terms. The District's staff consists of 27 paid employees: three fire captains, six fire engineers, 16 on-call firefighters, a temporary fire chief, and an administrative assistant. The District operates one fire station that is staffed with a minimum of one captain and two fire engineers per shift.

When the Grand Jury first examined the Mokelumne Rural Fire District jurors found the administration's operational practices in disarray. Although the District did have proper documentation, such as adequate policies, procedures, and training manuals, the administrative practices and board oversight were deficient. The fire chief and administrative assistant implement the day-to-day operations of the district. Witnesses interviewed by the Grand Jury reported that some of the District's problems have occurred for decades due to inadequate leadership. The fire chief position was usually held by fire chiefs who had retired from full-time leadership positions with other area fire departments. The position was categorized as "Temporary Fire Chief". The District could not afford to hire a full-time fire chief due to budgetary constraints.

In March of 2014, the temporary fire chief, a retiree from another fire department, abruptly resigned after exhausting the number of hours allowed by the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS). The administrative assistant had just been terminated due to allegations of embezzlement. Ultimately, the administrative assistant was arrested for the alleged embezzlement. Financial records indicated that the board of directors did not have internal controls over District finances, which created the opportunity for the alleged embezzlement. Funds were being spent even though bills for essential services were not being paid, which resulted in important needs, such as phone services, being temporarily suspended. The fire chief had to use personal funds to get the services immediately restored, because it was more expedient than the normal process. The Grand Jury learned that during the lack of phone services there was no loss of any calls for services from the public. The Grand Jury also found

evidence of conflicts among the board members, prompting one member to abruptly resign with little notice.

The Grand Jury found that the board of directors operated like a “good ol’ boys” club. This relaxed manner of operating resulted in violations of the Brown Act. For example, at one board meeting, directors voted on an item that was not on the agenda that cost the District a large sum of money and the board meeting agendas were not consistently posted as required.

According to financial records and witnesses, after the administrative assistant was terminated, embezzlement of funds continued to occur. The District had not made any changes or cancellation of credit card accounts that allowed continued access by the terminated administrative assistant. When the District became aware of the unauthorized use of credit cards they were then canceled.

The District’s fire captains were expected to carry out their normal duties as they tried to perform the duties of the terminated administrative assistant and the resigned fire chief, but were not adequately prepared.

The fire engineers had been operating without a contract for four years. At one of the board meetings jurors observed that the board of directors spent only 18 minutes in a closed session meeting to discuss a contract.

As the Grand Jury’s investigation progressed, jurors observed the fire District beginning to pull itself out of the ashes of disastrous consequences caused by reoccurring problems. The Grand Jury discovered from witnesses and news articles that this was not the first time an employee took advantage of the district’s finances. On April 13, 1996, it was reported by The Stockton Record and the Lodi News Sentinel newspapers that an ex-fire chief was terminated for misuse of district funds. It was also reported by The Stockton Record on May 8, 2000; the MRFD was struggling to stay financially stable. Since the District’s finances had taken another hit, the District is still in the process of financial recovery. The Mokelumne Rural Fire District’s Board of Directors began to gain control of some of the District’s problems. MRFD has entered into a Shared Services Agreement with the Waterloo-Morada Fire District. It has begun the process of self-correction under new and more effective leadership.

There was a noticeable improvement after the Shared Services Agreement with the Waterloo-Morada Fire District was put in place. On August 4, 2014 the Shared Services Agreement was signed and implemented sharing the fire chief and administrative assistant from the Waterloo-Morada Fire District. The Mokelumne Rural Fire District now has a checking account to pay reoccurring bills, alleviating excessive cost of late payment charges and the threat of suspended services that are vital to the community. The District and its personnel currently have an employment contract that is acceptable to both parties. There is some fine tuning needed but the workers have agreed to work with management on the health care portion of the contract at a later date. An election of two new board members who appear to have experience of board operations has also occurred.

