

# **FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES IN PLACER COUNTY**

## **Background/Summary**

There are currently 11 agencies providing fire protection on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada in the unincorporated areas of Placer County. These include 10 independent fire protection districts, each with an elected Board of Trustees, and the Placer County Fire Department governed by the Board of Supervisors. Each of these independent fire protection districts has a proud tradition of service to the community spanning many decades with both paid and volunteer fire service personnel. The cost for providing this service is about \$9 million per year.

The governance and delivery of fire and emergency services could better serve the public by a reduction in the number of independent fire protection districts with the potential to provide a higher level of service at a lower cost to the ratepayer. The merger of these fire and emergency services could result in more rapid response time, fewer elected officials, fewer fire chiefs and administrators, unified standards and training, and efficiencies in purchasing.

The demands of a rapidly growing County should require that public entities provide the highest levels of service at the most efficient cost to the ratepayer. The duplication of services and disparity due to historical differences could be vastly improved by unifying and streamlining these services.

## **Discussion**

The issue of fire protection in the unincorporated areas of the County was first brought to the attention of the Grand Jury with the controversy regarding the status of the Dry Creek Fire Protection District in the western part of the County. The Grand Jury interviewed a number of fire service officials from the County level and the independent fire protection districts. The Grand Jury heard extensive briefings regarding the current state of emergency services provided throughout the County.

## **Finding**

There is an urgent need to review the fire and emergency services in the unincorporated areas of Placer County.

## **Recommendation**

Complete a study of the benefits and potential cost savings derived from organizational change, including further consolidation of fire and emergency services in Placer County.

## **Respondent**

Placer County Local Agency Formation Commission

## **RESPONSE REQUIRED WITHIN 90 DAYS TO:**

The Honorable James D. Garbolino  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
County of Placer  
Historic Court House  
101 Maple Street  
Auburn, CA 95603