



# The Jacob Journal

A Newsletter from Supervisor Dianne Jacob

May 2007

## Fire Consolidation Leaps Forward

**Many fractured fire agencies come together, funding still big obstacle**

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

More than three years after the 2003 Firestorms charred much of San Diego County's Backcounty, the effort to bring greater unity to unincorporated area fire agencies just took a giant leap forward.

With Supervisor Jacob and regional fire experts leading the call for change, local officials approved a plan that calls for a single fire agency to provide fire and emergency medical services to more than half of the unincorporated area.

The proposal, crafted by the Local Agency Formation Commission which oversees the creation of new public entities, hinges on officials securing millions of additional dollars for the merger—a task Supervisor Jacob has been working on in the form of State legislation currently on hold in Sacramento.

If the additional funding falls into place, what was a scattered network of unevenly funded agencies will become a more cohesive unit, with standardized training, compatible resources and greater communication, three areas that were grossly lacking during the Cedar Fire.

The long road to the historic consolidation vote at LAFCO was not a

smooth one, nor did it go exactly according to plan. A handful of fire districts opted out of the new unincorporated area agency, saying they did not want to lose local control of their operations, resources, and above all, finances.

Some agencies said they feared the consolidation model, with its emphasis on paid professional firefighters, would discourage volunteer efforts in rural communities.

**What was a scattered network of unevenly funded agencies will become a more cohesive unit...**

According to LAFCO estimates, about 600 volunteers already contribute some \$14 million in donated time and services to rural communities.

Like other members of the LAFCO board, Supervisor Jacob was disappointed that agencies wanted out of the merger, but said she understood their fears of change and even shared their concerns about recruiting and retaining volunteers. The unselfish contributions of volunteers are an important part of the region's overall network of fire agencies. Volunteers keep communities engaged in disaster preparedness efforts and their cost-effective services cannot be marginalized.

LAFCO's larger consolidation plan does, in fact, place a high priority on volunteers. An executive summary states, "...a regional agency should be oriented toward helping volunteers in their efforts to provide better service, rather than demanding volunteer operations to narrowly support the regional agency's goals."

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**Fire**

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Supervisor Jacob holds out hope that LAFCO's continuing outreach to volunteers, coupled with the eventual success of the County's fire funding legislation, will convince doubtful agencies to join the consolidation effort during a later phase.

Senate Bill 806, authored by State Senator Dennis Hollingsworth, remains the only long-term, stable funding proposal on the table to pay for the new fire agency. It corrects a major flaw in the way the State returns property taxes to San Diego County.

Compared to other counties, local taxpayers pay nine cents more on every dollar to local schools. The State has been shortchanging us, giving away our share of education dollars to

other counties. SB 806 forces the State to treat our county just as it treats others. How? It shifts one penny of the nine cent discrepancy from schools to fire. The State, which is legally obligated to fund education, would be required, by law, to backfill the shift. With language that expressly protects schools

from losing so much as a dime, SB 806 deserves a chance to pass.

LAFCO's bold consolidation vote tells the State that our region has made big strides toward better fire protection. We're serious about securing funding for it too—using an equitable portion of our own property taxes.

### New Consolidated Fire Agency Fast Facts

- Will cover more than 1.5 million acres, about half of unincorporated San Diego County.
- Will include about 950,000 acres now served only by volunteer departments.
- Will include: East County Fire Protection District, Pine Valley, the San Diego Rural Fire Protection District, Mount Laguna, Boulevard and Campo.
- Contingent on officials securing additional funding.



**Rare Form:** Supervisor Jacob and Padres Outfielder Termel Sledge celebrate the newest Little Padres Park in El Cajon.

Supervisor Jacob was glad to secure \$100,000 in County funding to bring the El Cajon project to life. This is the third time she's partnered with the Padres to bring better fields to East County.

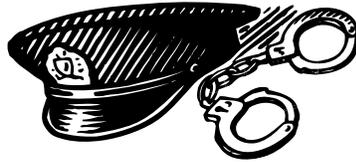
## Pitching in for an Amazing New Park

Girls softball is a beloved tradition in El Cajon. Thanks to the San Diego Padres that tradition will continue in beautifully renovated digs.

Players and fans of the El Cajon Girls Softball league are jubilant about the better infields, new grass, new bleachers and cool new scoreboards at their two fields at Magnolia Elementary School on Greenfield Drive. A picnic area and smaller T-ball field make the spot a true family park! The fields mark the 32nd and 33rd Little Padres Parks—a program launched by the Padres to build or improve more than 60 youth fields across the region.

# Eye on Crime

## East County Crime Continues to Drop



East County took a big bite out of crime, according to the latest stats available. Unincorporated communities experienced an eight percent reduction in overall crime in 2005. Lakeside was the lowest with a 16 percent reduction. Spring Valley experienced a 12 drop in violent crime.

## Gang Violence Down

Thanks to the East County Gang Task Force, gang violence is down dramatically: 22 percent. So far this year, investigators have nabbed 82 gang members. That is a 52 percent increase in arrests from this time last year.

## Two Sheriff's Stations in the Hopper

Sheriff's deputies in Alpine have 135 square miles to protect! The Rancho San Diego area is in need of greater law enforcement presence too. Both communities are closer than ever to securing new dedicated stations. The location for a new

station has been secured for the community of Alpine and should open soon. Another station in the Rancho San Diego area is not far off.

## Zeroing in on Metal Thieves

First it was bronze urns stolen from cemeteries. Then, it was copper lifted in bulk from construction sites. Now, metal thieves are hitting East County schools, pulling copper from air conditioning systems and sawing off copper irrigation pipes.

The County responded to last year's rash of metal thefts by sending warning letters to all local cities and recyclers reminding parties that the law requires recyclers to keep records of seller identities along with descriptions of metals that change hands.

With metal theft continuing to rise, the County is going a step further and endorsing new State legislation that zeros in on thieves. The bill forces recyclers to hold onto metals for at least 15 days, or get a photo of the person trying to sell the metal.

It calls for a more detailed description of metals being sold and requires scrap-metal dealers to pay anyone selling metal with a check instead of cash, payable at least 10 days after the transaction.



## Coffee and Conversation

Got ideas to make Rancho San Diego a better place?  
Join Supervisor Jacob at an informal community coffee!

June 29, 2007 at 8:30 a.m.  
Rancho San Diego Library  
11555 Via Rancho San Diego  
Rancho San Diego

# 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).

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We hope to hear from you soon!

May

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