

ANNUAL REPORT
Of the
RANCHO BERNARDO COMMUNITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

March 22, 2009

The principal emphasis of the Public Safety Committee in the past year has been upon the issue of fire safety. Because the San Diego area has suffered two catastrophic fires in the past few years and because fire protection in the city and county are woefully inadequate to combat future major wildfires, the Committee believes that fire protection is the major public safety issue confronting San Diego in general and Rancho Bernardo in particular.

In two appearances before the Committee George George reviewed for the committee the inadequate state for fire protection in the San Diego area and some of the possible ways to achieve needed improvements. He supplied the committee with The Report on San Diego Fire-Rescue Needs and Funding Plan from the Office of Independent Budget Analysis Report. The committee reviewed possible sources of funds to improve fire protection, including the parcel tax proposed as a proposition for the November ballot and the possible availability of Proposition 172 funds.

Mr. George discussed, and supplied the Committee with copies of, the San Diego County Grand Jury Report 2007-2008, which reviewed the unsatisfactory condition of fire protection in the county, suggested funding possibilities, and required public officials to submit a plan for funding improvements in fire readiness. The Committee prepared a resolution to submit for adoption by the Community Council urging city and county officials to respond in a meaningful way to the Grand Jury Report. The resolution was adopted by the Council and a copy was sent the mayor and each member of the City Council and the County Board of Supervisors.

Further in regard to fire safety, the committee heard reports by Jerry Mitchell of the Scripps Ranch Fire Safe Council, Kathy Howard of the County Fire Safe Council, and Richard W. Halsey of the California Chaparral Institute.

After the vote on the parcel tax proposition, Mr. George returned to update the Committee on the recent actions, or lack thereof, by public officials on the issue of fire safety. Although the proposition received majority approval by the voters it fell short of the two-thirds vote necessary for passage. Since the failure of the proposition public officials have done essentially nothing to improve fire protection in the city or county. The Committee discussed the need for the public to apply pressure upon elected officials to give attention to the improvement of wildfire preparedness.

Apart from fire safety, the Committee considered the following issues:

Gary Carlson and Pat White reported on the Neighborhood Watch program.

Ralph Parris reported on the San Diego Community Emergency Response Team program.

Paul Lennon, San Diego Police Department Area Coordinator, reported on crime in Rancho Bernardo and introduced Mark Jones, the new area Captain. Mr. Jones discussed staffing and other police matters affecting the north-east area of the city.

Jerry Hall of SafeBeaches San Diego and Dawn Darling of the Alcohol Policy Panel spoke and gave a visual presentation in favor of Proposition 7, a measure on the November ballot, subsequently adopted by the voters, which permanently bans alcohol on San Diego beaches.

The Committee approved a draft letter by Council vice president Steve DeMatteo relating to safety problems caused by the location of bus stops on West Bernardo Drive.

Respectfully submitted,
Franklin P. Auwarter
Chairman of the Public Safety Committee
March 23, 2009