



August 13, 2019

FILED Superior Court of California  
County of Butte  
AUG 16 2019  
Kimberly Elerer, Clerk  
By Deputy

Honorable Tamara L. Mosbarger, Presiding Judge  
c/o Court Administration  
Superior Court of California, County of Butte  
One Court Street, Oroville, CA 95965

RE: BUTTE COUNTY SHERIFF'S RESPONSE TO 2018-2019 GRAND JURY REPORT

Dear Judge Mosbarger:

On behalf of the Butte County Sheriff's Office (BCSO), I would like to thank the members of the Grand Jury for their many hours of dedicated service to the citizens of Butte County. The Grand Jury function is critical to ensuring the efficient operation of local government and I appreciate their efforts in regards to the Sheriff's Office and the citizens of Butte County. In accordance with Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05, please accept this response to the findings and recommendations of the 2018-2019 Grand Jury.

**Grand Jury Findings:**

The Respondent was not asked by the Grand Jury to respond to Findings 1-7, 9-12, or 15-18 and those findings pertain to matters that are not under the control of the Sheriff's Office. Accordingly, no response to those findings is being provided.

F8: The Butte County Sheriff's Office "Sheriff's Work Alternative Program" (SWAP) is an effective use of funding for vegetation reduction on evacuation routes.

The respondent agrees with the finding and would like to clarify that the program that specifically deals with vegetation reduction is the Butte County Sheriff's Alternative Custody Supervision (ACS) program.

F13: The 2013 Butte County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan is outdated.

The respondent disagrees with the finding for the reason that the plan was last approved in 2014 and does not expire until November of 2019.

F14: Code RED is inadequate as a stand-alone emergency notification system due to vulnerable telephone and cellular service.

The respondent agrees with the finding.

#### Grand Jury Recommendations:

The Respondent was not asked by the Grand Jury to respond to Recommendations 1-3, 6-10, or 14 and those recommendations pertain to matters that are not under the control of the Sheriff's Office. Accordingly, no response to those recommendations is being provided.

R4: The Board of Supervisors should allocate additional funding to the Butte County Sheriff's Office to expand the "Sheriff's Work Alternative Program" for use in vegetation reduction along evacuation routes, prior to January 1, 2020.

The recommendation requires further analysis. The program within the Butte County Sheriff's Office that specifically deals with vegetation reduction is the Butte County Sheriff's Alternative Custody Supervision (ACS) program. Expansion of the program would require additional correctional deputies, additional equipment, a sufficient number of qualified inmates to staff the new work crews and sufficient funds to cover the ongoing operating costs.

BCSO, like many law enforcement agencies, is currently dealing with staffing shortages throughout the department, including within the Corrections Division. Recruiting, hiring and training qualified candidates to fill the correctional deputy positions, necessary to supervise additional inmate work crews will likely take longer than the time frame set forth in the recommendation. Another factor to be considered is the availability of inmates who are capable of performing the work required and who meet the classification requirements of the ACS program. BCSO is committed to working with the Board of Supervisors on this issue.

R5: The Butte County Office of Emergency Management should amend evacuation route plans to include surrounding communities to address the influx of evacuating vehicles, prior to January 1, 2020.

The recommendation requires further analysis. BCSO agrees that coordination with surrounding communities needs to occur to mitigate delays and traffic congestion in the event of a large scale evacuation. Due to the dynamic and unpredictable nature of emergencies we are evaluating evacuation routes and the historical impacts that occurred in previous evacuations (such as routes that were burned over or blocked). Another important aspect of any evacuation is the public's personal emergency plan. The public needs to be familiar with the area in which they live to know what routes are available to them and to be prepared to help themselves and their neighbors, if capable. As this recommendation falls under the purview of the Butte County Office of Emergency Management the BCSO is committed to working with the Office of Emergency Management to evaluate this recommendation.

R11: The Butte County Office of Emergency Management should establish multiplatform emergency notification systems to augment the current CodeRED alert system, prior to January 1, 2020.

The recommendation has been implemented and will continue to implement improved emergency notifications. BCSO currently utilizes the CodeRED emergency mass notification system to alert community members of emergency situations. CodeRED allows BCSO to send telephone, text and email messages related to emergency situations to community members. CodeRED is an “opt-in” system which requires members of the community to sign-up for email and cell phone alerts. Since implementing the system in Butte County, BCSO has worked diligently to encourage community members to sign-up for alerts. This is an on-going effort.

In addition to CodeRED, BCSO has the ability to access the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) system through the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS). EAS is a message dissemination pathway that sends warnings via broadcast, cable, satellite, and wireline services, (i.e. television and radio). WEA is a message dissemination pathway that broadcasts alerts and warnings to cell phones and other mobile devices. BCSO also utilizes social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, along with traditional media platforms, such as local news outlets, to disseminate information about emergency situations.

CodeRED, IPAWS and Social Media platforms are all technology based and have their limitations. To help mitigate the limitations, BCSO utilizes “door to door” notifications by deputies when there is time and sufficient staffing. To augment the “door to door” notifications, BCSO has added unique siren tones to all of our patrol vehicles, which will only be used during evacuations. BCSO is in the process of implementing a public awareness campaign to help the public to recognize this unique siren that will enable them to put their personal emergency plan into action. Finally, BCSO is working in conjunction with the Butte County Office of Emergency Management to enhance our ability to alert the community of emergency situations when time is of the essence and/or technology reliant systems are compromised.

- R12: The Butte County Sheriff’s Office should acquire new fire-resistant outerwear for personnel in wildfire-prone areas, prior to January 1, 2020.

The recommendation requires further analysis to find funding to implement this recommendation. The purchase of fire-resistant outerwear is very costly and exceeds current funding levels. BCSO has received surplus items in the past from the military through the 1033 program however we have found oftentimes those items were incomplete, broken, mislabeled or not consistent with what our needs were. BCSO agrees that the fire-resistant outerwear is needed for our personnel and we will continue to look for options to help us acquire this needed safety equipment.

- R13: The Butte County Office of Emergency Management should acquire infrared-equipped drones to aid in spotting fire locations, prior to January 1, 2020.

The recommendation requires further analysis in conjunction with the Butte County Office of Emergency Management and Cal Fire. Factors to consider are safety issues of flying drones in airspace when firefighting aircraft are operating in the same airspace along with response times and trained personnel to operate them subject to FAA approval. Cal Fire currently will not fly their aircraft if drones are operating in the same airspace. Drones are capable of flying at a much higher

elevation to allow fire-fighting aircraft to safely operate over a fire and we need to evaluate the practicality of that type of resource and its response time along with qualified operators.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kory L. Honea', is written over the typed name and title.

Kory L. Honea  
Sheriff-Coroner

cc: Butte County Board of Supervisors  
CAO