



Stanislaus County Fire Authority

Business Plan 2015-2016

The Stanislaus County Fire Authority (Fire Authority) is a Joint Powers Agreement established in November 2005 by the fire agencies in Stanislaus County to make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on the expenditure of the Less-Than-Countywide Fire Tax, and to establish a cooperative relationship among the parties to the agreement for the provision of services.

OVERVIEW:

Issues of mutual concern to the fire agencies of Stanislaus County were identified and the Fire Authority, through a work-group process, came together for the following purposes:

- Facilitate cooperation among the Fire Agencies and the County related to the allocation and use of the Less-Than-Countywide Fire Tax
- Provide a forum for discussion and study of countywide issues of mutual interest
- Identify, inventory, and comprehensively plan for solutions to countywide issues requiring multi-jurisdictional cooperation
- Facilitate cooperation among the Fire Agencies and the County for specific purposes, interrelated actions, and for the adoption of common policies with respect to issues and problems which are common to the parties
- Develop countywide plans and policies for growth and development

The following agencies are signatory to the Joint Powers Agreement:

Burbank Paradise Fire District
Denair Fire Protection District
Keyes Fire District
Mountain View Fire Protection District
City of Oakdale
City of Patterson
Stanislaus Consolidated Fire District
City of Turlock
Westport Fire District
West Stanislaus Fire District

City of Ceres
Hughson Fire District
City of Modesto
City of Newman
Oakdale Fire Protection District
Salida Fire District
Stanislaus County Fire Warden
Turlock Rural Fire District
Woodland Avenue Fire District
Cal Fire – Santa Clara Unit

The Stanislaus County Fire Authority Board is comprised of a representative from each fire agency listed above. Each individual agency adopted a resolution to approve the Joint Powers Agreement in order to participate. Each representative is entitled to one vote. As outlined in the Joint Powers Agreement, the Stanislaus County Fire Warden's Office is the administering agency. The Fire Authority may designate any representative of a member agency to serve as Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary.

A quorum of at least one half of the member agencies is required for the Fire Authority to take action. A two-thirds majority of those members present are required to approve all fiscal matters, including the use of the Less-Than-Countywide Fire Tax, but not including expenditures of less than \$500.

FIRE AUTHORITY GOALS:

The following goals were adopted and reaffirmed by the Fire Authority membership:

- Ensure an open environment that provides respectful and professional responsiveness to our community and agency partners
- Adopt integrated, collaborative, and multi-disciplinary planning to ensure that our community and agency partners are served in an equitable, efficient and effective manner
- Provide the highest quality of fire, life safety and all risk support services through collaborative community and agency partnerships in the areas of fire prevention, fire investigation, fire communications, finance/administration, and training within available funding.
- Improve the stability and sustainability of revenue sources to support and enhance the fire, life safety and all risk services on a countywide basis

STRATEGIC PLAN:

The strategy of the Stanislaus County Fire Authority is to represent the interests of all member agencies by focusing on organizational goals of both the Fire Authority and individual agencies. The following strategies were reaffirmed by the membership:

- Expand and foster mutually beneficial relationships with internal and external fire agencies
- Enhance relationships between fire districts, cities, County agencies, and identified stakeholders
- Achieve a unified voice and strengthen the fire service to meet future challenges
- Be the spokesperson/organization for fire and emergency services countywide
- Provide strategic direction, leadership, and influence to coordinate professional standards
- Initiate and support efforts that assist in funding the fire service

- Improve financial stability of the existing programs and services
- Explore financial opportunities

ACTION PLAN:

The action plans are defined in an effort to meet the adopted strategies stated above. The following pages outline specific planned service levels based on the priorities and anticipated funding for Fiscal Year 2015 - 2016.

It is the intent and purpose of the Fire Authority to achieve the most efficient and effective use of the Less-Than-Countywide Fire Tax revenues, and to seek partnerships to advance the ability to provide fire and emergency services in Stanislaus County.

The Fire Authority strives to provide services commensurate with funding levels. As funding levels change, adjustments are made based on available funding and negotiated with the service providers to ensure program stability.

While preparing the annual Business Plan, the Fire Authority identifies service priorities, performance expectations and funding allocations for those services identified as critical to the fire agencies in Stanislaus County. Based on available funding, the group then targets achievable, sustainable service levels to support those priorities.

The Fire Authority will continue to hold quarterly meetings for updates on services provided as well as regular sub-committee meetings to address issues specific to each as needed.

