

Santa Cruz County Fire Protection Districts Response Times, Mutual Aid, and Consolidation

Summary

Santa Cruz County is currently served by ten fire protection districts, two city fire departments, County Fire, and Cal Fire (State agency). The number of these agencies has decreased over the last 30 years as agencies with many similarities and nearby borders have consolidated to provide better coverage and increased fiscal responsibility. The levels of independence from each other have also declined dramatically. The current districts have achieved consistent response times in the county. This was achieved through the use of the dispatch services provided by Santa Cruz Regional 911 Center (Netcom) and the negotiated mutual aid agreements between fire agencies.

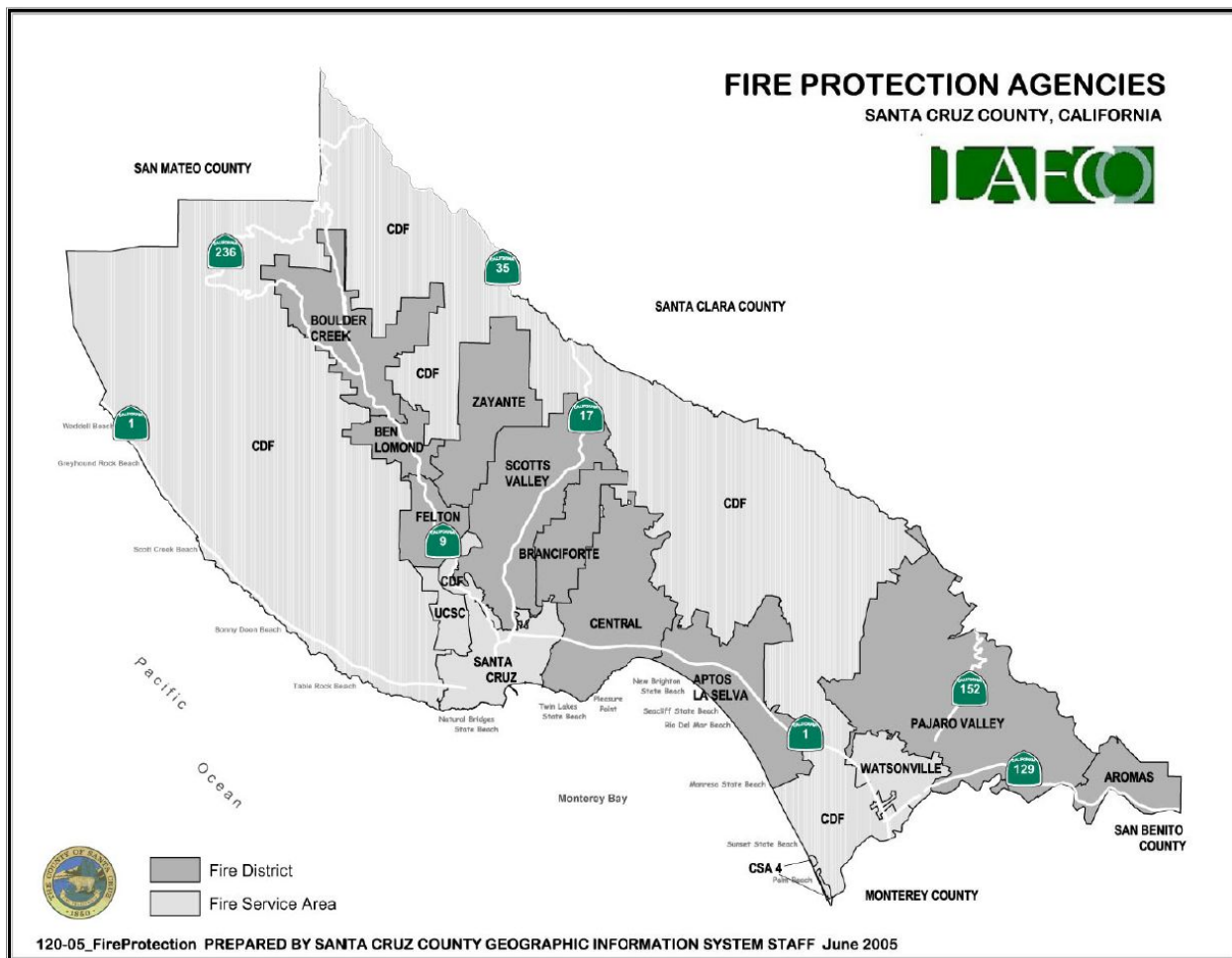
The existence of interlocking, overlapping "mutual aid" agreements between the districts and departments, combined with Regional 911 dispatch services, have in effect created a virtual single emergency and fire response agency in the urban areas of the county. The name on the side of the equipment responding to a 911 call is not the most important fact about the response. The consistent level of training and speed of response are the most important factors of all responses.

The Grand Jury chose to focus on two issues relating to nine fire protection districts in the County: responsiveness to service calls and potential opportunities for increased consolidation.

The Grand Jury found that the response times for both fire and medical calls are within desired parameters for all agencies investigated. We also found that several districts would benefit from increased shared services or consolidation.

Background

The cities of Capitola and Scotts Valley and the most heavily populated portions of the unincorporated area of Santa Cruz County are currently served by ten fire protection districts: [Aptos/La Selva](#), [Ben Lomond](#), [Boulder Creek](#), [Branciforte](#), [Central](#), [Felton](#), [Pajaro Valley](#), [Scotts Valley](#), and [Zayante](#). The Aromas Tri-County Fire Protection District also serves a portion of Santa Cruz County, however since the majority of the district lies in the counties of Monterey and San Benito, it was excluded from this investigation. These districts deliver Fire Suppression, Fire Prevention, and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) to their residents. See [Appendix A](#) for detailed information about each district, [Appendix B](#) for dispatch numbers for each district, and [Appendix C](#) for district statistics.



Source: Santa Cruz County LAFCo: Countywide Service Review, 2005.^[1] Note: The UCSC Fire Department has since merged with the City of Santa Cruz Fire Department

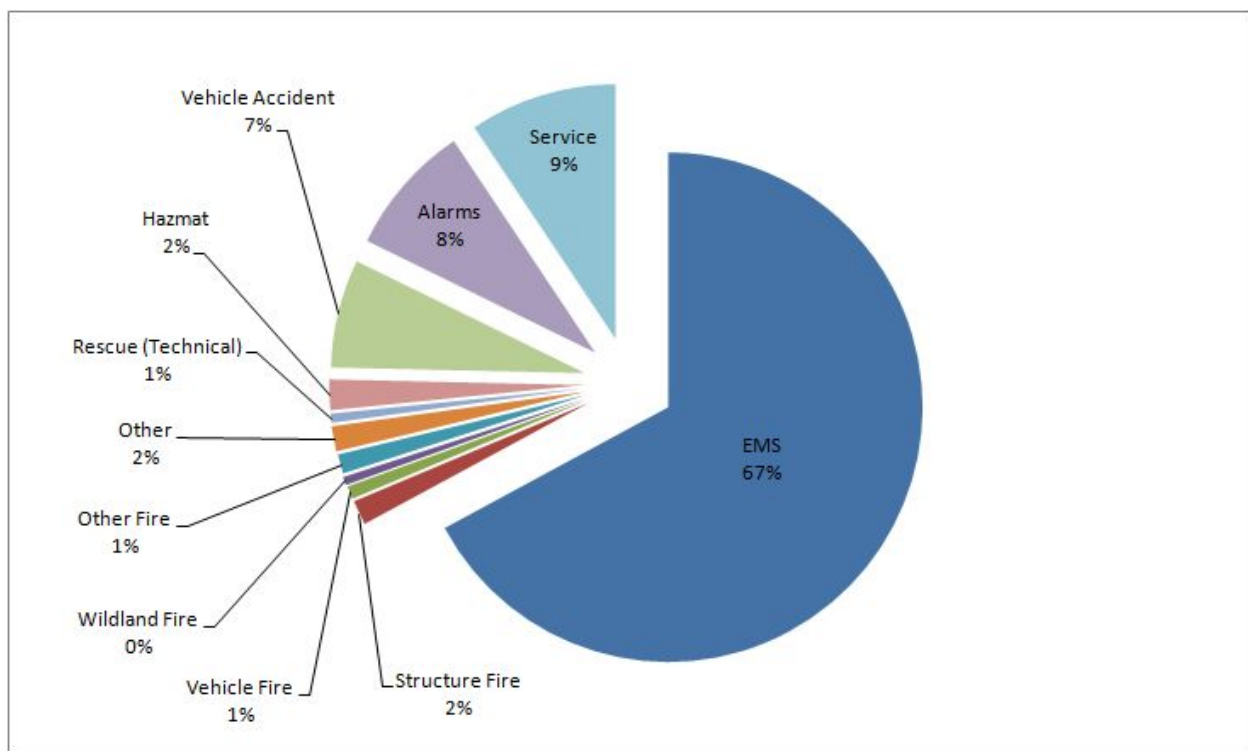
Fire districts are governed by independent boards of directors elected by district voters. These boards manage their own budgets, including the allocation of reserve funds for use in fiscal emergencies. Special districts are one of the few types of government agencies that have declined in number over the last two decades. An emphasis on efficient service delivery and fiscal responsibility are the primary reasons special district boards have initiated most of their 150 consolidations and mergers in the state.^[2] There are also examples of boards forming special, limited purpose Joint Powers Authorities (JPA) for specific shared purposes. For example all of the Los Angeles County Fire departments are forming a countywide fire training JPA to share the costs of training while increasing regional standardization.^[3]

The boundaries of and Sphere of Influence (SOI) for each of the various districts are determined by the Santa Cruz County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), which conducts Countywide Service Reviews in accordance with California Government Code Section 56430.^[4] LAFCO most recently reviewed fire districts in 2005,^[1] with an additional South County Fire Study^[5] in 2007.

Many of these fire districts were formed from the consolidation of neighboring districts. The two largest of these districts were formed in such a manner: Central Fire Protection District through the consolidation of Live Oak, Soquel, and Capitola Fire Protection Districts; and Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District from the merger of Aptos and La Selva Beach Fire Districts. Most recently, the resignation of its fire chief and the anticipated benefits of combining services led the University of California Santa Cruz Fire Department to consolidate with the city of Santa Cruz Fire Department.

Fire districts respond to a variety of calls, including good-will service calls, hazardous materials, EMS, and fires. In 2014, EMS calls accounted for more than 65% of calls to the fire districts in Santa Cruz County. To serve the large number of medical calls, the larger districts (Aptos, Central, and Scotts Valley) established policies to staff each engine with a certified paramedic. This allows firefighters, who routinely arrive on scene prior to the ambulance, to render Advanced Life Saving (ALS) care and improve outcomes for residents.

Santa Cruz County Fire District 911 Calls by Type (2014)



Source: [Appendix B](#)

Santa Cruz Regional 911 Dispatch Center (a.k.a. NETCOM)

Beginning in 1996 Santa Cruz County consolidated all of the local dispatch centers, with the exception of Cal Fire, California Highway Patrol (CHP), and the city of Scotts Valley Police Department (SVPD), into a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) providing public safety dispatch. This new agency, the Santa Cruz Regional 911 Dispatch Center (Netcom), is located in the city of Santa Cruz. Netcom dispatches the local fire districts and departments, the ambulance services in the county, and local law enforcement (with the

exception of Scotts Valley Police Department). The consolidation of these services into a centralized location also provides a site for an emergency command center. This center allows officials from a variety of agencies to work together during a natural disaster or other major countywide emergency.

For fire and EMS dispatching, Netcom uses Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) software. The CAD system allows the local fire protection districts to determine exactly how and when they will respond to the various types of fire and EMS calls. The districts work together through mutual aid agreements and coordinate their responses through additional agreements between the Fire Chief's Association and the Emergency Medical Services Integration Authority (EMSIA). When a fire or EMS call comes in, the CAD system requests the appropriate apparatus, such as water tenders or ladder trucks as needed, from neighboring districts.

Netcom is currently working with California Highway Patrol and Monterey County on the implementation of a text-to-911 system. This will allow hearing-impaired and vocally-impaired individuals and those in sensitive situations, such as domestic violence or home invasion, to contact emergency services through their mobile phone's text messaging system in lieu of a voice call. There are some concerns from alternative dispatch centers in the area that are not currently prepared to update their infrastructure to handle text-to-911. However Netcom is willing to handle those texts and transfer the information to the appropriate dispatch agencies.

Scope

The Grand Jury gathered data on response times, number of paid and volunteer firefighters, coverage area, population density, and budget for each fire protection district in Santa Cruz County. Using this data we compared the districts by type: volunteer or full-time. The gathered data and comparisons were used in interviews with representatives of the local fire protection districts and county officials. The Grand Jury also toured several local fire districts and the county dispatch center. We gathered data on possible consolidation scenarios, including benefits and challenges.

