

The Jacob Journal

A Newsletter from Supervisor Dianne Jacob

March 2002

Serving the Cities of:
El Cajon
La Mesa
Lemon Grove
Poway
Santee

Serving the communities of:
Agua Caliente
Allied Gardens
Alpine
Barrett
Blossom Valley
Bostonia
Boulevard
Campo
Canebrake
Casa de Oro
Crest
Cuyamaca
Dehesa
Del Cerro
Descanso
Dulzura
Eucalyptus Hills
Fernbrook
Flinn Springs
Granite Hills
Grantville
Guatay
Harbison Canyon
Jacumba
Jamul
Julian
Lake Morena
Lakeside
Mount Helix
Pine Hills
Pine Valley
Potrero
Ramona
Rancho San Diego
Rolando
San Carlos
San Pasqual
Santa Ysabel
Shelter Valley
Spring Valley
Tecate
Tierra del Sol
Vallecitos

Serving the Indian Reservations of:
Barona
Campo
Cosmit
Cuyapaipe
Inaja
Jamul
La Posta
Manzanita
Mesa Grande
Santa Ysabel
Sycuan
Viejas

State Can't Ignore Pleas for Fire Protection

What do the Viejas fire in January of 2001, the Potrero fire in December of 2001 and last month's devastating Gavilan fire have in common?

Besides raging through 50 years of unburned chaparral and destroying countless homes, each of these ruthless wildfires occurred outside what the State of California says is San Diego County's "fire season."

After last year's 10,000 acre Viejas fire near the East County community of Alpine, the Board of Supervisors immediately recognized the flaws in the way the State handles wildfire protection in San Diego County. The State's one-size-fits-all fire season lasts only eight months out of the year.

It ignores the deadly combination of Santa Ana winds, tinder-dry brush and low rainfall unique to the San Diego region. These conditions are so unique in fact, that fire officials say there are only two other places on the globe at similar risk.

During the State's off-season, the agency responsible for protecting wildlands, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), scales back its services. Seventeen of its 18 stations in San Diego County

close. Personnel are released and air tankers and helicopters are taken off-line and frequently relocated to other parts of the State.

Last April, the Board of Supervisors decided it was a matter of immediate public safety to put an end to the State's predetermined, arbitrary fire season. The

Board urged State and Federal lawmakers to proactively prepare for wildfires in San Diego's vulnerable Backcountry by giving fire agencies the resources they need to fight wildland fires year round.

Last month, before the last of the smoke from the Gavilan fire had cleared, the governor is-

sued his 2002/2003 budget proposal. The County was stunned to learn that not only does the Governor's proposed budget ignore this most pressing threat to public safety, it slashes \$20 million in funding from CDF. This sizeable cut, would eliminate nine percent of CDF's annual budget.

The language in the proposed budget claims that population encroachment into the state's wildlands has put a strain on CDF's resources. The governor would have San Diego County believe that CDF is picking up slack for the County's local network of experienced fire agencies which is charged with responding to structure fires. These agencies are funded by taxpayers with assistance from the County which contributed more than

"It looks like the Governor is proposing to do just the opposite of what he said in his State of the State Address."

***- Supervisor Dianne Jacob
North County Times***



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CDF Cuts

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\$4 million to various local fire agencies over the last two years.

To make up for the \$20 million cut, the Governor is asking local jurisdictions and fire agencies to reimburse the State through a cost-sharing plan. This would alter the entire financial structure of the State's fire protection system by shifting costs to local taxpayers who already pay for wildland protection through their state taxes. This is entirely unfair!

Unfair financing is just one of many problems with the governor's budget proposal for CDF.

For years, CDF crews and local fire fighters have worked together to fight wildland fires under landmark "mutual aid" agreements. Under such mutual aid agreements, when there is a fire in the wildland areas, in short, it's all hands on deck. CDF and local fire agencies work side by side to fight wildland fires and protect homes from being destroyed. The goal is a seamless and comprehensive response to wildfire which optimizes resources and speeds the containment of fires.

