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From: sarah.gordon@sdcounty.ca.gov

Sent: Thu, 4 Aug 2016 23:30:48 +0000

To: jannen@inbox.com

Subject: Community Requests Letter

Dear Ms. Jannen,

I am responding at the request of the County of San Diego's Chief Administrative Officer and Supervisor Dianne Jacob to your email dated July 12, 2016. A number of County agencies, including the Sheriff's Department and the Department of Animal Services, also received your communication, and I am writing to provide you with information from those and other departments regarding your questions/requests. Thank you for sharing your concerns with the County. The Sheriff's Department and the Department of Animal Services are each reviewing their various aspects of the Border Fire, and input such as yours is helpful in highlighting potential improvements and community needs.

Evacuations

On the question of using local deputies to deliver evacuation notices, the Sheriff's Department uses area deputies as much as possible in an emergency; however, more than 50 deputies worked the area at the height of the Border Fire, including all those from the Campo and Pine Valley substation, so it was not possible to assign only local deputies. All deputies are specifically trained on responding to fires, including conducting evacuations, and other wildfire responsibilities.

The San Diego County Sheriff's Department enforces evacuations and road closures in areas designated by the fire's incident commander, who makes these decisions based on the best information possible about fire behavior and risk to public safety. For example, even after a fire is out, a recently burned area can be extremely dangerous, with downed power lines, telephone lines, water pressure issues and concerns about the fire changing direction. The decision to open up an area after an evacuation is made by the fire command, with input from multiple government agencies and utility companies.

We ask people to evacuate, because while it is inconvenient, evacuations are proven to save lives. By their nature, roadblocks and evacuations will never be convenient, but the Sheriff's

Department is taking the concerns of the community seriously and is evaluating whether there are opportunities for improvement.

In your letter, you expressed concerns about some contacts with the public by deputies during the Border fire. The Sheriff's Department holds its deputies to a high standard and will address any specific complaints about deputies who serve the community or who assisted in the Border Fire. If anyone has a concern about a deputy, we would encourage them to contact Internal Affairs at 858-974-2065, or the Rural Lieutenant, Paul Robbins, at 619-938-8401.

Animal Services and Animal Evacuations

Animal Services is the lead animal agency in any disaster impacting animals in the unincorporated areas of the county, and the Department makes it a priority to educate and offer residents resources on how to be prepared for disasters via online, social media, community presentations and print media outlets. In an emergency, the Office of Emergency Services amplifies the Animal Service's information on animal evacuations and shelters through its emergency website at www.sdcountyemergency.com, its ReadySanDiego social media, and its SD Emergency mobile app. Please share these information platforms with community members; the County proactively promotes them in targeted campaigns and highlights them to local media during an emergency, but we have more people to reach. For emergency care assistance or evacuating animals and pets, residents are advised to call the San Diego County Department of Animal Services 24-hour Emergency Dispatch Line at (619) 236-2341. Also, emergency information is always available from 2-1-1 during a major incident.

The County encourages people with pets to take personal responsibility for the care and evacuation of their animals because law enforcement and fire personnel will not allow people into areas under mandatory evacuation where there is threat to life and property. If people are unable to evacuate their own animals, Animal Services will respond to the emergency dispatch line to assist.

Animal Services does not charge pet owners when their animal is rescued in a disaster; however, should emergency veterinary care occur, charges may apply to the owner. In addition, per state and local law, a dog owner is required to ensure that their dog is vaccinated against rabies and licensed. If not, the owner may be liable for such costs should their dog come into the possession of Animal Services.

Regarding your request about whether Animal Services followed all laws and policies during the Border Fire, Animal Services has the authority under County and state law to impound animals for their safety and wellbeing. Animal Services abided by such laws and all policies, at all times, during the Border Fire.

Animal Services rescued dogs from the Keefe property. Despite burnt power lines falling in close proximity to Animal Control Officers, they were able to rescue the dogs, including all but one frightened loose dog on the property that ran from the officers. That single dog has resisted being caught, but the animal is being cared for by the Animal Services. The department provided veterinary care to the rescued dogs and has found new homes for all of them.

You suggest the County explore designating large open spaces with irrigated grass such as Potrero Park or various private properties as evacuation points where people can take their animals during a wildfire. County emergency plans do include potential evacuation sites for people and animals; however, during the actual emergency, a site's use is determined based on the location's safety and the needs of the emergency. County park facilities are routinely made available for evacuation sites and emergency assistance; these sites are designated in close coordination with law enforcement and fire to make sure they are safe and outside of the active fire area. During the Border Fire, Potrero County Park was initially considered unsafe because of the fire's direction, but later it was designated the fire's Incident Command Post, and the park housed over 2,000 firefighters and their equipment. In this situation, Potrero Park was not used as an animal evacuation point, but it could potentially be used that way in another incident.

After every disaster, the Department of Animal Services conducts a post-disaster briefing. Animal Services will look into the suggestion in your email (*Evacuation Policies and Practices* "Item D," in your letter) to provide emergency resource numbers to the emergency personnel that are on location of a disaster area so residents who do not have that information readily available will have additional means of assistance.

Sheriff's response to the Keefe residence

The Sheriff's Department has initiated an internal investigation into the initial missing person's report on the Keefe residence. As part of the Sheriff's review of the fire, the department will examine its response and look for ways to improve.

So far, that review has shown the following timeline and actions completed by the Sheriff's Department. On Sunday, June 19, the Border Fire started early in the morning and began spreading east and north. That evening, deputies responded to the Keefe property, spoke to a male matching Jim's description, and notified him of the order to evacuate the area. The male told the deputies he would not leave, according to dispatch notes.

On Sunday, June 26, a deputy was asked to conduct a welfare check on the Keefe property. On the same night at around 11:30 p.m., a reporting party sent an e-mail to the Sheriff's Department's general e-mail account stating the Keefes were missing and nothing was being done. As noted on the Sheriff's website, this email account is not monitored 24 hours a day, so the e-mail was forwarded to the Rural command on Monday, June 27. Deputies started a missing person investigation that day, and a deputy conducted an initial investigation and checked around the Keefe's residence.

On Monday morning, June 27, the Communications Center received a call of a missing person's report on the Keefes. A deputy, after an initial investigation, completed a missing person's report, checked around the immediate property and entered the Keefes into the missing persons database.

On Tuesday, June 28, a sergeant from the Campo Substation and deputies from Sheriff's Bomb/Arson (who investigate all fire-related deaths), along with an investigator from Cal Fire, responded to the Keefe property. They searched the property around the outbuildings and did not locate the Keefes. They made a request for Search and Rescue volunteers, but the unit was handling a missing person report in Northern San Diego County and was not available.

On Wednesday, June 29, the sergeant assigned to Campo and the Search and Rescue sergeant again responded to the Keefe property. They were formulating a plan to activate search and rescue volunteers. Around the same time, a group of citizen volunteers located the Keefes' bodies over a ridge about 100 yards from the outbuildings. The deputies then set up a crime scene at the location because if the cause fire were found to be an act of arson, their death would be classified as a homicide.

Thank you again for your feedback and participation. The County of San Diego is committed to working with you and all residents to make San Diego the safest and most resilient community in

America. As indicated previously, this letter contains information provided by multiple departments. Please feel free to contact me, Sarah Gordon, in any future communications.

Sincerely,

Sarah Gordon

CAO Staff Officer

Public Safety Group

619-531-4538

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COUNTYNEWSCENTER DIRECT TO YOU