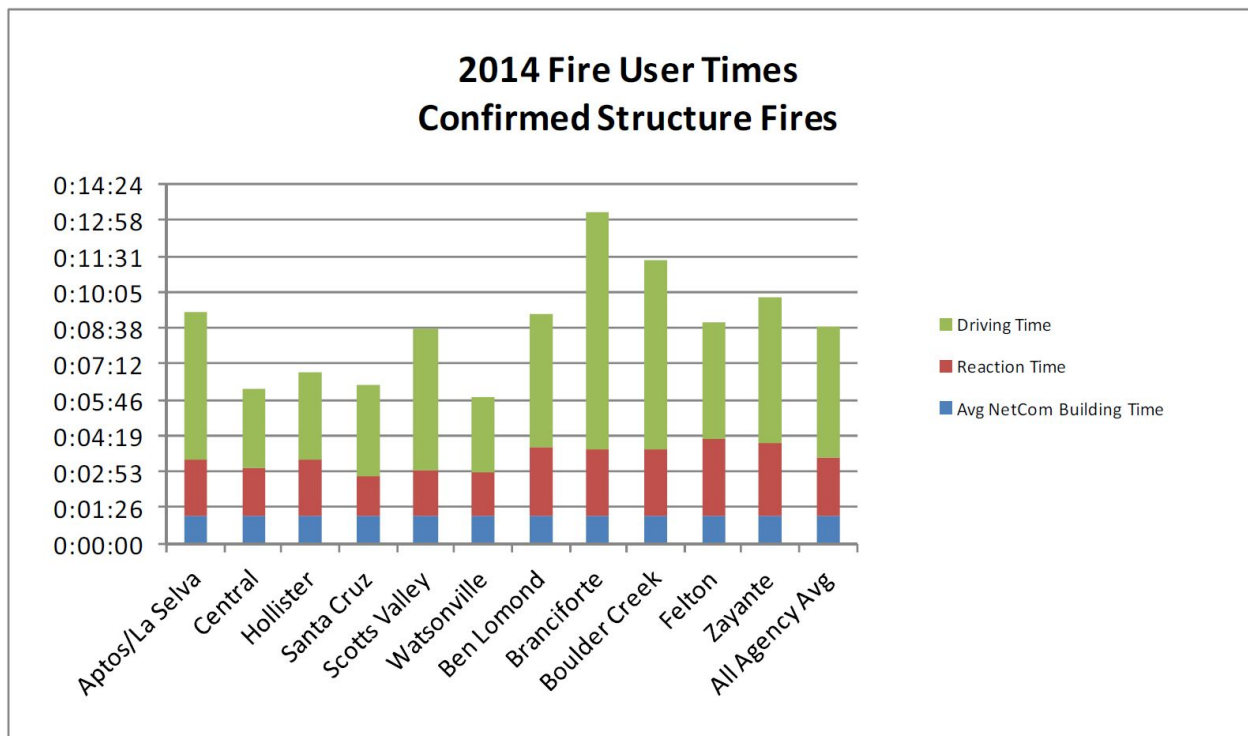
Our main questions were:

- What standards does each fire protection district use to rate/determine response time performance?
- Which fire protection districts are responding below established standards? What are these districts doing to remedy the situation?
- Are the fire protection districts adequately staffed for their population and/or coverage area?
- Would there be operational and fiscal benefits of consolidating fire protection districts?
- Would there be operational or fiscal disadvantages to consolidation?
- What factors prevent further consolidation projects from going forward?

Investigation

Response Times

Aptos La Selva Fire Protection District (Aptos Fire), Central Fire Protection District (Central Fire), and Scotts Valley Fire Protection District (Scotts Valley Fire) have adopted response standards similar to National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1710 section 5.2.4.1.1.^[6] Each agency has the goal of having the first engine company respond within 6 minutes for a minimum of 90% of EMS calls, and a second engine on the scene in less than 12 minutes for confirmed structure fire calls. Analytical software^[7] automatically issues reports for the district administration whenever a response is outside the target range. All three full-time districts met the goal of 90% compliance during the 2013/14 year.



Source: Santa Cruz Regional 911 Annual Report 2014^[9]

The volunteer districts, Boulder Creek Fire Protection District (Boulder Creek Fire), Ben Lomond Fire Protection District (Ben Lomond Fire), Felton Fire Protection District (Felton Fire), Zayante Fire Protection District (Zayante Fire), and Branciforte Fire Protection District (Branciforte Fire), have not adopted targeted response goals similar to the full-time districts. NFPA recommends different standards and methodologies for volunteer districts.^[8] The volunteer agencies all respond in the shortest time possible, usually arriving to EMS calls before county ambulance service. In the case of medical emergencies, the five volunteer districts are strategically located so that they are able to respond rapidly to calls within their coverage area. Several of the districts maintain a smaller vehicle stocked with medical gear to use on medical calls, which cuts down on response time by allowing the initial responder to take the vehicle to the scene

immediately and have other volunteers report directly to the scene. The volunteer districts utilize “sleeper programs” that encourage volunteers to live at the station in exchange for being on call several nights of the week, to reduce response times during the night.

Mid-County Region: Consolidating Aptos La Selva and Central Fire Protection Districts

Multiple reports have recommended the consolidation of Aptos Fire and Central Fire into one agency. In 1975, the Sierra Report^[10] studied how consolidations could improve the use of tax funds while maintaining or improving levels of service in Santa Cruz County. The Central Fire District and Aptos/La Selva Fire District JPA/Consolidation Study of January 2000 re-examined the issue and once again called for consolidation. These recommendations, however, were not adopted.

Central Fire and Aptos Fire share a border and have similar geography and tax bases.^[11] Factors in past reports supporting consolidation are still valid. Additionally, since Aptos’ Station 1 is less than one mile from the boundary with Central, consolidation of the two districts would allow Central’s Station 3 to be relocated to a more strategic site.

Shared Training

Currently the two districts share training programs, which take place at various locations. This joint training has familiarized the firefighters of the two districts with each other, helping them to work together more smoothly on shared calls. It has also helped the districts recognize the need to standardize the equipment and setup of their vehicles, thereby reducing confusion on the scene when firefighters respond to a call. Aptos Fire is developing plans to build a rescue structure at Station 1 that can be incorporated into shared training as needed.

Battalion Chiefs and Division Chiefs

There are differences in the utilization of personnel between Aptos Fire and Central Fire. Central Fire has Battalion Chiefs who serve as incident commanders and operate on 56-hour shifts. The Battalion Chiefs do not do administrative work. By contrast, Aptos Fire has Division Chiefs who serve in much the same capacity, but work a standard 40-hour week and do administrative work while at the station. This reduces the administrative load on the Aptos Fire Chief and the need for office staff.

The 2000 report, cited above, suggested that in a merged district the Battalion and Division Chief jobs could be restructured so that no positions would be eliminated, while maintaining the same coverage levels for each district. This would provide the benefit of reducing the number of office staff needed, as the Division Chiefs would take on additional administrative tasks.^[11]

Shared Services

The two districts currently share three major services: Information Technology (IT), Fleet Maintenance Service, and Fire Prevention Inspection services. IT is provided through a contract with Pagoda Technologies. The computer servers are hosted at

Central Fire's administration building. Without the shared services, each district would pay separately for the same service. Central Fire maintains a Fleet Maintenance Service. Aptos Fire contracts with Central Fire's Fleet Maintenance Service for maintenance and repair of fire apparatus, saving money and time.

When both Central Fire's and Aptos Fire's fire marshals retired in 2013, the two districts created an ad hoc committee, made up of selected directors from each Board. This committee oversees and evaluates an interim Cooperative Fire Prevention Program (CPP), which is still under evaluation as of this writing. Overseen by the Aptos Fire deputy fire marshal, this program has brought both districts up to date on their fire prevention inspections and saved them the cost of added positions. It has also enabled firefighters from both districts to adopt a more formal set of guidelines for conducting commercial inspections, leading to a more uniform experience for local businesses.

Currently these agencies are considering a proposal to create a three-year program under the leadership of the deputy fire marshal from Aptos Fire, with each district operating its own office staff and contracting its own inspectors. In the second year of the program, the proposal will add a half-time public education position which will help educate local communities about fire prevention. This position would become full-time in the third year. Central Fire would be responsible for 55% of the costs of this program and Aptos Fire would be responsible for 45%. The ad hoc committee recommended this proposal to the boards of the two districts in the second week of May 2015,^[12] with an expected vote on the program during the second week of June.

Three factors favor consolidation:

- Existing shared services (Fleet Maintenance, IT services, and Fire Prevention Program)
- The absence of a business manager in Central Fire and the presence of one in Aptos Fire
- High correlation between job duties of Battalion Chiefs and Division Chiefs

Barriers to Consolidation

There are, however, significant factors that impede consolidation, as explained below:

- Differences in Salary and Benefits Packages
- Local Board Issues
- The Impact of Public Records Act (PRA) Requests on District Finances and Staff Time

Differences in Salary and Benefits Packages: Aptos Fire has a higher pay scale, while Central Fire provides lifetime health benefits for employees and their families. These differences could be mitigated by the formation of a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) that could retain the pay and benefits packages of current firefighters. All new hires would share a pay and benefits schedule agreed upon by both districts and their respective collective bargaining units. A JPA was successfully used in 1987 during the formation of Central Fire which consolidated Live Oak Fire Protection District, Soquel Fire Protection District, and Capitola Fire Protection District.^[13]

Local Board Issues: The 2014 retirement of the Aptos Fire Chief presented an opportunity for consolidation. At that time there were feelers put out by individual members of each board, but nothing about consolidation was brought to a vote. A member of Central Fire's Board approached an Aptos Fire Board member^[14] about opening up a dialogue concerning potential shared opportunities. Instead, the Aptos Fire Board chose to continue their search for a new Fire Chief. Concurrently, the Central Fire Board of Directors chose not to pursue formal discussions of consolidation with Aptos Fire during this window of opportunity. It is worth noting that a member of Central Fire's Board did propose opening a discussion with Aptos Fire but the proposal did not become a motion for board action.^[15] During this period the Fire Chiefs were, in general, supportive of consolidation efforts. However, Board action would have been required for any consolidation efforts to move forward.

Events observed by Grand Jury members and attested to by interviewees have led the Grand Jury to conclude that policies and procedures regarding conflicts of interest and board member interactions in district operations were insufficiently defined. The relationship between the two districts has been strained by board member interference in operational matters across agencies. That interference is a barrier to consideration of consolidation by the two agencies.

During the course of our investigation Aptos Fire updated their Board of Directors Policy and Procedures Manual^[16] to include specific guidelines that limit board member interference in operational issues and that require board members to follow official channels when requesting information of other agencies.

The Impact of PRA Requests on District Finances and Staff Time: Interviewees from both districts informed the Grand Jury that they are struggling with excessive and unreasonable Public Records Act (PRA) requests. An Aptos resident has issued numerous PRA requests to both Aptos Fire and Central Fire (20 requests of Aptos Fire and 20 requests of Central Fire). Many of these requests concern the shared information technology services. These requests began in 2013 and continued through May 2015.

In the January 2015 Board meetings, each district detailed the amount of work time and financial resources that have been consumed in dealing with these and other PRA requests. Specifically they noted that during 2014, Aptos Fire and Central Fire spent 133 hours and 156 hours, respectively, dealing with PRA requests.^{[17][18]} Aptos Fire developed a job description for a temporary public records employee to assist with the PRA requests.

Officials from both districts mentioned that in many instances the PRA requests were vague and required multiple attempts by staff to confirm the specifics of the requested data. This was in addition to the time needed to locate, review, and protect confidential portions so the data could be delivered to the requestor. To help increase the clarity of requests and facilitate the district's response to PRA requests Central Fire adopted procedures to streamline its PRA request process.^[19]

Fiscal Impact of PRA Requests (2013-2015)

	# PRA Requests	Cost of PRA Requests	Cost of Extra Staff	Total
Aptos Fire	22	\$11,000 (133 hrs)	\$20,000	\$31,000
Central Fire	42	\$12,688 (200 hrs)	Unknown	\$12,688
Total	64	\$23,688 (333 hrs)	\$20,000	\$43,688

Source: Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District Board of Directors minutes 1/8/15^[17] see [Appendix D](#) for more information

The combination of local board issues and the high volume of PRA requests have placed fiscal and operational strains on both districts, hindering current and future large scale cooperation or consolidation, and consuming public resources.

Sphere of Influence: Branciforte Fire and Scotts Valley Fire

In 2014, Branciforte Fire received 157 calls, the lowest number of calls for service in Santa Cruz County (see [Appendix B](#) for information about fire calls). By contrast, for 2009-2013 Branciforte Fire's payroll budget was higher than that of Boulder Creek Fire, the largest and most active volunteer fire district in the county.^{[20][21][22][23][24]} Branciforte Fire's significant spending on salary and benefits occurs even though their Fire Chief has voluntarily forgone his salary since 2011.