Reasons for Investigation

After receiving citizen complaints, the Grand Jury started its investigation. The complaints alleged that the District was operating illegally, engaged in political misconduct, bargaining in bad faith, and imposing contractual items against the will of the bargaining group. The Grand Jury found these and more violations to be substantiated. Ineffective leadership created anxiety and added stress among the firefighters who put their lives on the line to protect citizens and their property. Mokelumne Rural Fire District's finances were in disarray.

Method of Investigation

Through interviews, research of documents, including financial records, attendance at board meetings and tours of more efficient fire districts, jurors gained insights about the Mokelumne Rural Fire District.

Materials Reviewed

- Mokelumne Rural Fire District's:
 - Policy Binder
 - Procedures Manual
 - Budgets
 - Final Audit Report (2014)
 - Agendas and Minutes
 - Grievance filed by Labor Unit
 - MOU Negotiations Memo from Board of Directors
- The Ralph M. Brown Act Manual
- Shared Services Agreement between Waterloo-Morada Fire Protection District and Mokelumne Rural Fire District
- French Camp-McKinley Fire District Organizational Chart
- Administrative Assistant Contract
- Documents from San Joaquin County Auditor's Office
- LAFCo Municipal Service Review, October 21, 2011
- 2014-2015 Final Budget for Montezuma Fire Protection District
- Agendas and Minutes of Montezuma Fire Protection District board meetings
- Various news articles

Interviews Conducted

- Five Mokelumne Rural Fire District personnel
- Mokelumne Rural Fire District Board of Directors
- Four retired and current fire chiefs
- A representative from LAFCo
- A representative from San Joaquin County Auditor's Office

Sites Visited

- Mokelumne Rural Fire District

- Tour of the Montezuma Fire Protection District station 1
- Tour of the Montezuma Fire Protection District at the Stockton Metropolitan Airport

Facts, Findings, and Recommendations

With the increased risk of wildfires in San Joaquin County, rural fire districts have become vital to the protection and safety of the county's rural areas. The Grand Jury found that there are some areas within San Joaquin County's jurisdiction that are not covered by any fire district. These areas are known as the Unprotected Delta Region. According to the *2011 Final Municipal Service Review (MSR)*:

This area is a portion of the Delta encompassing approximately 540 residential units and a population of approximately 2,400 people without fire protection. This can be corrected by either amending the boundaries of the district or establishing a SOI and authorizing out-of-agency service approvals pursuant to §56133 of the California Government Code. The long term solution is to establish a fire district for the entire area or annex to an adjoining district. Since there is no tax base, there is no revenue to pay for fire service. A special tax assessment would need to be passed by the voters. Authorization of out-of-agency service agreements may discourage the creation of a new district or annexation to another which ultimately should be the goal.

Because the county fire districts are in the business of fire safety, protection, and saving lives, they do respond to these areas and in some cases pay the expense of providing services. The areas are not covered by any fire district because the property owners have opted out of paying the taxes required for fire protection. Most of the fire districts have exhausted the tax bases obtained from property owners under the voter-approved real property tax initiative limitations. There are few financial resources left to cover the rising cost of doing business. All witnesses interviewed, except one, agreed that consolidation of some of these rural fire districts is inevitable and needed. While it is not realistic to expect a fire district to ignore an emergency situation, it is expected that all measures be taken to recoup the costs incurred.

Discussion

1.0 Mokelumne Rural Fire District Was Operating Under Ineffective Leadership

Prior to the Grand Jury's inquiry, the fire chief abruptly resigned after exhausting the number of hours allowed by the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS). The fire chief left written instructions to the board and assigned the various duties to three fire captains. At a board meeting, some members complained that they were not advised of the resignation, which indicated that all board members were not included in the distribution of vital information. Although the captains were not experienced in performing administrative duties, they assumed the duties expected of the fire chief and administrative assistant. Jurors observed that one of the board members appeared to be bitter and argumentative at the board meeting. That board member later resigned.