The Governor's budget proposal would tread heavily on crucial mutual aid agreements by forcing local officials to consider whether they could afford to ask CDF for assistance. Imagine you're a fire chief on your way to a brush fire which is threatening homes, the last thing you want to think about is the price of a bill from the State of California.

Moreover, the Governor's proposed budget lacks evidence. There is simply no data that shows CDF is depleting its budget by responding to non-wildland emergencies in the County of San Diego. So where did the \$20 million figure come from? The State Department of Finance calls it more of a "target number" and says it is not based on research.

In his January State of the State Address, the Governor issued this promise, "We will maintain our full commitment to public safety... I am opposed to balancing the State budget on the back of local government." As I said to the *North County Times*, it looks like the governor is proposing to do just the opposite of what he promised in his State of the State Address.

The County of San Diego intends to remind the Governor of his promise. The Board has taken action to inform the Governor of our opposition to the \$20 million cut. How many homes have to burn and how many lives must be threatened before the state prioritizes the unique fire needs of San Diego County? It must not take another devastating wildfire to find out.



Dial Away Your Household Hazardous Waste

Supervisor Jacob is pleased to announce a new free service available to disabled and elderly residents in the unincorporated area of San Diego County. If you're unable to take your household hazardous waste to existing drop off collection facilities or one-day collection events, a new door-to-door program strives to meet your needs.

Call the County of San Diego's recycling and household hazardous waste toll free hotline at 1-877-713-2784, to request the County's new door-to-door waste disposal service. Up to 15 gallons or 125 pounds of household hazardous waste will be accepted and the pick up is always free.

Examples of household hazardous waste include:

Unused or leftover portions of products containing toxic chemicals

Products labeled: Caution, Warning, Danger, Poison, Toxic, Flammable or Corrosive

For more information, please contact the County of San Diego Recycling and HHW Toll Free Hotline at 1-877-713-2784.

Supervisor Jacob Goes Back to Sixth Grade to 'Read Across America'

It's been a long time since Supervisor Jacob hit the books. But, she did just that in honor of Read Across America, a nationwide campaign to keep our country's young people turning the pages of quality books.

To celebrate reading, Supervisor Jacob had help from a group of bright and extremely polite 6th graders at Hillsdale Middle School in El Cajon who listened intently as the Supervisor read *Nim and The War Effort* by Milly Lee.

Supervisor Jacob is a former teacher and believes that reading is an important factor in student achievement and creating successful, lifelong readers. She thinks Read Across America should last all year long. That's why she's urging parents to teach young people about the joys of reading.

Nim and the War Effort takes place during WWII and follows the adventures of Nim, a young Chinese girl from San Francisco who enters a contest to collect newspapers to aid in the war effort. When a little boy in Nim's school challenges her because he thinks she's not an American, Nim teaches him what being an American is all about.

Supervisor Jacob thinks the book is especially suited for parents and kids to read together. Research shows that kids who are motivated to read are more likely to do well in school than kids who don't read.

Why not pick up a copy of *Nim and the War Effort*? Get set for an adventure in reading!



Eager Readers: Students at Hillsdale Middle School and Supervisor Jacob read together for Read Across America, a campaign which gets young people interested in books.

60 Minutes Investigates San Diego Red Cross

Legendary CBS News correspondent Mike Wallace has been investigating the finances and the leadership of the San Diego chapter of the American Red Cross.

60 Minutes is scheduled to air his report on Sunday, March 10 at 7:00 p.m. on KFMB TV Channel 8.

The report will include interviews with Supervisor Dianne Jacob and victims of last year's Viejas Fire, which burned nearly 10,000 acres and destroyed six homes in the East County community of Alpine.

Jacob has been critical of the chapter after an internal audit revealed the chapter mishandled more than \$400,000 in donations and failed to follow its own disaster plan during the fire.



Join me for Coffee and Conversation...

**Friday, March 22, 2002 at 9:00 a.m.
Mountain Empire Community Center
976 Sheridan, Campo**

**April 26, 2002 at 8:30 a.m.
Mary's Donuts
9031 Mission Gorge Rd., Santee**

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Mar-02

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