Boulder Creek Fire and Branciforte Fire Comparison

	Boulder Creek Fire	Branciforte Fire
Number of Volunteers (2013)	42	41
Number of Calls (2014)	384	153
Average Wages	\$6,473	\$7,328
Average Retirement and Health Cost	\$570	\$2,643
Total Wages	\$323,634	\$344,410
Total Retirement and Health Cost	\$28,513	\$124,201
Total	\$352,147	\$468,611

Source: California State Controller Office^[25] See [Appendix B](#) for 2014 call numbers

Note: Branciforte financials do not include any salary for a fire chief.

Part of the reason for the disproportionately high salary and benefits packages in Branciforte Fire is that the district staffs their station with a full-time firefighter year round. The district places a high value on this, since unlike the majority of volunteer fire districts in the county, Branciforte Fire does not have many local businesses within its

boundaries where volunteers could work. As a result there are very few volunteers who are available to respond to calls during business hours. Currently, only five volunteers live inside the district. The rest reside outside the district. More than twenty years ago Branciforte Fire elected to have paid staff at their station.

Branciforte Fire's annual budget ranges from \$600,000 to \$700,000. In 2013 the district paid out \$344,410 in total wages and \$124,201 in retirement and health costs. This leaves from \$131,389 to \$231,389 to pay for non-salary operations of the district. Currently Branciforte Fire is operating with minimal financial reserves.

Like most fire districts in the county Branciforte is part of the Santa Cruz County Fire Agency Insurance Group (SCCFAIG) JPA. Salaried and volunteer firefighters are covered under SCCFAIG. Due to higher than average salaried staffing for a volunteer district, Branciforte has a limited financial reserve to deal with any catastrophic workers' compensation cases. If one large or multiple smaller workers' compensation claims occur in the district, the premiums that would result could financially cripple the district.

Branciforte Fire has several options for its future, including:

- Consolidation of Branciforte Fire with Scotts Valley Fire
- Managerial oversight provided by Scotts Valley Fire
- Maintaining the current arrangement

Consolidating Branciforte Fire with Scotts Valley Fire

Branciforte Fire exists within the Scotts Valley Fire Sphere of Influence (SOI).¹¹ If they were consolidated, the new district would have two staffing options for the Branciforte Fire station. The first option is to bring staffing levels up to that of a full engine company akin to Scotts Valley Fire Station 1 and Station 2. The cost to do this would be prohibitive as it would exceed the combined revenues generated from Branciforte Fire and Scotts Valley Fire.

The second option is to run Branciforte Fire as a full-time volunteer station. While this would produce fiscal savings, the drop in response coverage is something that is unacceptable to the Board of Directors of Branciforte Fire. If the station were to be closed, dispatching response units from Scotts Valley Fire and other neighboring districts, would result in EMS response times greater than 10 minutes for portions of the district.

Managerial Oversight Provided by Scotts Valley Fire

One solution to maintain the current level of service in Branciforte Fire, while achieving some savings in the long run, would be for Scotts Valley to oversee the operations of the district. This would eliminate the Branciforte Fire Chief position, yet preserve the local governing body and maintain the current coverage goals.

Scotts Valley Fire could also add its volunteers to those in Branciforte. This would increase the number of volunteers available for calls and reduce administrative costs for Branciforte Fire. It would also increase cooperation between the two agencies, facilitating a future consolidation.

Scotts Valley's Fire Chief would be working with two boards and two budgets. This may present contractual and administrative complications. Additionally, in order to function seamlessly, both districts would need to align their training programs.

Maintaining the Current Arrangement

Residents in Branciforte Fire currently pay an annual assessment of \$100 to provide for fire service. With the economy starting to recover, the district could ask residents to increase that tax to help offset the rising costs of California Employment Retirement System (CalPERS), insurance premiums, and to provide a salary for the Fire Chief, should the current Chief or a new one require a salary. However, even if a tax increase were approved, the potential of a crippling workman's compensation claim could still pose excess financial liability to the district. The lack of sufficient financial reserve and a contingency plan need to be addressed.

San Lorenzo Valley Region

Consolidation of the four fire protection districts in the San Lorenzo Valley (SLV) was examined in a 1994 LAFCO study.^[26] The study found that if all four districts were consolidated, the main fiscal benefit would be in the reduction of duplicate administrative staff (secretaries and fire chiefs). The main service benefit would occur from unified training, planning, staffing, and operations. However, ultimately, the report concluded:

Bigger is not automatically better. While it is difficult to argue with the idea that administrative efficiencies can be achieved with consolidation by elimination of duplicate or overlapping functions, there is also the danger that the spirit, accomplishments of volunteer efforts and community support shown in small communities could be affected in a negative way through consolidation. Local leadership and community involvement and support are important factors which must be taken into consideration.^[26]

The fire districts in SLV currently train together. Boulder Creek trains with Ben Lomond and Zayante trains with Felton. Additionally, advances in technology and the formation of Netcom have decreased response times from neighboring districts and increased interagency cooperation.

Reductions in the salaries of Fire Chiefs and administration present potential savings but there are also potential expenses relating to CalPERS. Currently both Boulder Creek Fire and Felton Fire are members of CalPERS, while Ben Lomond Fire and Zayante Fire are not. Any consolidation effort would necessitate that the newly consolidated district apply for membership in CalPERS, something the revenue of Zayante Fire and Ben Lomond Fire cannot currently support.

The communities surrounding the volunteer fire districts in SLV have a significant community investment in their individual districts. The events and fundraisers for the districts are staples of the local community. Combining these local districts could have a significant negative impact on the level and nature of community support.

The volunteer agencies expressed concerns to the Grand Jury regarding the future availability of volunteers. Due to the rising cost of living in Santa Cruz County, some agencies are having difficulties recruiting and retaining volunteers. If this situation continues, it could negatively impact one or more of the districts in SLV.

While consolidation is something the Grand Jury generally advocates, in the case of SLV, it should only be used if staffing or financial needs threaten the viability of one or more districts.

Santa Cruz County LAFCO

The last Countywide Service Review for fire districts in Santa Cruz County occurred in 2007. California Government Code Section 56425(g) states, "On or before January 1, 2008, and every five years thereafter, the commission shall, **as necessary**, review and update each sphere of influence."^[4]

Lack of funding has prevented Santa Cruz County LAFCO from performing scheduled Countywide Service Reviews (CSR) or Sphere of Influence (SOI) studies. A study will need to be conducted by LAFCO before any consolidation can go forward.

Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) Software Replacement

The Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system is an integral part of the successful mutual aid between fire districts. The current CAD software will no longer be supported after 2018^[9] and Santa Cruz Regional 911 (Netcom) has not yet decided on replacement software or details of payment.

Netcom staff plans to hire a consultant to assist in the CAD selection process in the 2015/16 fiscal year and has asked the fire and police agencies to form an evaluation team when staff has compiled the information.^[27]

Netcom staff is researching and evaluating replacement systems, speaking with vendors, and testing demonstration systems. All this is being done to build a preliminary requirements list for the new CAD system. It is planned that a Request for Information (RFI) will go out sometime during 2015, with the goal of having the new CAD system in place in fiscal year 2017/18.^[9]

It is estimated that a new CAD system will cost approximately \$1,500,000. Netcom officials recommend budgeting for estimated payments of \$293,690 annually starting in 2017/18 and continuing through 2024/25 to fund a new CAD system.^[28]

Findings

F1. The consolidation of Fire and Emergency Medical System dispatch services at the Santa Cruz Regional 911 center and mutual aid agreements between districts have created an efficient virtual single service district for those services in the entire county.

Response from the Board of Directors, Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District:
PARTIALLY DISAGREE - "Partially agree" is not permitted, but the Board does partially agree with Finding No. 1. The consolidation of the Fire and Emergency Medical System dispatch services at the Santa Cruz Regional 911 center coupled with mutual aid/automatic aid agreement are major components that have created and efficient virtual single service fire district. However, as mentioned in the Report at Page 4, other factors such as continued cooperation amongst Santa Cruz Fire Chiefs via the formation of a Santa Cruz County Fire Chiefs Association and the County EMSIA have also contributed. In addition, there is a long history of California being the national leader in cooperative fire assistance agreements through guidance of FIRESCOPE and Cal OES are also additional components that have helped create a seamless single service delivery.

Board vote 5-0 Partially Disagree (Finding 1)

Response from the Board of Directors, Ben Lomond Fire Protection District:
PARTIALLY DISAGREE - Partially Agree:

While dispatch services have been streamlined and become very efficient, it has created some potential for lag time in non-emergency responses; especially for the volunteer agencies. Career fire agencies respond to non-emergency requests quite often, in some areas as much as 12% of responses are for non-emergency, public Service requests/calls; in fact in Santa Cruz County that percentage stands at 9%. The lag time comes into play for volunteer agencies, where some dispatchers are very hesitant to dispatch a non-emergency call during "non-office" hours, such as early morning hours... because said agencies are not "staffed" around the clock.

Just because an incident is classified as non-emergency does not mean that there is no urgency needed in mitigating a problem. A water leak may be a non-emergency incident, however, unchecked it can and often will lead to flooding and can result in significant damage.

County Communications (NetComm) should dispatch ALL non-emergency requests in the same manner; if a career agency would/will respond to such an incident during "off-hours", and is therefore dispatched immediately; the same must be the case for volunteer agencies.

Response from the Board of Directors, Branciforte Fire Protection District:
AGREE - [July 16, 2015 MINUTES NEW BUSINESS 10.1] ... After discussion all agree on F1, ...

Response from the Board of Directors, Boulder Creek Fire Protection District:
AGREE

Response from the Board of Directors, Central Fire Protection District:
AGREE - Board vote 4-2 Agree

Response from the Board of Directors, Felton Fire Protection District:
AGREE

Response from the Board of Directors, Scotts Valley Fire Protection District:
AGREE

Response from the Board of Directors, Zayante Fire Protection District:
AGREE

F2. Shared services between fire districts have improved response times, training, and services across the county.

Response from the Board of Directors, Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District:
PARTIALLY DISAGREE - While Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District agrees that shared service between the districts has improved services, we are not in agreement that this is "county wide". Aptos/La Selva will continue to support increasing shared services where it is financially sound and increases service to our constituents and Santa Cruz County as a whole.

Board vote 5-0 Partially Disagree (Finding 2)

Response from the Board of Directors, Ben Lomond Fire Protection District:
AGREE - Partially Agree:

Unsure exactly how "shared services" would lead to improved response times; shared Services are usually prevention, maintenance and in the case of the county, dispatch Services. A centralized dispatch probably improves call handling times, which would lead to more efficient dispatching, however travel times are what they are... any improvements due to dispatching would show in the "call-taking" time where an incident is triaged, located and then appropriate agency(ies) are dispatched.

Shared training and joint purchasing have been around for a little while now and lead to better efficiency in skills and more purchasing power with apparatus and equipment. These would not have any affect, however, on response times (with the exception of perhaps newer, safer apparatus).

What could lead to improvements in response times, from a "shared service" point of view would be/are improvements to mutual aid, such as the concepts of "boundary drops" where the closest apparatus is dispatched, regardless of jurisdiction.

Response from the Board of Directors, Branciforte Fire Protection District:
AGREE - [July 16, 2015 MINUTES NEW BUSINESS 10.1] ... After discussion ... all agree on F2, ...

Response from the Board of Directors, Boulder Creek Fire Protection District:
AGREE

Response from the Board of Directors, Central Fire Protection District:
PARTIALLY DISAGREE - The Board of Directors voted 4-2 to partially disagree. Shared services in training, fleet maintenance, computer services and joint purchasing have created efficiencies within the specific discipline for those districts who participate in such programs. Automatic and Mutual Aid agreements do provide improved response times for those who participate in such agreements between agencies.

Response from the Board of Directors, Felton Fire Protection District:
AGREE

Response from the Board of Directors, Scotts Valley Fire Protection District:
AGREE

Response from the Board of Directors, Zayante Fire Protection District:
AGREE

F3. Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District and Central Fire Protection District did not take advantage of the opportunity to pursue consolidation when the Aptos Fire Chief retired in 2014.

Response from the Board of Directors, Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District:
DISAGREE - The opportunity to consolidate or not consolidate fire districts is not dependent on one fire chief retiring. As mentioned in the Report at Pages 6-7, consolidation is a complex issue that must weigh current service efficiencies against future service efficiencies, financial and contractual obligations, not to mention the political differences of opinion such as local control, subsidized Services, etc.
Board vote 5-0 Disagree (Finding 3)

Response from the Board of Directors, Central Fire Protection District:
AGREE - Board of Directors voted 5-1 to agree.

F4. The differences in pay scales and benefits between Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District and Central Fire Protection District are issues that must be addressed prior to consolidation.

Response from the Board of Directors, Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District:
AGREE - As mentioned in the Report at Pages 6-7, consolidation is a complex issue that must weigh current service efficiencies against future service efficiencies, financial and contractual obligations, not to mention the political differences of opinion such as local control, subsidized services, etc.
Board vote 5-0 Agree (Finding 4)

Response from the Board of Directors, Central Fire Protection District:

AGREE - The Board of Directors voted 4-2 to agree.