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

In Fiscal Year 2015-2016, the Finance and Administrative Support Service continues to be administered through the Stanislaus County Fire Warden's Office. This service manages the Less-Than-Countywide Fire Tax budget; coordinates the meetings, agendas, required filings; distributes reports from service providers to all participating agencies; addresses issues affecting the fire districts; and seeks opportunities to provide regional solutions to common challenges. The Finance and Administrative team also provides support to the Fire and Rescue Operational Area Coordinator, providing assistance to individual agencies as well as the mutual aid system as a whole. The maintenance for specific equipment utilized regionally, such as the mobile air unit and the fire mobile command post, and the cost of administering the property taxes are also included.

The program priorities are to:

- Administer the budget within County guidelines and report to the Fire Authority
- Provide administrative support to the Fire Authority with agendas, board reports, minutes, conflict of interest statements, and information updates on Fire Warden website
- Administer mobile data computer (MDC) and Fire Records Management System (RMS) programs including billing participating agencies and processing of all related maintenance contracts and invoices
- Assist fire agencies with financial information, human resources, and administrative issues as requested
- Continue to seek opportunities to fund regional equipment
- Ensure that Fire Authority members are updated through annual report, business plan, and budget documents
- Communicate with county CEO staff and Board of Supervisors regarding the goals, priorities, needs and expectations of the Fire Authority
- Provide support to the Fire and Rescue Operational Area Coordinator
- Administer special projects to support the fire service in Stanislaus County
- Coordinate meetings to address mutual concerns and issues
- Support and administer a cooperative purchasing program
- Seek options to take advantage of regional grants that will support and enhance the fire service within Stanislaus County

FIRE TECHNOLOGY & COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

Fire Technology & Communications Services will continue to assist fire agencies throughout Stanislaus County in Fiscal Year 2015-2016 by supporting and enhancing the many systems that provide critical communications capabilities through the County Fire Warden's Office. The service will continue to focus on programs that are identified by the fire agencies within Stanislaus County. During the time this program has been operational it has become very clear that there are demands well beyond what current staff can provide. As a result of increased demands to support infrastructure, radio, MDC, CAD, and specific agency requests, personnel will be seeking opportunities to collaborate and achieve further efficiencies. During the 2015-2016 Fiscal Year, the following services will continue to be provided:

- Represent fire agencies on SR911 technical issues
- Lead the Countywide Communications Advisory Committee (CAC)
- Serve as the SR911 fire service representative for CAD
- Represent the fire service in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) map development for Stanislaus County
- Represent Stanislaus County fire agencies in statewide communications groups including; NAPCO, CALSIEC, Bay Area Radio Users Group- BAYFROG, and Statewide COMT and Capital Bay Planning Area
- Represent the fire service as the lead of the regional mobile data computer project
- Continue to work towards establishing radio interoperability within Stanislaus County
- Assist fire agencies with grant writing for their communications needs
- Annually provide updated radio frequency loads for specific mobiles and portables
- Monitor technology trends and recommend system improvements
- Provide recommendations for standardized radio equipment
- Recommend IT systems countywide
- Provide administration and technical support for the regional records management system (RMS)
- Coordinate dispatch center to dispatch center training and communications
- Manage and support NetMotion and RMS servers for regional systems

FIRE INVESTIGATION SERVICES

In Fiscal Year 2015-2016, a Regional Fire Investigation Unit (FIU) is being developed to provide services countywide. This regional concept is contingent upon a partnership with fire, law enforcement and the District Attorney's office. The Authority recommends contributing \$350,000 of LTCW to support the regional program.

The following services will be provided:

- Determine origin and cause of fires in compliance with NFPA 921 guidelines
- Provide documentation and assistance to law enforcement agencies for follow up of criminal fire investigations
- Provide documentation and assistance to District Attorney's office regarding criminal fire investigations
- Provide documentation and assistance to private fire investigators and insurance industry representatives regarding civil fire investigations
- Establish and deliver an effective training program for chief and company officers throughout the County to conduct preliminary fire investigations and initial origin and cause determinations following NFPA 921 guidelines
- Establish effective lines of communications with partner agencies to promote information sharing
- Provide training for fire investigation staff to increase their skills and proficiency in the field of fire investigation
- Provide a quarterly report to the Fire Authority that outlines the number of fires investigated, case status, dollar loss, and number of arrests by jurisdiction
- Facilitate regular meetings for all county fire agencies to discuss issues and concerns related to fire investigations

FIRE PREVENTION SERVICES

In Fiscal Year 2015-2016, Fire Prevention Services will continue to support fire agencies within Stanislaus County through the County Fire Warden's Office. Fire Prevention Bureau (FPB) staff anticipate this action plan will increase revenue to support and enhance services within Stanislaus County through the implementation of the One-Stop-Shop concept. FPB staff will continue to streamline the permitting process by collaborating and partnering with the County Building Department, to eliminate duplicate entry and reduce costs, while increasing revenue and overall customer service.

