



City of St. Helena

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September 2, 2008

The Honorable Francisca P. Tisher
The Honorable Raymond A. Guadagni
Presiding Judges 2007-2008
Napa County Superior Court
825 Brown Street
Napa, Ca. 94559

FILED

SEP 12 2008

Clerk of the Napa Superior Court
By: _____
Deputy

Subject: Response to 2007-2008 Grand Jury

Dear Honorable Judges Tisher, Guadagni, and Members of the Grand Jury:

This letter is in response to the 2007-2008 Grand Jury Final Report, which was released on May 9, 2008 and is intended to fulfill the legal requirements for response. We appreciate the comments by the Grand Jury and the opportunity to respond.

Finding #5:

Napa County PSAPs do not receive wireless 911 calls directly from the caller.

Response to Finding #5

The City of St. Helena agrees with this finding as St. Helena Police Department does not receive these types of wireless calls directly from the caller.

Recommendation #2:

County PSAP organizations initiate action to receive wireless 911 calls directly.

Response to Recommendation #2:

St. Helena Police Department's PSAP is located within the dispatch center. The PSAP contains two authorized answering positions, which means there are two 911 trunks. The current system was installed in 2003 and funded by the State of California. Over the past five years the 911 system has become outdate, along with replacement parts not being available. The State has recommended that the 911 system either be replaced or upgraded by 11/11/08.

The Police Department has decided to upgrade the system in lieu of replacement. The same vendor (AT & T) who installed the system five years ago will perform the upgrade. The upgrade will have most of the software and hardware needed for the PSAP to receive wireless emergency calls from the caller. It is anticipated that the upgrade will be completed by the end of the first quarter in 2009. Additional hardware/software (GIS mapping etc.) and multi agency

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coordination will need to occur before St. Helena Police Department can start receiving the emergency wireless phone calls. It is possible to have the system up and running by the end of 2009. Funding will need to be addressed after the initial upgrade for the remainder of the hardware and software.

Finding #13:

None of the PSAP organizations have quality assurance programs for their PSAPs, or even the basic elements of such a program in place.

Response to finding #13:

The City of St. Helena agrees that the Police Department doesn't have a quality assurance program for monitoring the PSAP system, but the PD does refer to a dispatch/records policy manual on how to transfer medical and fire calls to the appropriate agencies via the department's PSAP.

Recommendation #5:

Napa County PSAPs institute formal quality assurance programs, preferably audited by outside third party organizations qualified in the area of emergency communications.

Response to Recommendation #5:

St. Helena Police Department has four Police Dispatchers and two Community Service Officers who work in the dispatch center and continuously use the PSAP system to answer and transfer all types of calls. Each has been trained in the use of the PSAP system, as well as referring to the department's policy and procedure manual on how to transfer medical and fire emergency calls for service. Following the policy and procedure acts as an internal guide and monitoring system.

The Dispatchers and Community Service Officers are not Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) trained/qualified, thus the reason to transfer the medical and fire calls per department procedures. This particular process and procedure has been in place for many years and has been very successful without incident and without the need for an outside audit or monitoring system.

It should also be noted the State of California 911 Emergency Communications Office monitors each and every agency within the state on how expeditious the 911 calls are being answered. State mandates that 90% of the 911 calls should be answered within 10 seconds. St. Helena PD averaged 96% over the past 12 months. This statistic may not be an indicator of what happens after the call is received, but it does monitor how quickly the 911 call is being answered and the quickness in initiating the process.

Finding #14:

Combine existing primary PSAP functions into a single consolidated PSAP would appear to better service the citizens of Napa County than the current system.

Response to Finding #14:

The City of St. Helena respectfully disagrees with this particular finding as it specifically relates to the services provided to St. Helena residents.

Recommendation #6:

Master plan is modified to include a consolidated Napa County PSAP and planning be initiated to establish the facility.

Response to Recommendation #6:

The St. Helena Police Department does recognize that it is possible to have all 911 calls go to a centralized PSAP such as Napa Central Dispatch while St. Helena Police Department still maintains control of all other types of calls that come into the PD. What is lost will be the opportunity to provide more personal and local service to the community.

Emergency calls will bypass the local PD and depending on the type of emergency will create a delay in response from the local PD especially if the emergency is criminal in nature. If a St. Helena resident were to return home and interrupt a crime in progress the emergency call would go to a central PSAP, then routed back to the local PD for response. There will be a delay in PD response, thus affecting the services provided to the community and potential for suspect apprehension. Contracting this service out would cause the need to address funding as well.

It is known that many of the emergency 911 calls St. Helena PD receives are medical in nature. It is also commonplace for Police Officers to be dispatched to these medical calls where immediate assistance is needed. It is not uncommon for St. Helena Police Officers to arrive on scene prior to medical and fire personnel. Police Officers are mandated by the State of California to receive 12 hours of First Aid/CPR training every two years for the purpose of rendering assistance at medical calls, collisions etc. Again, an emergency medical call that bypasses the local PD to a central PSAP will create a delayed response by police when needed, thus adversely affecting the service provided to the community.

These comments are respectfully submitted for the City of St. Helena, as approved by the St. Helena City Council at their regular meeting of August 26, 2008.

Sincerely,



Carol Poole
Acting City Manager