- F5.** Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District and Central Fire Protection District have a common problem resulting from excessive and unreasonable Public Records Act requests. These requests have negatively impacted the daily administration, budgets and operations of the districts.

Response from the Board of Directors, Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District:

AGREE - Board vote 5-0 Agree (Finding 5)

Response from the Board of Directors, Central Fire Protection District:

AGREE - The Board of Directors voted 6-0 to agree.

- F6.** The lack of enforced policies and procedures regarding conflicts of interest and board member interactions in district operations, has interfered with the ability of the Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District and Central Fire Protection District to consider further shared services or consolidation.

Response from the Board of Directors, Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District:

PARTIALLY DISAGREE - Prior to the issuance of the Grand Jury Report, Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District has adopted a Board Policy Manual that defines board member interactions and a code of conduct.

Board vote 5-0 Partially Disagree (Finding 6)

Response from the Board of Directors, Central Fire Protection District:

PARTIALLY DISAGREE - The Board of Directors voted 4-2 to partially disagree. The Board of Directors of the Central Fire Protection District do not believe there has been any enforcement issues with policy and procedure regarding conflict of interest of Board Member interactions in District Operations within the Central Fire District. Current operational functions and services such as Fleet Maintenance, Information Technology has continued to functioned with minimal effect. In support of this observation is correspondence from the Grand Jury Foreperson indicating the belief that the issue does not lay with Central Fire District. The disruptive behavior caused by Board Member interference does inhibit further consideration.

- F7.** The joint Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District and Central Fire Protection District Cooperative Fire Prevention Program is successful and could benefit the county if made permanent.

Response from the Board of Directors, Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District:

PARTIALLY DISAGREE - "Partially agree" is not permitted, but the Board does partially agree with Finding No. 7. The CPP appears that it could be a benefit to both districts.

Board vote 5-0 Partially Disagree (Finding 7)

Response from the Board of Directors, Central Fire Protection District:

PARTIALLY DISAGREE - To date the CPP has been successful in identifying organizational practices and procedures needed to streamline joint operations. The agencies continue to address those organizational differences. The program was never intended to serve County residents other than in those served by the two fire districts. A much larger organization including a different governance model would be required to expand services to the whole county. In addition the economic capacity to fund increased service levels and lack of service expectation of smaller agencies makes it unlikely they would become users of such a proposed model. Board of Directors voted 6-0 to partially disagree[.]

- F8.** Expansion of the Central Fire Protection District's fleet services department is needed to allow a larger number of districts to contract with this service.

Response from the Board of Directors, Central Fire Protection District:

AGREE - The Board of Directors voted 6-0 to agree.

- F9.** Branciforte Fire Protection District's lack of a tangible reserve or funds to pay their Fire Chief leaves them vulnerable to insolvency, which would leave Branciforte residents without a fire district.

Response from the Board of Directors, Branciforte Fire Protection District:

PARTIALLY DISAGREE - [July 16, 2015 MINUTES NEW BUSINESS 10.1] ... After discussion ... all partially agree on F9...

- F10.** Scotts Valley Fire Protection District is the most logical partner for consolidation or shared services with Branciforte Fire Protection District.

Response from the Board of Directors, Branciforte Fire Protection District:

AGREE - [July 16, 2015 MINUTES NEW BUSINESS 10.1] ... After discussion ... all agree on F10.

Response from the Board of Directors, Scotts Valley Protection District:

AGREE

- F11.** The differences in policies and procedures of the four fire protection districts in the San Lorenzo Valley inhibit future consolidation.

Response from the Board of Directors, Ben Lomond Fire Protection District:

PARTIALLY DISAGREE - Partially Agree:

The San Lorenzo Valley fire districts, along with other stakeholders, such as Scotts Valley Fire, Cal-Fire and Branciforte Fire have created a "District Council" where various chief officers and or board members/administrators meet to discuss challenges facing these areas specifically. As direct result, "joint policies" have been formulated to address such concerns and bring all stakeholders into greater consistency with policies. These agencies also participate in joint training and

prevention details in an effort to increase inter-operability and efficiency.

The biggest inhibition to future consolidation of the SLV fire districts is that most districts serve as the sole representative of "local government" for said town (or geographic area). The fire stations serve as the meeting location for various civic groups active in those towns (or geographic areas). This creates a feel of autonomy for each town, all of whom are unincorporated; and serve as a great source of local pride. This has been alluded to in the previous Grand Jury report.

**Response from the Board of Directors, Boulder Creek Fire Protection District:
AGREE**

**Response from the Board of Directors, Felton Fire Protection District:
AGREE**

**Response from the Board of Directors, Zayante Fire Protection District:
AGREE**

F12. The continued success of Santa Cruz Regional 911 is dependant upon the successful replacement of the Computer Aided Dispatch software.

Response from the Board of Directors, Santa Cruz Regional 911:

AGREE - The current CAD system in use by SCR9-1-1 is Motorola Printrak CAD. This CAD system has served (and is continuing to serve) the community of Santa Cruz since 1996. It is a robust system that currently meets all of our User's needs. Motorola has informed SCR9-1-1 that they will no longer support this version of CAD past August 31, 2018, therefore it is imperative that a replacement product be purchased, installed, and functional prior to that date.

SCR9-1-1 staff has begun the process of investigating CAD systems in order to have enough information to develop a comprehensive Request for Proposal in order to acquire a replacement system.

Recommendations

R1. Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District and Central Fire Protection District should work together to merge and form a Mid-County Fire Protection District. (F1-F4, F7)

Response from the Board of Directors, Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District:

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED - The structure of the recommendation limits our answer to a timeframe of six months. We continue to be open to explore opportunities that are of mutual benefit to all fire districts which may or may not include consolidation.

Consolidation, in different forms, has been talked about in Santa Cruz County since the mid 1970's. Several Grand Jury reports and independent studies have addressed consolidation; however for a variety of reasons, consolidation has not occurred.

Consolidation is a complex issue that requires political will, labor support and

sound financial and contractual solutions. Aptos/La Selva will continue to endeavor to find increased areas of shared services.

Board vote 5-0 Will not be implemented (Recommendation 1)

Response from the Board of Directors, Central Fire Protection District:

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED - The Board of Directors voted 6-0: will not be implemented.

The feasibility of merging, consolidating or other enhanced models of governance has been studied several times since the publishing of the 1973 Sierra Report.

Most of the proposed efficiencies highlighted in the Sierra Report have been implemented.

Additional studies such as the 1986 - Hughes, Heiss report; 1992 - Mid County Consolidation Feasibility Study; 1993 - Ralph Anderson Report; 1994 - addendum to the Ralph Anderson Report and the extensive joint exploration in 2000 by the Aptos and Central Fire Boards have not resulted in a consolidation. In no era has consultant conclusions affected a governance determination suggesting the two Districts can provide enhanced services or significant savings as the product of a consolidation.

Extensive study has consistently concluded that the greatest economic savings results from Fire Station closure. Station distribution and response times are in line with or exceed our Standards of Coverage response time policy. Modest savings may be recognized through shrinking Administrative Staff but as the Cooperative Prevention model has highlighted – agencies are running at minimal levels and combining staff would only allow status quo service levels.

The concern for abdication of local control will inhibit further analysis until such a time as system distress or as yet unrealized significant benefit is demonstrated by the dissolution of independent Districts established by law to serve their community. Lastly, in the 14'-15' Grand Jury report it was observed on Page 11 that "bigger is not automatically better" as well as "local leadership and community involvement and support are important factors which must be taken into consideration". This sage advice is universal in its application.

- R2.** The governing bodies of Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District and Central Fire Protection District should adopt the three year plan for the Cooperative Fire Prevention Program. (F7)

Response from the Board of Directors, Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District:

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS - Aptos/La Selva has approved a three year plan for the CPP MOU with the understanding that Central Fire District has until December 10, 2015, to approve the MOU.

Board vote 5-0 Requires further analysis (Recommendation 2)

Response from the Board of Directors, Central Fire Protection District:

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS - The Board of Directors voted 4-2: Requires

further analysis.

This study has not been completed and requires ratification of a memorandum of understanding. Both agencies need agreement of financial terms and further evaluation on integration of policy and practices is ongoing. This process will take a minimum of 3-6 months to complete.

- R3.** Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District should create policies for receiving and responding to PRA requests. (F5)

Response from the Board of Directors, Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District:
HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED - Board vote 5-0 Has been implemented
(Recommendation 3)

- R4.** Central Fire Protection District should adopt and enforce clear and comprehensive conflict of interest regulations for Board Members. (F6)

Response from the Board of Directors, Central Fire Protection District:
HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE - The Board of Directors voted 6-0 "Has not been implemented but will be implemented in the near future.

The Board of Directors is reviewing updated language to the Board of Directors by-laws at its August 2015 Board meeting with scheduled ratification at the September 2015 Board meeting.

- R5.** Central Fire Protection District should explore expansion of its fleet maintenance services to support contracts with a greater number of local fire districts. (F8)

Response from the Board of Directors, Central Fire Protection District:
HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED - The Board of Directors has voted 6-0 to agree.

- R6.** Branciforte Fire Protection District should negotiate with Scotts Valley Fire Protection District for the provision of managerial oversight of administration and operations by Scotts Valley. (F1, F2, F9, F10)

Response from the Board of Directors, Branciforte Fire Protection District:
HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED - The Branciforte Fire Protection District Board of Directors signed a Managerial Services Agreement with Scotts Valley at our next Board of Directors meeting on September 17th 2015. The administration and operations by Scotts Valley FPD for the Branciforte FPD will begin on October 1 2015.

Response from the Board of Directors, Scotts Valley Protection District:
REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS - Upon receipt of a request by the Branciforte Fire Protection District Board of Directors, the Scotts Valley Fire Protection District Board of Directors will negotiate, in earnest, for the provision of managerial oversight of administration and operations by Scotts Valley FPD for the Branciforte

FPD. The timeframe will be based on Branciforte FPD's initiation of a request.

R7. The four fire protection districts in the San Lorenzo Valley should further align their policies and procedures in anticipation of future consolidation. (F1, F2, F11)

Response from the Board of Directors, Ben Lomond Fire Protection District:

HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED - Has Been Implemented:

Please see the response above regarding the District Council. The various agencies and stake holders have been meeting and working to more closely align policies and practices; in addition to joint purchasing, joint training and joint fire prevention activities.

Being made up of a majority of volunteer agencies does restrict funding and can make for slower progress; however significant gains have been made and will continue.

Future steps could include such ideas as boundary drops added into mutual aid practices and shared equipment specifications for such equipment as fire hose, protective clothing and self-contained breathing apparatus .

Response from the Board of Directors, Boulder Creek Fire Protection District:

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED - The Boulder Creek Fire Protection District agrees with findings 1, 2 and 11 of the 2014-2015 Santa Cruz County Grand Jury report. Due to this fact Recommendation 7 will not be implemented by the Boulder Creek Fire Protection District.

Response from the Board of Directors, Felton Fire Protection District:

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED - The Felton Fire Protection District will not be implementing this recommendation. On page 12 of this Grand Jury report, the report reads, "While consolidation is something the Grand Jury generally advocates, in the case of the SLV, it should only be used if staffing or financial needs threaten the viability of one or more districts."

If staffing, financial or some other issue arises that causes one or more of the SLV fire districts to not be viable, this would be the time to consider consolidation of one or more of the SLV fire districts.

Response from the Board of Directors, Zayante Fire Protection District:

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED - Due to the diversity and differences within the four fire protection districts in the San Lorenzo Valley, we, the Board of Directors of the Zayante Fire District do not believe it feasible to consider consolidation at this time. Each district encompasses distinct differences in population, geography, and relationships with the people within the communities that would make it difficult for a singular entity to reasonably control or manage all the districts.

Further, the wealth of knowledge and understanding of the communities held by the existing management in each district, would be lost if consolidated.

While consolidation might look good on paper, we believe it would ultimately be not cost effective, a detriment to response times, difficult supervision over long

distances and lack of understanding of the people at each station, their skills, needs, schedules and moral[e].

- R8.** Santa Cruz Regional 911 should replace the Computer Aided Dispatch software prior to the 2017/18 fiscal year. (F12)

Response from the Board of Directors, Santa Cruz Regional 911:

HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE - With the current CAD system in use by SCR911 having an "end of life" date of August 31, 2018, SCR911 will have a new CAD system purchased, installed, and functional prior to the end of FY 17/18. The process is a long, complicated one that has already begun. SCR911 management staff has developed a realistic timeline to ensure that the new CAD system is ready to go by the time the current system is end of life. SCR911 Board of Directors has been involved in the planning of the Long Term Equipment Replacement schedule for many years, which has included a CAD replacement project. Funding for this project has been also discussed as part of our long term plan.

Commendations

- C1.** The Grand Jury commends Santa Cruz Regional 911 for providing exemplary service in dispatching fire, police and EMS, and for working to establish a text-to-911 system.
- C2.** The Grand Jury commends both Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District and Central Fire Protection District for creating the Cooperative Prevention Program.
- C3.** The Grand Jury Commends Central Fire Protection District for creating a district policy for responding to Public Records Act requests.