Although there was a meeting agenda, the board meeting was chaotic and unorganized. The atmosphere was tense and the board members did not follow the agenda. The directors appeared to ignore

parliamentary procedures. The board members approved an \$8,000 expenditure that was not on the agenda. The board of directors ignored a prior request from union representatives for items to be included on the agenda. The requested agenda items were omitted, but quarrelsome discussions ensued on those items anyway.

The Grand Jury found that a review of Board minutes and agendas showed no evidence that income and expense reports or a year-to-date spread sheet of finances were presented at Board meetings until August 2014, when a Shared Services Agreement was signed. The lack of checks and balances and a general absence of administrative oversight created the opportunity for embezzlement of public funds. A review of District records revealed that forms required to be filed by Board members were missing.

The board's actions appeared to be violations of the rules of order and the Brown Act. Jurors interviewed board members and employees of the Mokelumne Rural Fire District and were informed that this was typical conduct. Some called the operations of the board of directors "the good ol' boys" club.

Testimony revealed that some of the problems with the leadership dated back decades. Previous fire chiefs left due to terminations and forced resignations and the problems continued to perpetuate themselves. Problems were not resolved. They continued under the leadership of each new fire chief.

On a positive note, the Grand Jury determined the Mokelumne Rural Fire District employees are well trained. Their training records were up to date. The training of firefighting personnel and reserve firefighters is ongoing and continuously updated. Fire captains, fire engineers and reserve firefighters are highly qualified with numerous certifications, firefighting skills, and emergency medical training. The station was found to be clean and orderly. The firefighting equipment, which may need some updating, appeared to be well maintained and in good condition.

The Mokelumne Rural Fire District entered into a Shared Services Agreement on August 4, 2014 with the Waterloo-Morada Fire District for shared services of their fire chief and administrative assistant. The chaos previously observed seemed to dissipate. The new fire chief brought organizational skills to the board meetings and there seemed to be less tension. The new administrative assistant organized MRFD records, and provided financial reports at the meetings. The meetings were conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Brown Act. Two newly-elected board members appear to be experienced in the operation of board activities. An employee contract was ratified by the District's board and the firefighters' union within three months of the changes in the District's administration. This agreement resulted because District officials and employees finally came to the table dedicated to transparency, diligence, and fairness.

Findings

- F1.1** Mokelumne Rural Fire District was operating under ineffective leadership.
- F1.2** District policies and procedures were not always followed.
- F1.3** The Shared Services Agreement helped bring stability to the District.

2.0 Financial Stresses and Service Agreements among Various Fire Protection Districts

An examination of the financial records of MRFD revealed several inadequacies. The former administrative assistant, who has been charged with the theft of public funds, had full control of the district's finances. There was no administrative oversight or checks and balances adequately performed by the board.

The board of directors has a Financial Review Committee that was supposed to provide oversight. Previously when there was a financial problem, the administrative assistant explained the deficiency without documentation. The finance committee accepted the explanation without documentation. The administrative assistant's job description was created by the administrative assistant. The self-authored contract gave the position the same benefits as the unionized personnel, including a uniform allowance. This employee had access to credit cards that resulted in unauthorized cash advances and personal use. There were large expenditures for office supplies, inappropriate expenditures at Costco for items that were not used by the district. Re-occurring bills were paid late and resulted in late fees. On one occasion phone services were suspended.

As a result of fiscal irresponsibility the board approved an \$8,000 expenditure, on a non-agenda item, for a LifeLock Protection Plan for the employees and their family members. This was purchased to protect against identity theft and fraud due to the alleged embezzlement. Free protection options were available but not considered. Possible options that would have provided the same protection are a letter to one of the three major credit reporting agencies, the local credit bureau, and notification to the employees' banking institutions.

Due to the limited financial resources from their tax base, an unlikely possibility of passing a bond measure, and the economic recession, the already financially strapped District was struggling financially.

