

# The Jacob Journal

A Newsletter from Chairwoman Dianne Jacob

February 2004

## AFTER THE CEDAR FIRE

# Rural Fire Departments Need to Come Together

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  
Wynola

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

The October Firestorms of 2003 have cast a new spotlight on a five year-old effort to improve fire protection in rural areas of San Diego County through greater cooperation, legislative action, public education and the examination of service delivery in those areas.

Long before the October Fires, the County's Task Force on Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services recognized the disparity in funding among the 35 different fire departments in the unincorporated areas of the County. In 2002, the Task Force decided it was high time to evaluate those inconsistencies in funding and worked through the Local Agency Formation Commission to comprehensively review the services of most of the fire departments in the unincorporated areas. The launch of that review marked the first legal and researched-based step to bring together unincorporated area fire departments.

Now, that review is complete and it confirms what we've known for years. Unincorporated area fire departments lack continuity and they lack resources. Compared to the rest of the region, the unincorporated areas are the most splintered.

Emergency response times vary from five minutes in better funded areas to as many as 30 minutes in remote areas served by all volunteer firefighters. More than a dozen rural communities have fire insurance ratings of nine or 10, with 10 being the worst. Most alarmingly, too many

departments are woefully underfunded. Some are driving antique trucks and are forced to hold bake sales to make ends meet. Members of the Task Force who have been working for years to make these areas whole believe that the October Firestorms have created a new sense of urgency to bring together fires departments in the

unincorporated areas.

Right now, the voices of 35 separate departments are trying to talk over one another to be heard. Brought together, they could become more efficient and combine their purchasing power to save money. With enhanced funding, training and communications they could lower insurance ratings and cut response times.

It's an economic principle: There is strength in numbers. Fire departments should be combining that strength to bring in the funding they so desperately need.

I will be asking my colleagues to place a measure on the November ballot which will let people of the unincorporated areas decide if they want to bring fire

"We've all seen how quickly one community's spot-fire can become a regional inferno."

- Dianne Jacob



Fire Departments.....	Page 1
Fire/Gavel Pass.....	Page 2
Volunteers/Insurance.....	Page 3
Get the Journal at home.....	Page 4
How to reach me.....	Page 4

Continued on Page 2

### Fire Departments

Continued from Page 1

departments together, or if they are content with the way things are now. What happened to us in October coupled with the conclusions of the service review should be the impetus for change.

Some don't agree. They say, "Why should I care about the underfunded fire department miles away?" I say, "You have to care. You've seen the consequences of the status quo."

The Firestorms showed us that indiscriminate wildfire doesn't know when it's crossing over from one department's territory to the next. We've all seen how quickly one community's spot-fire can become a regional inferno.

Change shouldn't be limited to fire departments in the unincorporated areas. The fractures that exist in the rural areas exist in more urban areas too. Region wide, there are 64 different fire departments putting out fires. We are all alone as the only large county in the State that does not have a countywide firefighting entity. Recently, the San Diego County Fire Chiefs Association announced support for a countywide firefighting entity. The region's top fire minds agree, it's time to change our haphazard way of protecting lives and property in San Diego County. The solution starts with the marriage of the 35 individual fire departments in the unincorporated area of this County.

*Read the review of fire departments in the unincorporated areas on the website of the San Diego County Task Force on Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services at [www.firetaskforce.org](http://www.firetaskforce.org).*



**Leader to Leader:** Chairwoman Jacob accepts the 2004 Board gavel from Supervisor Greg Cox.

## Jacob Tapped to Chair 2004 Board of Supervisors

**T**his year, as thousands of October fire victims work to rebuild their lives, and as the State of California grapples with a monumental budget crisis, Supervisor Jacob will be at the helm of the Board of Supervisors.

Last month, Jacob accepted the gavel from outgoing Chairman Greg Cox and pledged to steer the County through the State's multibillion dollar budget deficit and other challenges in the coming year.