Responses Required

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Findings</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>	<i>Respond Within/ Respond By</i>
Board of Directors, Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District	F1 - F7	R1 - R3	90 Days 9/24/2015
Board of Directors, Central Fire Protection District	F1 - F8	R1, R2, R4, R5	90 Days 9/24/2015
Board of Directors, Scotts Valley Fire Protection District	F1, F2, F10	R6	90 Days 9/24/2015
Board of Directors, Branciforte Fire Protection District	F1, F2, F9, F10	R6	90 Days 9/24/2015
Board of Directors, Boulder Creek Fire Protection District	F1, F2, F11	R7	90 Days 9/24/2015
Board of Directors, Ben Lomond Fire Protection District	F1, F2, F11	R7	90 Days 9/24/2015
Board of Directors, Felton Fire Protection District	F1, F2, F11	R7	90 Days 9/24/2015
Board of Directors, Zayante Fire Protection District	F1, F2, F11	R7	90 Days 9/24/2015
Board of Directors, Santa Cruz Regional 911	F12	R8	90 Days 9/24/2015

Definitions

- **ALS:** *Advanced Life Support* - Category of first responder treatment that goes beyond that of an EMT. Requires Paramedic equivalent training and certification by local governing agencies to implement.
- **ALSFPD:** *Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District*
- **Aptos Fire:** *Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District*
- **Auto Aid:** Fire Agencies providing coverage on fire or medical calls for neighboring districts/departments. The current Auto Aid system is assisted by the Computer Aided Dispatch System and based upon agreements between Fire Districts/Departments as well as EMSIA and the Fire Chiefs Association. Also known as Mutual Aid
- **Ben Lomond Fire:** *Ben Lomond Fire Protection District*
- **BLFPD:** *Ben Lomond Fire Protection District*
- **BCFPD:** *Boulder Creek Fire Protection District*
- **Boulder Creek Fire:** *Boulder Creek Fire Protection District*
- **BFPD:** *Branciforte Fire Protection District*
- **Branciforte Fire:** *Branciforte Fire Protection District*
- **CAD:** *Computer Aided Dispatch* - Software system used to dispatch law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services
- **Cal Fire:** *California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection*
- **CalPERS:** *California Public Employees Retirement System* - The State agency responsible for managing public agency retirement funds through contracts with local agencies
- **Central Fire:** *Central Fire Protection District*
- **CFPD:** *Central Fire Protection District*
- **CPP:** *Cooperative Prevention Program* - Joint fire prevention program developed by Aptos and Central Fire Protection Districts
- **CSR:** *Countywide Service Review*
- **EMS:** *Emergency Medical Services*
- **EMSIA:** *Emergency Medical Services Integration Authority* - Joint Powers Authority formed in Santa Cruz to oversee Emergency Medical Services and Advanced Life Support in Santa Cruz County
- **EMT:** *Emergency Medical Technician*
- **Felton Fire:** *Felton Fire Protection District*
- **FFPD:** *Felton Fire Protection District*

- **Haz Mat:** *Hazardous Material* - Usually references the Santa Cruz County Hazardous Material Team
- **JPA:** *Joint Powers Authority*
- **LAFCO:** *Local Agency Formation Commission*
- **LAR:** *Large Animal Rescue*
- **LRA:** *Local Responsibility Area* - Portion of land where the County is responsible to provide fire protection
- **Mutual Aid:** Fire Agencies providing coverage on fire or medical calls for neighboring districts/departments. The current Mutual Aid system is assisted by the Computer Aided Dispatch System and based upon agreements between Fire Districts/Departments as well as EMSIA and the Fire Chiefs Association. Also known as Auto Aid.
- **NETCOM:** Santa Cruz County's Regional Dispatch Center, also referred to as SCR911.
- **NFPA:** *National Fire Protection Association* - An international nonprofit organization that advocates for fire fighting codes and standards as well as research, training, and education. [<http://www.nfpa.org/about-nfpa>]
- **PRA:** *Public Records Act*
- **Pajaro Valley Fire:** *Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District*
- **PVFD:** *Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District*
- **RFP:** *Request for Proposals*
- **Santa Cruz Fire:** *City of Santa Cruz Fire Department*
- **SCFD:** *City of Santa Cruz Fire Department*
- **SCHMIT:** *Santa Cruz Hazardous Materials Interagency Team* - Formed by the County of Santa Cruz and the cities of Capitola, Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, and Watsonville to respond to hazardous material incidents.
- **SCCFAIG:** *Santa Cruz County Fire Agency Insurance Group* - Joint Powers Authority that insures the fire districts against workman's compensation claims
- **SCR911:** *Santa Cruz Regional 911* - Santa Cruz County's Regional 911 Dispatch Center, also referred to as NETCOM.
- **SLV:** *San Lorenzo Valley*
- **SOI:** *Sphere of Influence* - The probable physical boundaries and service areas of a local agency, as determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission.
- **SRA:** *State Responsibility Area* - Portion of land where the State of California is responsible to provide fire protection.
- **Scotts Valley Fire:** *Scotts Valley Fire Protection District*

- **SVFPD:** *Scotts Valley Fire Protection District*
- **Watsonville Fire:** *City of Watsonville Fire Department*
- **WFD:** *City of Watsonville Fire Department*
- **Zayante Fire:** *Zayante Fire Protection District*
- **ZFPD:** *Zayante Fire Protection District*

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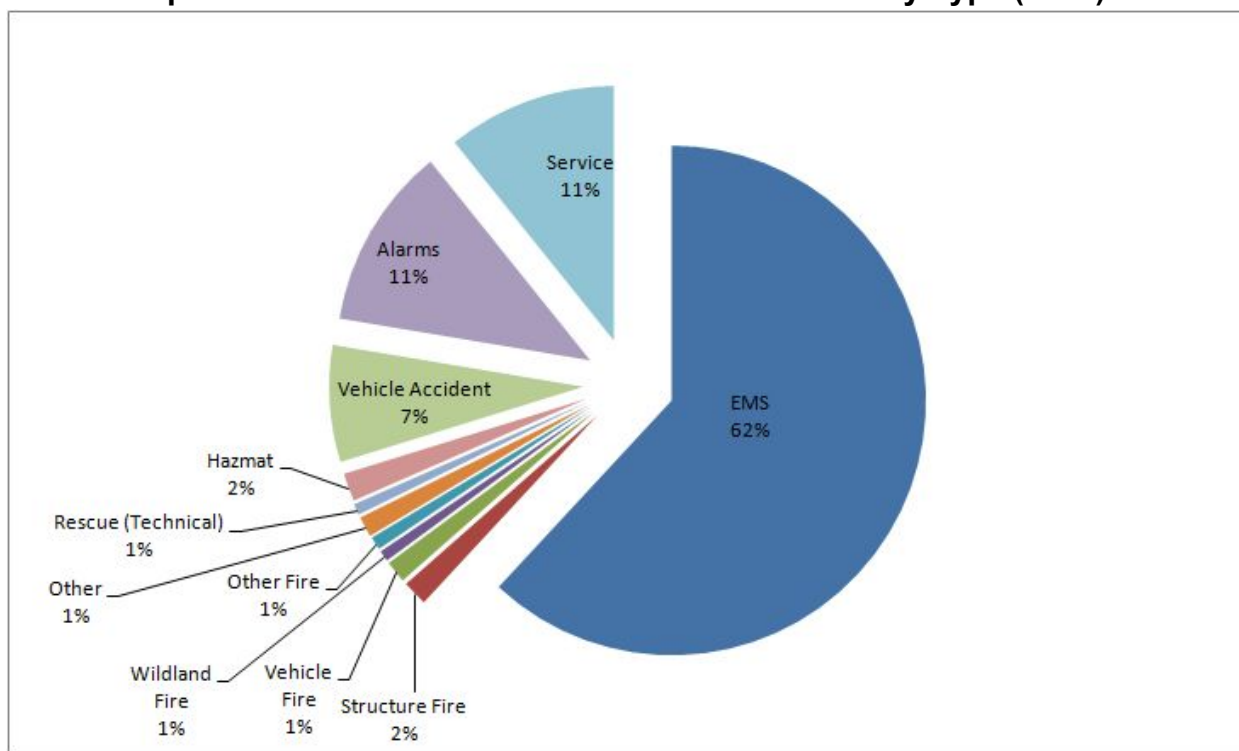
Appendix A

Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District

The Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District (ALSFPD) was formed in 1986 by consolidating the Aptos Fire Protection District and the La Selva Beach Volunteer Fire Protection District. ALSFPD serves the unincorporated areas of Aptos Village, Seacliff, Rio del Mar, Seascape, La Selva Beach, Aptos Hills-Larkin Valley, and Day Valley. The district has three stations located in Aptos, Rio del Mar and La Selva Beach. Station 1 is located less than a mile from the border between the district and Central Fire Protection District. Station 1 also houses the administration office and training space that the district plans to expand in the near future.

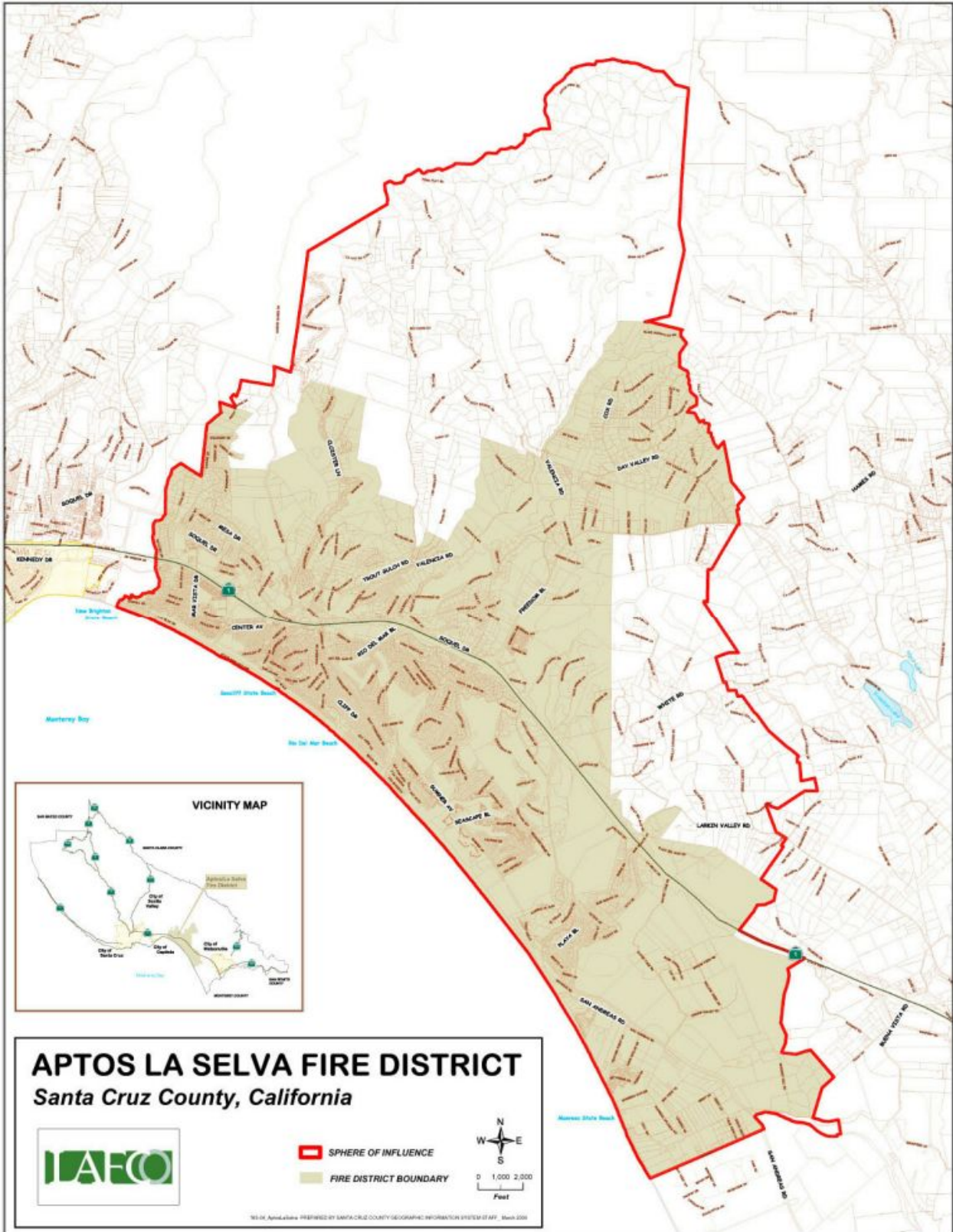
According to the 2010 census the combined population of the ALSFPD area is approximately 25,000. For the 2014/15 fiscal year the district had total revenues of \$9,592,109 and total appropriations of \$10,409,332.^[29] The district has approximately 39 employees, including 30 firefighters, three division chiefs, and one business manager.^[30]

Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District 911 Calls by Type (2014)



Source: [Appendix B](#)

The coverage area is divided into the suburban demand zone and the rural interface demand zone. Responses are monitored based on self imposed standards that were adopted in 2005^[31] with a goal of 90% or more of the calls being responded to within targeted response times. These standards set a first response time of 6 minutes for all medical emergencies in the suburban areas and 8 minutes in the rural areas. For all structure fires the district requires a second engine (frequently provided from another district via mutual aid) and a Duty Chief to respond in under 12 minutes.