The Grand Jury examined other fire district operations in San Joaquin County and discovered that MRFD financial situation was not unique. According to the 2011 Final Municipal Service Review, *"The Districts rely primarily upon property tax, special taxes, fees for service, and development mitigation fees and have little opportunity to increase fees. The most significant financing constraints for fire services are legal requirements that limit property taxes and require voter approval of new taxes and tax increases."* Because the district's financial resources are primarily tied to property taxes, districts have been greatly affected by the recent downturn in the economy. It was noted that several fire districts throughout the county have joint powers agreements and shared service agreements with each other to deal with the rising cost of operations. Some of the districts' agreements are shown in the table below:

District	Mutual Aid Partners	Automatic Aid	Other Agreements
Clements	Neighboring fire districts, Statewide Mutual Aid, Countywide Mutual Aid	Liberty	JRUG
Collegeville	Statewide Mutual Aid, Countywide Mutual Aid	None	JRUG
Farmington	French Camp-McKinley, Statewide Mutual Aid, Countywide Mutual Aid	Linden, Escalon, Collegeville, Oakdale Rural (Stanislaus County)	JRUG
French Camp- McKinley	Statewide Mutual Aid, Countywide Mutual Aid	Montezuma, Lathrop-Manteca	JPA with Montezuma
Liberty	North county fire districts, CalFire, Statewide Mutual Aid, Countywide Mutual Aid	Clements, Woodbridge, Mokelumne, and Cosumnes FD	JRUG
Lincoln	Neighboring Fire Districts Statewide Mutual Aid, Countywide Mutual Aid,	None	None
Linden-Peters	Jenny Lind Fire District, Statewide Mutual Aid, Countywide Mutual Aid	Neighboring fire districts for specific incident types	NORCO with Mokelumne, and Waterloo-Morada JRUG
Mokelumne	Mutual Aid upon request, Statewide Mutual Aid, Countywide Mutual Aid	Neighboring fire districts	Shared Services Agreement with Waterloo-Morada, NORCO
Montezuma	Statewide Mutual Aid, Countywide Mutual Aid	French Camp-McKinley Fire and Lathrop-Manteca	JPA with French Camp- McKinley JRUG
Thornton	Statewide Mutual Aid, Countywide Mutual Aid	Cosumnes FD	JRUG
Waterloo-Morada	Statewide Mutual Aid, Countywide Mutual Aid	Linden Peters, Woodbridge and Mokelumne	Shared Services Agreement with Mokelumne, NORCO JRUG
Woodbridge	Statewide Mutual Aid, Countywide Mutual Aid	Waterloo-Morada, Mokelumne, Liberty, Stockton, and Consumes Community Service District	JRUG

Table 1-1

Some districts are currently operating under consolidations, as indicated below:

- City of Lodi-Woodbridge Rural Fire District
- City of Manteca-Manteca/Lathrop Rural Fire District
- City of Tracy-Tracy Rural Fire District
- Woodbridge Rural Fire District-Forest Lake Rural Fire District

On March 16, 2015, The Record reported “3 fire protection agencies join forces, nix borders”. The story stated that the North County Automatic Aid Agreement (NORCO) includes a prearranged emergency response plan among the Linden-Peters, Mokelumne and Waterloo-Morada fire districts. Consolidation would eliminate the need for any other agreements among the fire districts.

A survey of rural fire districts found a variety of financial situations as shown in Table 2.1. Of the 12 districts surveyed, pay and benefits were not found to be consistent. Some districts operate without full-time firefighters, and they utilize a volunteer reserve staff. The districts that operate with an all-

volunteer staff are more solvent. Several districts have had budget shortfalls during the last five years, when property taxes fell after reevaluation of properties during the economic downturn. Eight of the 12 districts surveyed have approved special assessments resolutions to keep up with the cost of doing business. Some of the districts do not have a sustained equipment replacement fund to cover the cost of required replacement and maintenance of equipment.

SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICTS

Fire District Name	Budget Shortfalls (5 yrs.)	Special Assessments	Budget Limitations for Equipment
Clements Rural Fire District	No	Yes	No
Collegeville Fire Protection District	No	Yes -2002	No
Farmington Fire District	No	No	No
French Camp-Mckinley Fire District	Yes	Yes	No
Liberty Fire District	No	No	No
Lincoln Fire District	No	No	No
Linden-Peters Fire District	No	No	No
Mokelumne Rural County Fire District	Yes	Yes	Yes
Montezuma Fire Protection District	No	Yes	No
Thornton Fire District	Yes	Yes	Yes
Waterloo-Morada Fire District	Yes	Yes	Yes
Woodbridge Fire District	Yes 2009-2012	Yes	Yes (2 vehicles)

Table 2-1

Findings

- F2.1** Mokelumne Rural Fire District operated in a fiscally irresponsible manner.
- F2.2** There were operational improvements with Mokelumne Rural Fire District after the Shared Services Agreement was implemented with Waterloo-Morada Fire District.
- F2.3** Of the 12 districts surveyed eight have reported financial problems. Those districts have found it necessary to enter into agreements with other districts to stay solvent.

3.0 Consolidation of Rural Fire Districts

The Grand Jury found at least eight fire protection districts that could benefit from consolidation into one effectively run organization. San Joaquin LAFCo completed a study of the Rural Fire Protection Districts of San Joaquin County. This was reported in the latest "*Municipal Service Review*" (MSR), which included information about other governmental service providers. The Grand Jury's focus was restricted to the services provided by the rural fire districts at the sub-regional level. The MSR considered several governance alternatives for fire protection in San Joaquin County. Some of the alternatives have already been instituted. The agreements already in place are JPAs, Shared Services Agreements, automatic aid agreements, and realignment of district borders, just to name a few. However, there is a need for more agreements.

The MSR reported that:

One or more affected special districts or registered voters by petition could initiate actions for consideration by LAFCo to consolidate all of the fire protection districts into a single special district. A consolidated agency could provide unity of command, eliminate duplicate positions, and allow strategic planning for the unincorporated area and within those portions of the cities which are served by fire protection districts. Areas not presently served would not be included in the consolidated agency. Depending upon the number of board member(s) selected for the new agency, more than 87 elected and appointed positions could be eliminated.

Further:

Consolidated agencies inherit the property tax allocation of the previous districts. Since all districts were formed prior to Proposition 13, the districts would convey property tax revenue of over \$23.1 million. The special tax assessments which the voters in several of the fire protection districts have adopted would also transfer to a consolidated agency and would add an additional \$6.5 million of available revenue. Under this situation, it would be appropriate to form service zones to retain the current revenues received from the special assessments. No new sources of revenue would become available as a result of consolidation.

If LAFCo were to initiate the proposal for consolidation, a petition of 10 percent of the voters or landowners within any affected district would trigger an election over the entire region. If an election was required, a majority of voters within each district must approve the consolidation. Failure to receive a majority vote in any one district would terminate a consolidation of the other fire protection districts. If a proposal for consolidation were initiated by a district board or by petition of property owners or registered voters, a 25 percent threshold of voters or landowners would trigger an election.

Finding

F3.1 The Grand Jury found that the subject of consolidation has been considered by LAFCo and some of the rural fire districts.

Recommendations

R3.1 No later than November 1, 2015 LAFCo and the county's rural fire districts are to coordinate a series of meetings to consider the operational benefits of consolidation. The districts should include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Waterloo-Morada Fire District
- Mokelumne Rural Fire District
- French Camp-McKinley Rural Fire District
- Montezuma Fire Protection District
- Linden-Peters Fire District
- Clements Rural Fire District
- Woodridge Fire District
- Liberty Fire District

R3.2 No later than December 31, 2015 LAFCo and the fire districts are to begin providing quarterly updates of the consolidation progress to LAFCo Commissioners, rural fire districts boards of directors, and the public.