This funding will allow the following objectives to be addressed:

- Continued collaboration and communication between the Fire Marshal and Fire Districts regarding impacts of new development projects
- Participate in the environmental review committee
- Deliver plan reviews
- Provide services in support of the One-Stop-Shop priority
- Implement the Accela program to increase efficiency and customer service
- Maintain state mandated inspection program
- Assist in target hazard and business inspection programs
- Continuously evaluate local fire and life safety codes and ordinances as they apply to current and proposed projects
- Active involvement in the code hearing process to ensure that Stanislaus County fire agencies may have input in the next code adoption cycle
- Continue cooperative vegetation/ force clean program with the fire districts
- Continue the training program to increase knowledge and proficiency of Fire Prevention Specialists
- Enhance partnerships with business, community groups and county departments
- Analyze fire prevention fees for cost recovery data
- Maintain the countywide rural water supply recommendation except for SRA
- Facilitate regular meetings for all county fire agencies to discuss issues and concerns related to fire prevention

TRAINING PROGRAM

A three-year Regional Training Program was approved in Fiscal Year 2014-2015 to support the fire agencies within Stanislaus County. This provides access to programs, meetings and class extensions offered through the Regional Fire Training Center (RFTC). Modesto Junior College (MJC) has prioritized the fire service program and continues to offer new opportunities. Listed below are goals outlined by MJC.

Regional Fire Training Center

3 Year Center Vision and Targets

Training and Education Targets by the MJC Regional Fire Training Center

1. GOAL 1:
 - a. Maintain the delivery of MJC Fire Academies
 - b. Offer courses in support of the Fire Science Certificate and A.S. Degree
 - c. Offer courses to support the Emergency Medical Services
2. GOAL 2:
 - a. Offer an active schedule of California State Fire Marshal approved classes
 - b. Enhance Distance Education Capabilities (i.e. online and hybrid courses)
 - c. Expand Fee Based classes offered by the RFTC and Community Education
3. GOAL 3:
 - a. Expand Safety Training Venue for Community & Local Industries (i.e. Manufacturing OSHA Training, OES – CIMS/NIMS/IES, etc.)
4. GOAL 4:
 - a. Organize a Fire Science Safety Conference
5. GOAL 5:
 - a. Improve Priority Registration for Employees of JPA Fire Authority Members seeking to complete their Associate Degree
6. GOAL 6:
 - a. Update Lecture Rooms with Smart Classroom Technology
 - b. Repair Simulator to Working Conditions

Stanislaus County Fire Authority
Budget Narrative
Fiscal Year 2015-2016

The Fiscal Year 2015-2016 budget is balanced utilizing \$1,286,255 in revenue and \$27,745 of fund balance (savings). It is anticipated that expenses will increase approximately 6% for the fiscal year primarily due to a one-time purchase of a new Fire Prevention records management system and cost of living increases. This increase will be funded by estimated revenue growth of 3.4% which includes an increase in Fire Prevention fee collection, a projected 3% growth in the revenue from the Less-Than-Countywide Fire Tax and a one-time draw of \$27,745 from Fund Balance. This budget includes the estimated cost for each prioritized service.

Currently, FPB staff manually enters all plan checks and inspections into three systems. The recommended FPB program Accela, is a real-time, web-based system which will eliminate the need to maintain multiple databases and provide the customer an efficient, and streamlined plan check process. This system also has the ability to request final permits at the time of the plan check and allow the customer to track their plans on a web-based system. The FPB will also be able to accept plans in PDF format expediting the process. We also anticipate the implementation of the on-line payments module in the near future. The cost to fully implement the system is not to exceed \$40,000 which includes licensing, data migration, training, implementation, and hardware.

Fiscal Year 2015-2016
Budget Projections
Fire Service Fund

		2014-2015		2015-2016	
		Budget	+/-	Budget	
<u>Projected Revenues</u>					
Less Than County-wide	\$ 1,078,500			\$ 1,110,855	
Fire Prevention Fees	\$ 150,000			\$ 160,000	
Misc. Reimbursements	\$ -0-			\$ -0-	
Intergovernmental	\$ 15,400			\$ 15,400	
Total Revenue	\$ 1,243,900		+3.4%	\$ 1,286,255	
<u>Projected Expenses</u>					
Finance & Admin Support, Equipment Maintenance And County Charges	\$ 175,900			\$ 150,000	
Fire Prevention	\$ 535,000			\$ 560,000	
▪ Accela FPB Program	\$ -0-			\$ 40,000	
Technology & Communications	\$ 150,000			\$ 161,000	
Fire Investigations	\$ 330,000			\$ 350,000	
Training (RFTC)	\$ 53,000			\$ 53,000	
Total Expense	\$ 1,243,900		+6%	\$ 1,314,000	
Use of Fund Balance (Savings)	\$ -0-			\$ 27,745	
Balance	\$ -0-			\$ -0-	