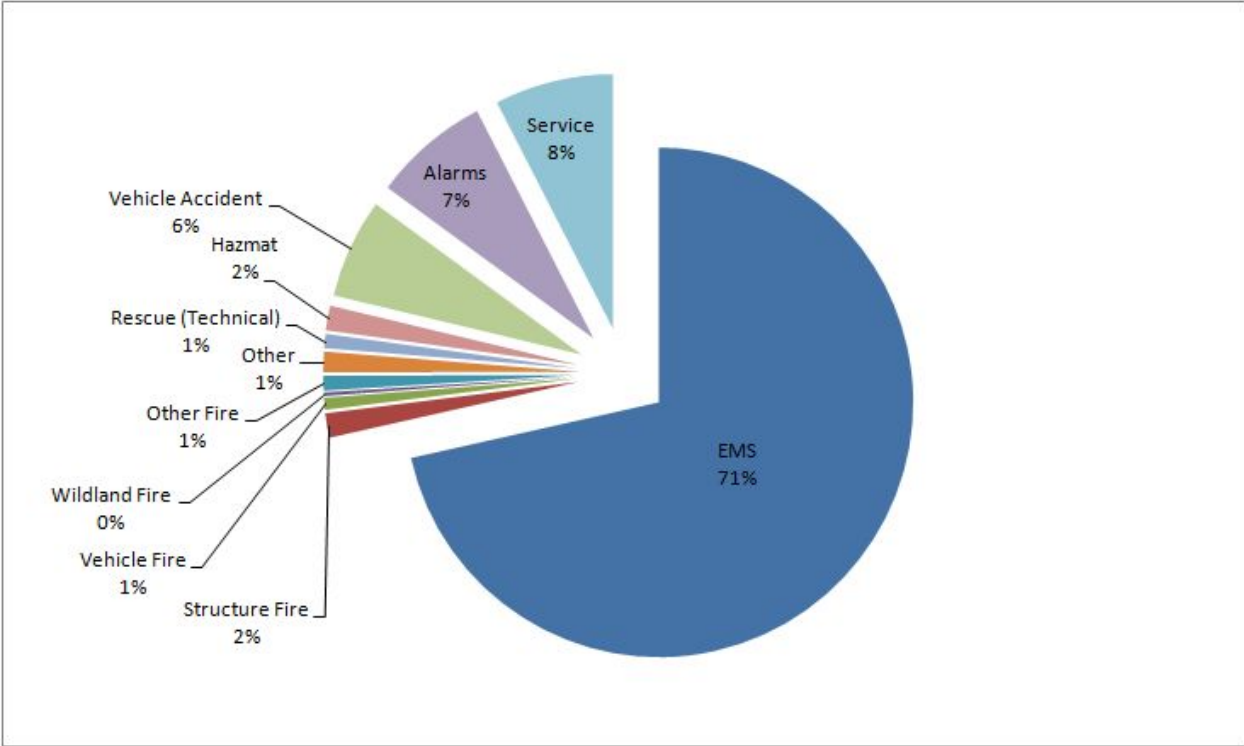
Source: Santa Cruz County LAFCo: Countywide Service Review, 2005^[1]

Central Fire Protection District

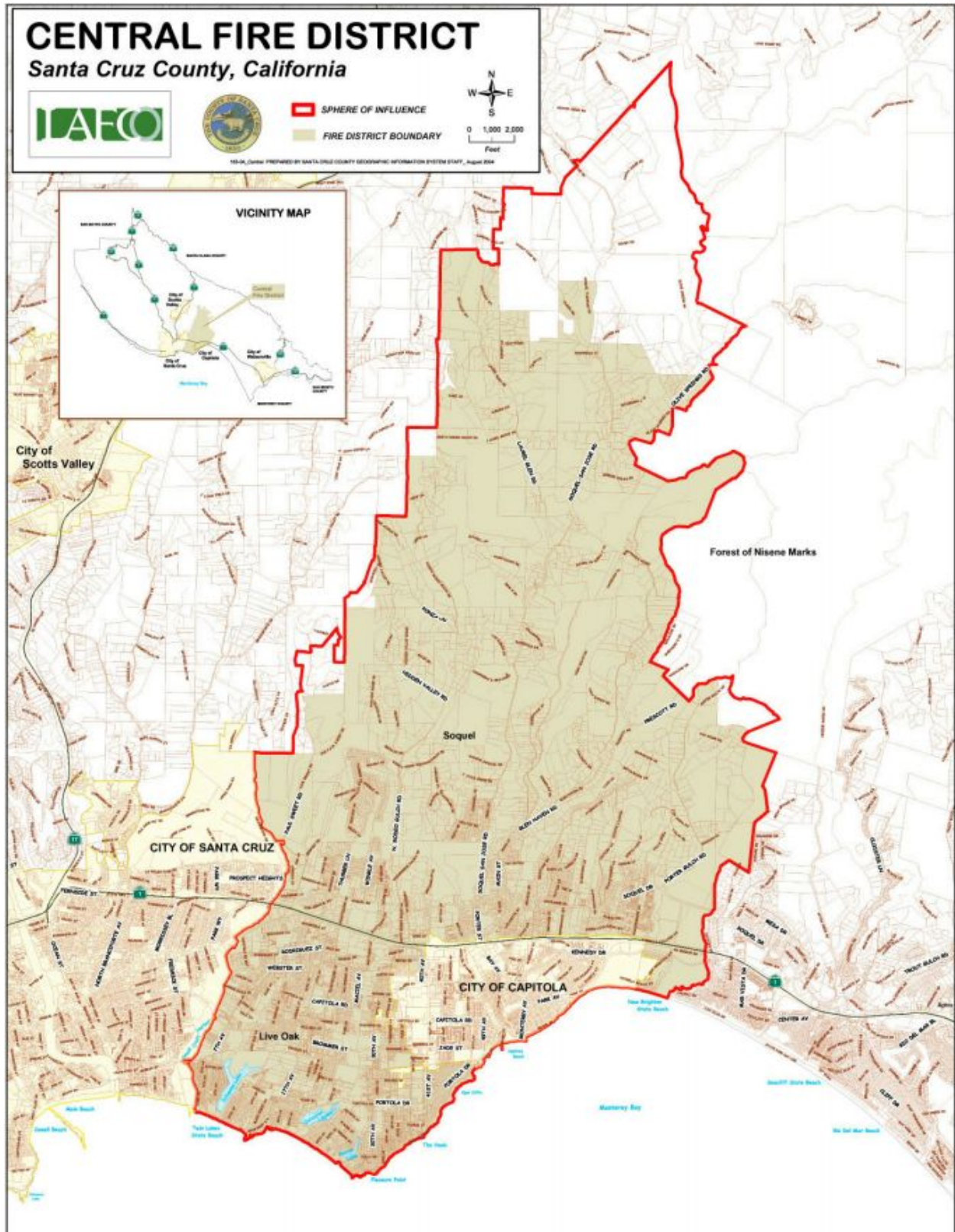
Central Fire Protection District (CFPD) was formed in 1987 after the consolidation of the Live Oak, Soquel, and Capitola fire protection districts. The district serves the unincorporated areas of Live Oak and Soquel as well as the city of Capitola. The district has four stations located in Live Oak, Santa Cruz Gardens (Thurber Lane), Soquel, and Capitola. The district’s administration building is next to Station 1 in Live Oak. Housed within the administration building is the shared Information Technology (IT) center for both ALSFPD and CFPD. These services are provided through a contract with Pagoda Technologies.^[32] The district also owns a burn trailer, used for training, that is housed in Watsonville near the airport, and a fleet services garage which performs maintenance on its large vehicles as well as those of other local fire agencies such as ALSFPD, Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District (PVFPD), CSA-4 Pajaro Dunes, and City of Santa Cruz Fire Department (SCFD).

According to the 2010 census the combined population of the areas serviced by the district is approximately 55,000 people.^[33] For the 2014/15 fiscal year the district had total revenues of \$13,919,696.^[34] The district has approximately 44 full-time firefighters and 13 paid call firefighters.^[35]

Central Fire Protection District 911 Calls by Type (2014)



Source: [Appendix B](#)



Source: Santa Cruz County LAFCo: Countywide Service Review, 2005^[1]

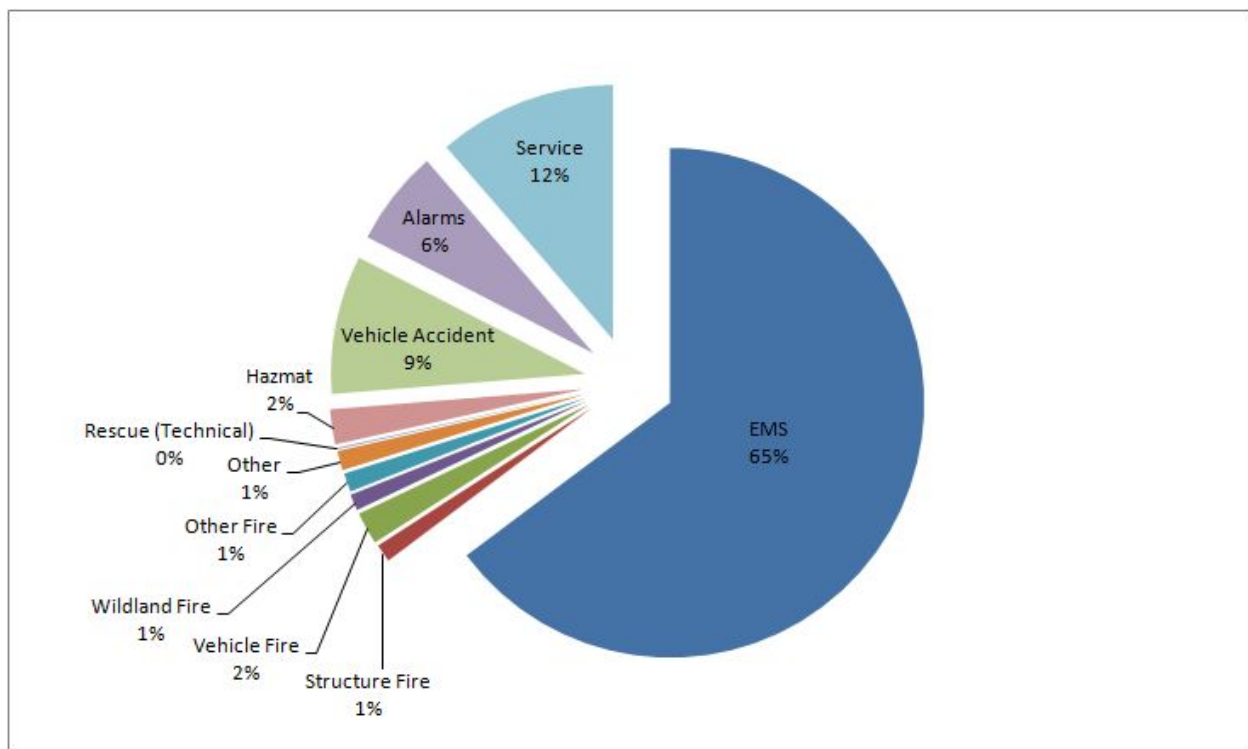
In 2014 CFPD had the second highest call volume in the county, after the city of Santa Cruz, representing 20% of the total calls for service dispatched from the Santa Cruz Regional 911 center (SCR911).^[36] Response times are reported to the board of directors in the monthly meeting packet. The district has a goal of responding to urban medical calls in 4 to 6 minutes.^[37] The goal is to have the first engine on site in less than 6 minutes for all fire events.

