

September 19, 2006

Board of Supervisors
Marin County Civic Center
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, California 94903

SUBJECT: Response to 2005-2006 Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report "*The Next Disaster: Are Marin Citizens Prepared?*" (June 20, 2006)

Dear Board Members:

RECOMMENDATION: Concur in and adopt the attached proposed response on behalf of the Board of Supervisors and the Director of Emergency Services to the 2005-2006 Marin County Civil Grand Jury report regarding the County and its residents' preparation for a disaster and its aftermath. Further, authorize the Board President to forward the response to the Presiding Judge of the Marin County Superior Court.

SUMMARY: The 2005-2006 Civil Grand Jury published a report on June 20, 2006, entitled "*The Next Disaster: Are Marin Citizens Prepared?*" The report included a request for response from your Board and an invitation to respond by the Director of Emergency Services.

In developing this response, input was sought from the Emergency Services Manager as well as the Marin Operational Area Disaster and Citizen Corps Council. In most cases, the Board was asked to respond to the same findings and recommendations as the Director of Emergency Services. In some cases, only the Director of Emergency Services was asked to respond. This distinction can be found in the attached report.

Attached for your consideration, in accordance with §933 of the California Penal Code, is a proposed response. A copy of the Grand Jury report is also attached for your information.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

ALTERNATIVE: The Board may amend any suggested response.

REVIEWED BY:

<input type="checkbox"/>]	County Counsel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A
<input type="checkbox"/>]	Human Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A
<input type="checkbox"/>]	Auditor-Controller	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew H. Hymel
County Administrator

cc: County Counsel

September 19, 2006

Honorable M. Lynn Duryee
Presiding Judge
Marin County Superior Court
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

Dear Judge Duryee:

Forwarded herewith is the response by the Marin County Board of Supervisors and the Director of Emergency Services to the 2005-2006 Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report "*The Next Disaster: Are Marin Citizens Prepared?*" The Board of Supervisors' response addresses all Findings and Recommendations for which a response was requested from the Board of Supervisors. Similarly, the Director of Emergency Services' response addresses all Findings and Recommendations for which a response was requested from that position.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Adams
President, Board of Supervisors

cc: Civil Grand Jury

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT FORM

Report Title: "The Next Disaster: Are Marin Citizens Prepared?"

Report Date: June 20, 2006

Response by: Marin County Board of Supervisors and the Director of
Emergency Services

FINDINGS

- We agree with the findings numbered: F1, F3, F4, F5, F6
- We disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: F2

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered R3, R4, R5 have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
- Recommendations numbered R1, R2 will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.

Date: September 19, 2006

Signed: _____

Number of pages attached: 5

**Marin County Board of Supervisors
and the Director of Emergency Services**

Response to Findings and Recommendations from Grand Jury Report
“The Next Disaster: Are Marin Citizens Prepared?” June 20, 2006

FINDINGS

Except where noted, the responses to the findings and recommendation are the same for the Marin County Board of Supervisors and the Director of Emergency Services.

- F1. There is widespread agreement among government officials and concerned citizens that there is pervasive public apathy with regard to citizen disaster preparedness in Marin County.**

Response: Agree.

- F2. A few sustained efforts are being undertaken to define an acceptable level of citizen preparedness and track progress toward it. Without such information, efforts to combat lack of preparedness, either public or private, cannot be appropriately targeted (i.e., which communities are most vulnerable and/or behind others) or evaluated (i.e., what works and what doesn't).**

- **The Office of Emergency Services (OES) Disaster Service Worker (DSW) database currently tracks people who have gone through formal Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training; however, it appears to provide a basis for tracking more general citizen preparedness, given proper input.**
- **Certification programs, like the CERT programs or Belvedere-Tiburon's modified CERT program, can provide the data needed to track the progress of citizen preparedness.**

Response: Partially Agree

The County supports and encourages all efforts by local agencies to prepare its residents to be better prepared for a disaster. CERT training is an excellent training tool to achieve this goal. The DSW database, however, was not designed for, nor was it ever intended to serve as a measure of public preparedness.

Its purpose is to support the recruitment and integration of volunteers for the operational need to respond effectively to disasters. The OES DSW database supports local jurisdictions by consolidating records of individual members of the public who attend CERT training. Additionally, members of the public who register as part of the OES RACES program or the Medical Reserve Corps are also tracked.

- F3. Numerous community organizations are committed to solving the lack of citizen preparedness for disasters and are to be commended. Many are developing their own approaches, Web sites and materials, generally with meager funding and reliance on local talent.**

Response: Agree

County OES publishes and makes available to the public, a wealth of materials for individual and neighborhood preparedness. Specific events (e.g., earthquake, flood, wildland fire, etc.) are highlighted with an overall emphasis on suggestions for individual preparedness including emergency supplies checklists and tips for high risk communities. Much of the materials are available in Spanish as well. The County website has disaster preparedness information as well as links to disaster preparedness sites.