"County residents should know that their County government is strong, fiscally sound and prepared to manage whatever the state passes on," Chairwoman Jacob said. "When it comes to budgets, San Diego County is in better financial shape than most. We have more experience than most to see that vital services, particularly public safety, are protected."

This is Supervisor Jacob's third turn as Chairwoman of the Board. She has represented the people of the County's Second Supervisorial District since 1993, and has earned a reputation as a practical, no-nonsense policy maker. Chairwoman Jacob said she is looking forward to working with California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to bring fundamental changes to the way the state does business.

"At last we have a Governor with a plan to tame outlandish State spending. The State can learn from San Diego County's dedication to strict fiscal discipline and we're ready to help any way we can!"



## A Special Day for Volunteers

**C**hairwoman Jacob was glad to attend a sunny Saturday picnic recently to thank Red Cross volunteers who helped comfort victims of the October Wildfires. Chairwoman Jacob presented a County of San Diego Proclamation to San Diego chapter CAO Ronne Froman and long time volunteer Laura Stremmer. Chairwoman Jacob declared January 17 to be "Red Cross Volunteer Recognition Day" throughout the region.

Coming Soon...

### *Online Help for Cancer Patients*

**T**his month, Chairwoman Jacob will help launch the nation's very first online clearinghouse of cancer information and services. The San Diego County Cancer Navigator website will make seas of information about treatment, clinical trials, counseling services, screenings and prevention available at the click of a computer mouse. The site was specially designed by San Diego physicians, nurses and other caregivers to ease the anxiety of cancer patients and their families. The site is set to launch on February 20.

The Cancer Navigator website address is:

***www.cancernavigator.org.***

### **Are You a Wildfire Victim with Fire Insurance Issues?**

**C**alifornia's Fair Access to Insurance Requirements (FAIR) Plan can help. The FAIR Plan is designed to make property insurance more readily available to people having difficulty obtaining it from private insurers because their property is considered "high risk." For more information contact the California Department of Insurance Consumer Hotline at 1-800-927-HELP. Hotline hours are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. You may e-mail questions to:

***927HELP@insurance.ca.gov.***

## **East County Counts Down to PETCO Park**

**Chairwoman Jacob and the San Diego Padres invite you to a Padres Town Hall Meeting to preview the team's first season at PETCO Park. Get an update on ballpark construction, find out the easiest ways to park and take a look at prospects for the 2004 season. See you there!**

**Thursday, February 19, 2004 at 7:00 p.m.  
El Cajon Community Center, 195 E. Douglas Avenue, El Cajon**

# Get The Jacob Journal!

The Jacob Journal will be mailed to you on a regular basis by request only. If you like what you've read, fill out the form below and mail it back to us at 1600 Pacific Highway, San Diego, CA 92101 or fax it to us at (619) 696-7253. You can also sign up to receive the Jacob Journal on our website at [www.diannejacob.com](http://www.diannejacob.com).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

We hope to hear from you soon!

FEB-04

(619)531-5522

The Second District Staff

**Geoff Patnoe**

*Chief of Staff*

**Chimene Adams**

*Policy Advisor*

**Erika Black**

*Chair's Assistant*

**Caroline Braun**

*Field Representative*

**Jeff Collins**

*Policy Advisor*

**Erin Farris**

*Field Representative*

**Darren Gretler**

*Policy Advisor*

**Donna Sievert**

*Office Manager & Scheduler*

**Jennifer Stone**

*Communications Advisor*

**Adam Wilson**

*Field Representative*

## **DIANNE JACOB**

*Supervisor, Second District  
San Diego County Board of Supervisors  
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 335  
San Diego, CA 92101*

*(619) 531-5522  
(800) 852-7322 toll free  
(619) 696-7253 fax*

*e-mail:  
[Dianne.Jacob@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Dianne.Jacob@sdcounty.ca.gov)*

*website:  
[www.diannejacob.com](http://www.diannejacob.com)*