Scotts Valley Fire Protection District

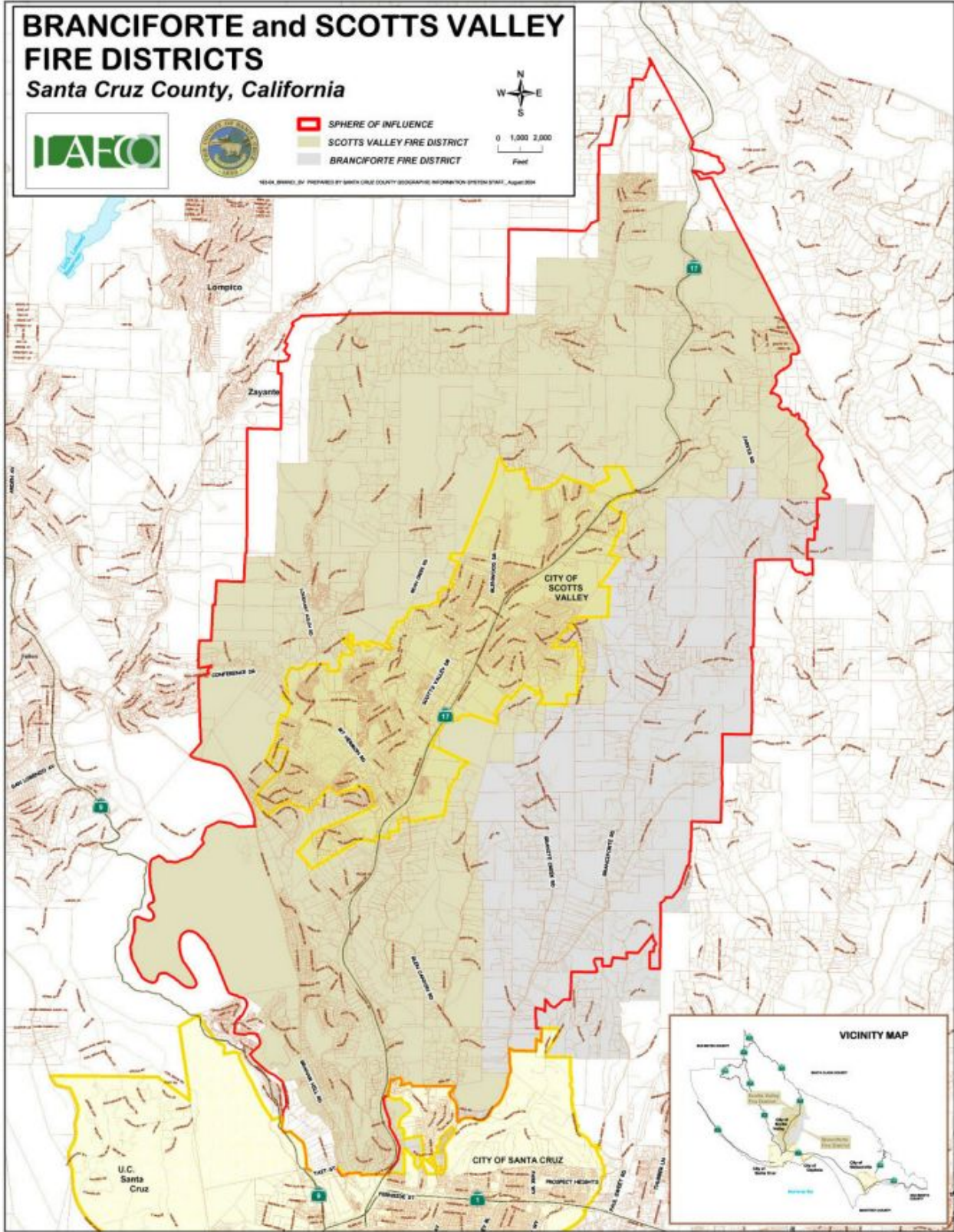
The Scotts Valley Fire Protection District (SVFPD) was formed in 1958. The district serves the city of Scotts Valley and the surrounding unincorporated areas stretching from Santa Cruz City limits in the south to Laurel Road in the north. It is the primary agency responding to vehicular accidents on Highway 17 up to the summit. The district operates two stations, one on Erba Lane and the other on Glenwood Drive. Station 1 is staffed with a minimum of 4 firefighters (1 battalion chief, 1 captain, 1 engineer and 1 firefighter/paramedic). Station 2 is staffed with a minimum of 3 firefighters (1 captain, 1 engineer, and 1 firefighter/paramedic). The district also has 15 paid call firefighters who assist full-time firefighters, and also serve as a hiring pool. The paid call firefighters do not respond to calls for EMS or incidents on Highway 17. A paid call firefighter may occasionally serve with full time firefighters as a fourth person on an engine crew during the day.

In the 2013/14 fiscal year SVFPD received total revenue of \$5,386,671 and total expenditures of \$5,339,340, leaving their end of the year fund balance at \$566,064.^[38]

Scotts Valley Fire Protection District 911 Calls by Type (2014)



Source: [Appendix B](#)



Source: Santa Cruz County LAFCo: Countywide Service Review, 2005^[1]

SVFPD is unique in that it houses the Santa Cruz County Hazardous Materials Interagency Team (SCHMIT) and all the associated equipment and apparatus at its Glenwood Drive station. SCHMIT was formed in 2001 via a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the County of Santa Cruz, the Cities of Santa Cruz, Watsonville, Capitola, Scotts Valley, UCSC, and State Parks.^[39] There are 24 local Hazardous Materials technicians representing ALSFPD, CFPD, SVFPD, City of Santa Cruz Fire Department (SCFD), and City of Watsonville Fire Department (WFD). SVFPD uses grant money to secure and maintain needed apparatus.

Standards of coverage as adopted by SVFPD set the goal of responding to 90% of medical calls within 6 minutes and responding to fire calls with a 14 person crew within 10 minutes. When there is a response that is outside the targeted goal it is automatically sent to the Fire Chief for review. The district has been able to position its stations such that they are within 5 miles of any call location within the district.

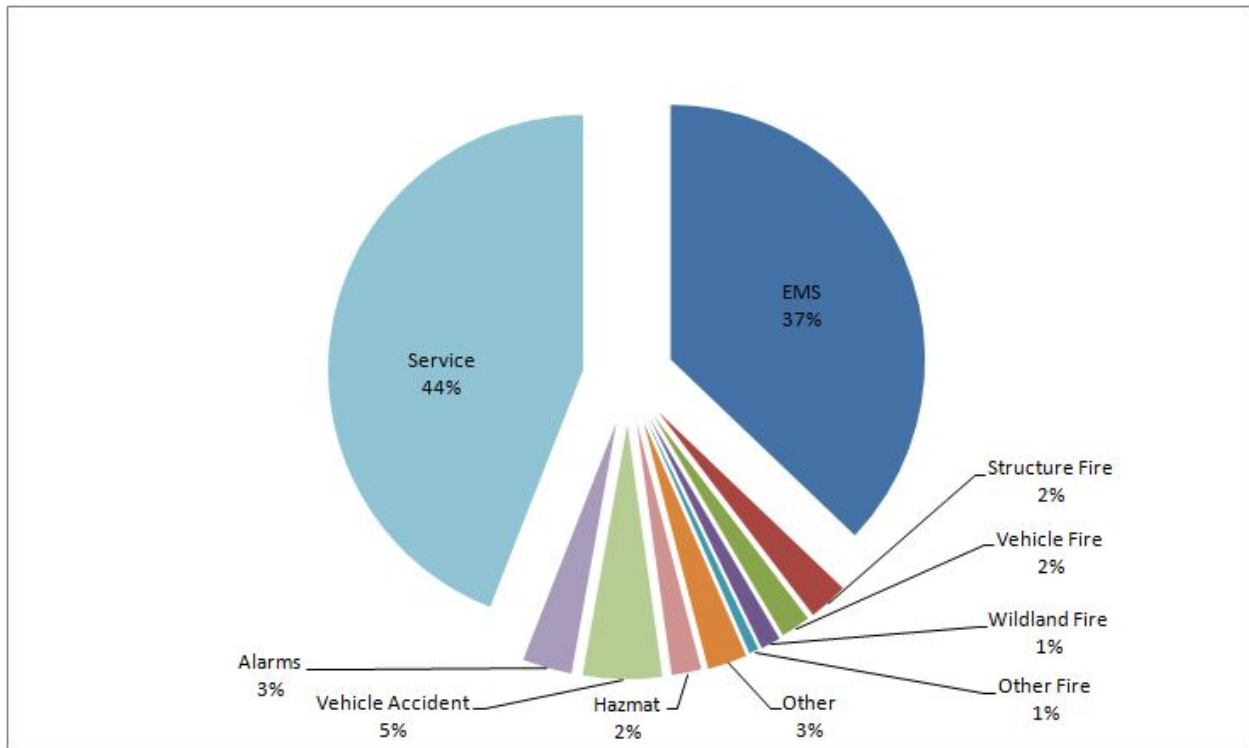
Branciforte Fire Protection District

The Branciforte Fire Protection District (BFPD) was formed when it split off from the SVFPD. The district serves the area east of the city of Scotts Valley and north of the city of Santa Cruz. The district is home to nearly 3,500 people and the Mystery Spot, a local tourist attraction. There are two stations within the district: Station 1 is centrally located and contains the majority of the district's apparatus. This station is staffed year-round by a full-time firefighter, and is home to the district's sleeper program, in which volunteers are encouraged to live at the station in exchange for several nights per week of on duty status. The second station is located in the northern portion of the district and houses an unstaffed engine. Station 2 is only staffed during emergencies or storms that could potentially cut off the northern portion of the district from Station 1.

BFPD volunteers keep their gear with them in their personal vehicles, and generally respond directly to the incident. This cuts down on response time, since volunteers reach the incident by responding directly from home or work. Full-time staff respond with the appropriate vehicle, enabling action to be taken as soon as the required number of firefighters and vehicles arrive at a call. When incidents are closer to Station 2, volunteers or paid staff who are cleared to drive the engine often stop at the station to pick up the engine on their way to the incident.

BFPD uses volunteers who are employed by fire districts beyond Santa Cruz County. As a result they have a higher than average number of paramedic-trained volunteers. This enables the district to perform Advanced Life Support (ALS) unlike most other volunteer agencies in Santa Cruz County. Through an agreement with Santa Cruz County EMSIA, and subject to regulations and training by county Health Services Agency, BFPD is cleared to carry more potent life-saving drugs on their vehicles. However, BFPD's ALS service is dependent on having a volunteer on the call who is currently a trained paramedic and approved to function as such in Santa Cruz County.

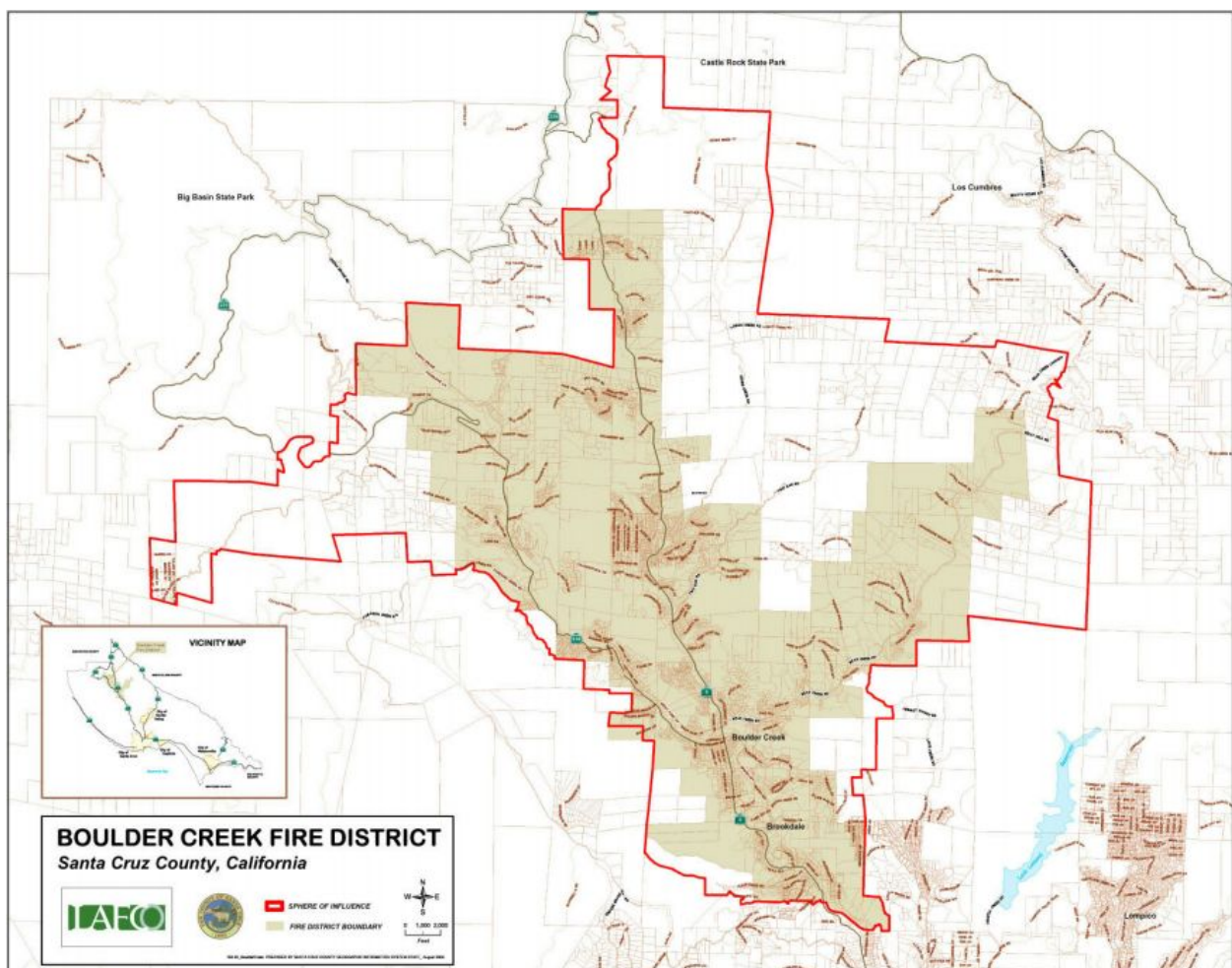
Branciforte Fire Protection District 911 Calls by Type (2014)



Source: [Appendix B](#)

Boulder Creek Fire Protection District

The Boulder Creek Fire Protection District (BCFPD) was formed in 1923 and serves the communities of Boulder Creek and Brookdale as well as the surrounding areas. The district is served by two stations. Station 1 is located at the junction of Route 9 and Highway 236 in the middle of Boulder Creek, while Station 2 is located off Highway 236 south of the Boulder Creek Golf and Country Club. Station 1 operates year-round and houses the majority of the district's equipment, as well living quarters for five volunteers who live at the station in exchange for work at the station. Station 2 is shared with Cal Fire which staffs it only during peak fire season. BCFPD receives the largest call volume of all the volunteer districts in the county: 782, of which 457 are EMS calls.^[36] Due to the high percentage of EMS calls, BCFPD runs a medical unit that it dispatches to rescue and EMS calls, rather than responding with a fire engine or truck.