- F4. Motivating our citizens to prepare for disasters requires sustained and persuasive reminders of the inevitability of disasters in Marin.**

Response: Agree

- F5. Three County entities have been providing considerable leadership and support to county-wide efforts to get the citizens to prepare for disasters and are in positions to provide additional leadership and support.**

- **The Director of Emergency Services is empowered by the County Code to “direct and control the effort of the emergency organization of this county...” and to “direct cooperation between and coordination of services and staff of the emergency organization of this county, and resolve questions of authority and responsibility that may arise between them.”**
- **The mission of the Office of Emergency Services is “To protect life, property, and the environment by developing, coordinating, and managing programs that prepare for, respond to, and mitigate disasters and emergencies.” One of the key elements of its programs is to organize and coordinate focused public education campaigns to enhance personal and community preparedness. Campaigns include Earthquake Month and Winter Storm Preparedness Week.**
- **The Marin Operation Area Disaster and Citizen Corps Council’s duties, powers, and scope included:**
 - a) **Review and evaluate disaster preparedness progress in the public and private sectors;**
 - b) **Promote disaster preparedness through communications and education;**
 - c) **Harness the power of every resident through education and outreach, training, and volunteer service to make their families, homes and communities safer from natural and/or man-made disasters or emergencies; and**
 - d) **Report annually to the Board of Supervisors.”**

Response: Agree

F6. Local disaster councils, disaster preparedness committees, and local neighborhood organizations represent sound community approaches to getting citizens to prepare; however, some cities and towns do not have active disaster councils, disaster preparedness committees, or their equivalent.

Response: Agree (on behalf of the Director of Emergency Services)

Local disaster councils and preparedness committees are certainly one manner in which to better prepare a community and its citizens for disasters. Other avenues to consider to further citizen preparedness would be to engage school districts, special districts and aid organizations such as the local Red Cross.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2005-2006 Marin County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the County take the following action:

- R1. That the Director of Emergency Services use his/her authority under the Marin County Code to lead an effort to determine an acceptable level of citizen disaster preparedness for Marin County and how to attain it.**

Responses: Disagree (on behalf of the Director of Emergency Services)

It is important to note that emergency preparedness is the responsibility of each resident within the County. The more residents that are prepared the better off the community will be. Determining an "acceptable level" would be misleading to our residents since we want to encourage as many households as possible to be prepared for a disaster.

The role of the Director of Emergency Services is, in part, to provide opportunities for residents to adequately prepare themselves and their families for disasters. The Director of Emergency Services' authority should not be misconstrued as an alternative to an individual's personal responsibility for oneself and his/her family.

- R2. That the County Office of Emergency Services expand its DSW database to include the results of citizen preparedness certification program conducted by local disaster councils, disaster preparedness committees, and neighborhood organizations and periodically publish statistical information as an informal gauge of the level or preparedness to keep this issue in the public eye.**

Responses: Disagree

The DSW database can be used for informational purposes, but it should not be used as a gauge for public preparedness. There are several ways individuals can prepare themselves for a disaster. CERT and other training tools supported by local governments are one way to prepare residents but certainly not the only way individuals can become prepared.

The DSW database was not designed for, nor was it ever intended to serve as a measure of public preparedness, but is intended to support the recruitment and integration of volunteers in organized disaster response programs. The DSW database serves as a central clearinghouse of citizens who have achieved a standard of training and have registered as a disaster service worker in the aftermath of a disaster. Also, included in the database are each local agency employee (e.g., county, city/town, special district, etc.) who are, by law, registered DSWs. Publication of such data could be misconstrued – the important public message is the need for individual vigilance in self-preparation for a disaster.

- R3. That the Marin Operational Area Disaster & Citizen Corps Council dedicate a forum (perhaps PDEP) for community disaster preparation organizations (such as local disaster councils, disaster preparedness committees, homeowners associations, neighborhood organizations, and individual citizens) to come together on a regular basis to share ideas and coordinate programs to get citizens to prepare for disasters.**

Responses: Agree

Educating the public on disaster preparedness is critical for any disaster plan. Any opportunity to effectively educate the citizens on their need to prepare is essential. Various methods should be considered in effective outreach to the public; in fact, a disaster forum is being planned within the County for later this year to share ideas and determine the need to continue to do so in the future.

- R4. That the Office of Emergency Services institute on-going campaigns to remind the citizens of the inevitability of disasters and the need to prepare for them (e.g., Marin Disaster Preparedness Week).**

Responses: Agree

A campaign to engage the public should be implemented to motivate individual citizens to prepare for a disaster. Such campaigns should be developed in conjunction with cities/towns, school districts, special districts and other stakeholders who can help further raise the awareness and provide a level of educational outreach to citizens. Local campaigns are likely to be more effective in coordinating such efforts and communicating a message that will be meaningful to local residents.

- R5. That each city and town in Marin County establish and maintain a disaster council that actively engages in getting its citizens to prepare for disasters; that these disaster councils, disaster preparedness committees or their equivalent and any local neighborhood organizations develop and implement certifications programs that will motivate and recognize citizen disaster preparedness; and that they report the results of their programs to OES for incorporation into its database.**

Responses: Agree (on behalf of the Director of Emergency Services)

A fundamental role of local government is to respond to disasters. Any opportunity for local agencies to encourage greater disaster preparedness of its residents is good policy. The County's disaster council has proven to be a valuable tool in our ongoing effort to raise awareness of its citizens to prepare themselves and their families for a disaster and its aftermath.