Conclusion

The Grand Jury understands that consolidation or reorganization of the fire districts at the sub regional level is difficult and may take years to fully implement. Many of these districts were formed over 70 years ago, are steeped in tradition, and are closely identified with the communities they serve.

Lack of leadership, financial problems, and alleged criminal activity as discovered in MRFD show what can happen when there is a lack of oversight and transparency.

Although there are many options available to join forces and services of the fire districts, the Grand Jury believes Consolidation of Districts at Sub Regional Level is the best path going forward. Consolidation would provide financial stability, unity of command, equality of employee pay and benefits, and elimination of redundancies. Strategic planning opportunities would be positive aspects to a more efficient delivery of safety, protection, and service to the public. Depending upon the number of board members selected for the new agency more than 87 elected and appointed positions could be eliminated. Many of these positions are not salaried and there would not be a substantial loss of income to individuals who serve on these boards. Many of the board members have served on the board of fire districts for many years.

The foremost objective to consider for any consolidation is the level of service. The quality of service for fire protection must be maintained or improved as a result of any changes in organization. Financial considerations also must be given great weight. Governments, including special districts, must consider new ways to do business given the present fiscal constraints. Services must be effective and efficient.

Disclaimers

Grand Jury reports are based on documentary evidence and the testimony of sworn or admonished witnesses, not on conjecture or opinion. However, the Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing such evidence except upon the specific approval of the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court, or another judge appointed by the Presiding Judge (Penal Code Sections 911, 924.1 (a) and 929). Similarly, the Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing the identity of witnesses except upon an order of the court for narrowly defined purposes (Penal Code Sections 924.2 and 929).

Response Requirements

California Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05 require that specific responses to all findings and recommendations contained in this report be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the San Joaquin County Superior Court within 90 days of receipt of the report:

Mokelumne Rural Fire District shall respond to Findings F1.1, F1.2, F1.3, F2.1, and F2.2

Waterloo-Morada Fire District shall respond to findings F1.3, and F2.2

Waterloo-Morada Fire District, Colleagueville Fire Protection District, French Camp-McKinley Rural Fire District, Liberty Fire District, Montezuma Fire Protection District, Thornton Fire District, Woodridge Fire District, and Clements Rural Fire District shall respond to Finding F2.2 and Recommendation R3.1 and R3.2.

The Local Agency Formation Commissioners shall respond to Finding F3.1 and Recommendations R3.1, and R3.2.

Mail or hand-deliver a hard copy of the response to:

Honorable Lesley Holland, Presiding Judge
San Joaquin County Superior Court
P.O. Box 201022
Stockton, CA 95201

Also, please email the response to Ms. Trisa Martinez, Staff Secretary to the Grand Jury at grandjury@sjcourts.org

Appendix

Final Municipal Service Review of Rural Fire Protection Districts of San Joaquin County Prepared by San Joaquin Local Agency Formation Commission October 21, 2011

[http://www.co.san-](http://www.co.san-joaquin.ca.us/lafco/Fire%20District%20Study/FINAL%20Fire%20MSR_Oct%202011_.pdf)

[joaquin.ca.us/lafco/Fire%20District%20Study/FINAL%20Fire%20MSR_Oct%202011_.pdf](http://www.co.san-joaquin.ca.us/lafco/Fire%20District%20Study/FINAL%20Fire%20MSR_Oct%202011_.pdf)

- *Page 4 Unprotected Delta Region*
- *Pages 4-5 Financial Ability of the Agencies to Provide Services*
- *Page 8 Approach to governance alternatives for fire protection in San Joaquin County*
- *Pages 59-60 Consolidation has the advantage of providing more efficient service...*
- *Pages 63-64 Consolidation of Districts at Sub-Regional Level*

Pages 123-125 Mokelumne Rural County Fire District