

Valley Center Community Planning Group
Emergency Evacuation Sub-Committee
Minutes

July 31, 2025 6:30pm

Valley Center Library

29200 Cole Grade Road Valley Center CA 92082



Committee

Delores Chavez Harmes
Chair / VCCPG

Chief Chip Duncan
Rincon Fire

James Gordon
LAFCO / Community

Sgt. Scott Hill
SD Co. Sheriff

Chief David Morrison
Deer Springs Fire

Chief Joe Napier
Valley Center Fire

Dr. Robb Rattray
VCFPD / Community

Chief Carl Schwettman
CAL Fire

Representatives

Adrienne Selekman
District 5
Representative

Sgt. Daniel Hollywood
CHP

Attendance: Dee Harmes, Chief Joe Napier, Chief Chip Duncan, James Gordon, Vlad Ciupitu, Robb Rattray, Chief Carl Schwettman, Sgt. Cook, Chief Justin Laffredo, Matt Matthews, Dori Rattray

Pledge of Allegiance: Meeting called to order at 6:30pm

Welcome: Chief Carl Schwettman, CAL Fire Northern Division Chief, 29 years with CAL Fire and 34 years in fire service. Recipient of Gold Medal of Valor from Governor.

Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve minutes from January 30, 2025 and April 24, 2025 by Chief Napier, second Dr. Rattray. Motions passes unanimously.

Public Comments: None

Action Items:

Chair's Report: Harmes reported there has been movement from representatives on SANDAG to address fire and evacuations, especially in the North County areas. Request is being prepared to SANDAG for a grant to cover a feasibility study and Ceqa for the proposed evacuation route from Mirar del Valle through Daly Ranch in Escondido.

VCFPD-Chief Napier: Continuing to clear a path and create fuel break to protect VC and Escondido & Deer Springs and SRA, Prop 4 climate grant application for the maximum of \$950,000 which will be submitted by Aug. 8th, 2025. VCFPD has applied for grant with letters of support from Chief Mecham, Chief Duncan and Rincon and San Pasqual tribes. Private enterprise must be used for buck back work as a condition of the grant. But these grant funds could be used to help with Dear Springs areas. Also requesting ceqa exemption for wildfire protection. Carl DeMaio will bid for direct state funding for \$350,000 with comes through OES. Notification of grant being awarded won't be till winter 2025 at the soonest.

VCFPD station 3 is coming along on budget. Bricks are available for purchase to commemorate new flag pole. Specking out another engine as reserve apparatus are aging. Nine new employees are needed for station 3; three captains, three engineers, three firefighters and job announcements are currently out.

Harmes asked if current infrastructure will be able to handle new Indian Creek housing project of apx 2,000+ residents added to the community. Chief Napier explained the widening of Cole Grade Rd and the capacity on Valley Center Rd. is adequate now. Miller Rd is already a failed road; there is no capacity for this road. Adding one or two more connectors to Miller Rd will cause serious problems. Community must come together to insist developers do some mitigation with Miller Rd., and not just by the cemetery but the entire road.

Dollars for a roundabout on Miller and Valley Center Rd would be better used to widen Miller Rd. County did not give us Road 19 or Road 20 (cut across from Cole Grade to Lilac). These options or given up or the county says adding these roads are too costly but these access routes must happen sometime. Possibility for these routes to be a condition for developers to move forward with their projects, but county may still override local decisions.

CAL Fire: Chief Schwettman - based at Fox Fire center on hwy 76. Negotiations ongoing to add additional rotary wing helicopter to fleet, stationed at Fallbrook. C1-30 also being added to fleet, however the Ramona air attack base will need to undergo some much needed upgrades and maintenance. Current retardant mixing station is antiquated. Two additional aircraft also coming from Hemet Ryan air attack base to augment needs. If any major activity is required Brown Field reload base or San Diego bases will come into play. Crew strength is at full strength as well as full resources are ready to go for this season. County also has 4 bulldozers in fleet. All the collaboration this year will pay big dividends. Defensible space by homeowner is critical for firefighting apparatus to get to a structure. Firefighter 1 crews are paid firefighters, not inmates. Chief Schwettman has experience with evacuation route development, having sat on the Hwy 67 evacuation committee-started in 2017 and still ongoing. Choke points found were where Hwy 67 emptied onto traffic light areas. CAL Trans was provided scenarios on a simulator to show how fast fire travels. County has been spraying fire retardants on the roads and mowing is on going but can't keep up with growth.

Deer Springs: Chief Morrison (no report)

Rincon Fire: Chief Duncan – Rincon has welcomed Chairman Stallings as new chairman. Took possession of a new brush engine "Code 3 Marie" Cal Fire model 34. A campaign has been initiated to bring greater awareness to Genasys Protect. Signs will be posted throughout reservation with QR code and "Know your zone" to encourage download of the app. A request has been made for the Tribe to sponsor a PSA. County OES has not been as aggressive as needed. Application has been in service for over a year, yet majority of communities are not aware of it. Suggestion to have signage on grade, use of high school sign board. Chief Schwettman suggested placing rolling message signs on main thoroughfares in Valley Center with gentle reminders of clearing for defensible space and download Genasys Protect app.

VC Sheriff: Sgt. Hill – (no report)

LAFCO: James Gordon – Attended wildfire preparedness presentation by Rancho Santa Fe Fire Dept. with CAL Fire, CHP, sheriff, SD County Fire, animal control, water districts, Red Cross, etc. Similar presentations have been provided in our area. Worth noting, improvements have been made to wildfire preparedness presentations. VCFD provides wildfire town halls annually as well as the event with SDGE at Bates Nut Farm. This year the date is August 30, 2025 at Bates. VCFD also utilizes a series of 8 videos that are in tune with Ready Set Go and evacuation processes for Genasys Protect. Prop 4 grant money can also be used for education. James will forward presentation to Chair to share with board and on social media platforms.

Next Meeting: October 30, 2025

Meeting Adjourned: 7:02pm