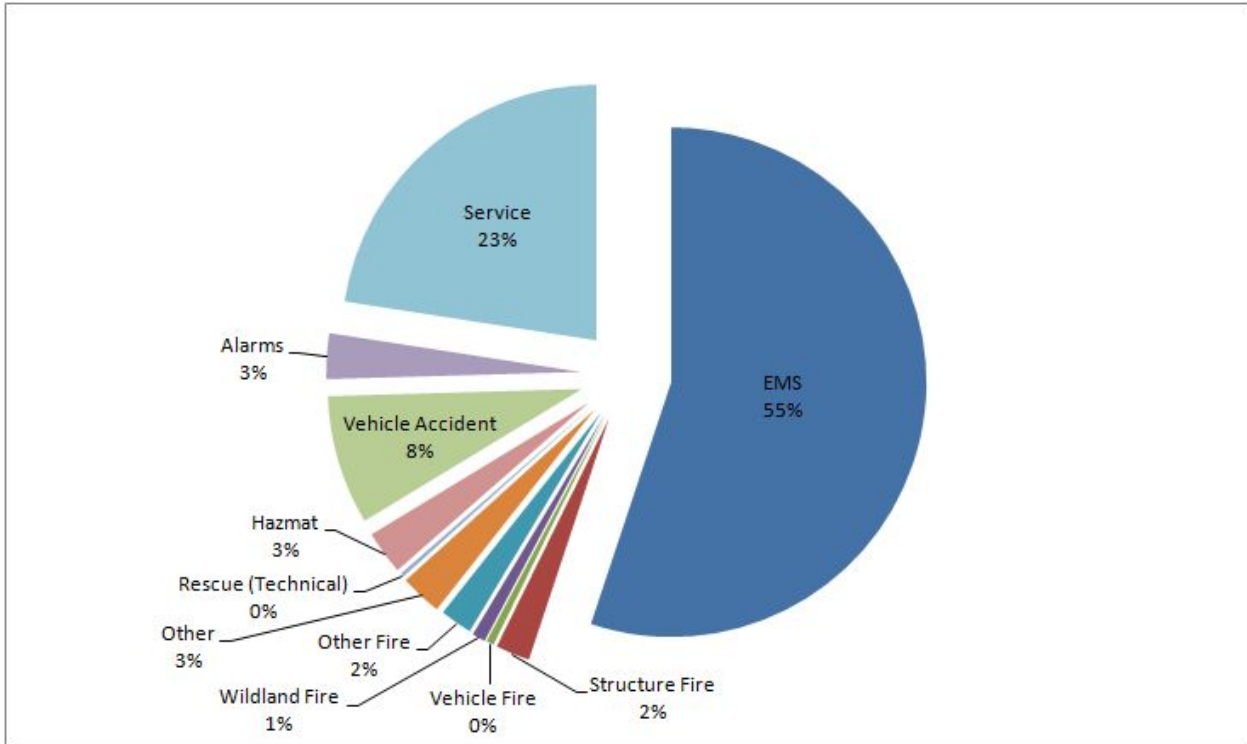


Source: Santa Cruz County LAFCo: Countywide Service Review, 2005^[41]

According to the district website, the combined population in the Boulder Creek and Brookdale areas is approximately 15,000.^[40] For the 2014/15 fiscal year the district had total revenues of \$736,037 and expenditures of \$906,701 with \$170,664 in assets (Buildings and improvements) and \$10,104 in contingencies.^[41] In addition to tax revenue, BCFPD raises money for its reserve fund through annual pancake breakfasts,

crab feeds, dinner dances, and Christmas tree sales. These events are coordinated by the non-profit Boulder Creek Fire Department Inc.

Boulder Creek Fire Protection District 911 Calls by Type (2014)



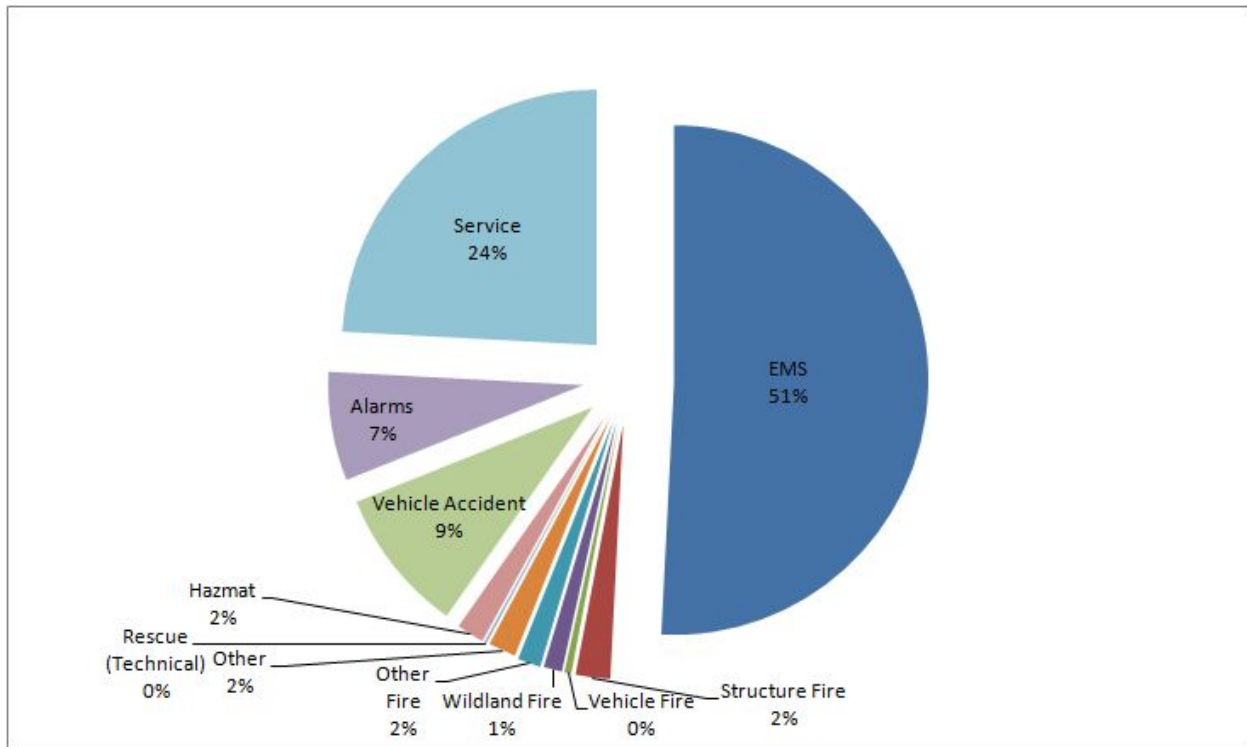
Source: [Appendix B](#)

Felton Fire Protection District

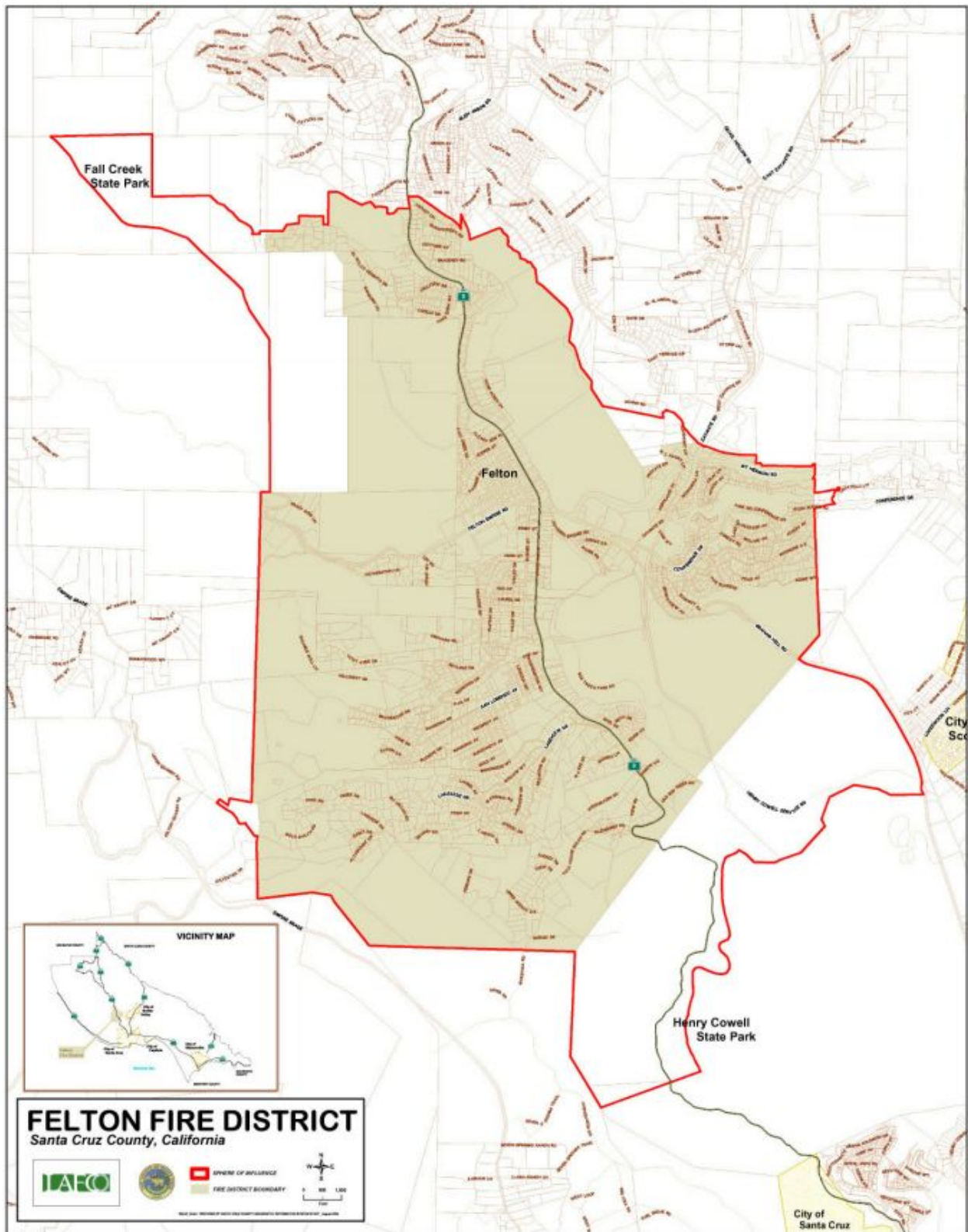
The Felton Fire Protection District (FFPD) serves the unincorporated areas of Felton and Mount Hermon as well as surrounding areas. The district is served by one station located off Highway 9 in the middle of Felton. The seven square miles that make up the district house approximately 4,000 residents. The district responded to 644 calls in 2014.^[36] The district is staffed by one full-time firefighter, a fire chief, a board secretary who is shared with Ben Lomond Fire Protection District (BLFPD), and 28 volunteer firefighters.

FFPD is home to the Large Animal Rescue (LAR) team. This team is trained to operate the necessary equipment to rescue large livestock such as horses, cows, and exotic animals raised in the area. FFPD's LAR team is one of the only such teams in this region of California; as such it conducts training for agencies outside of the county, and has been dispatched as far away as Marin County.

Felton Fire Protection District 911 Calls by Type (2014)



Source: [Appendix B](#)



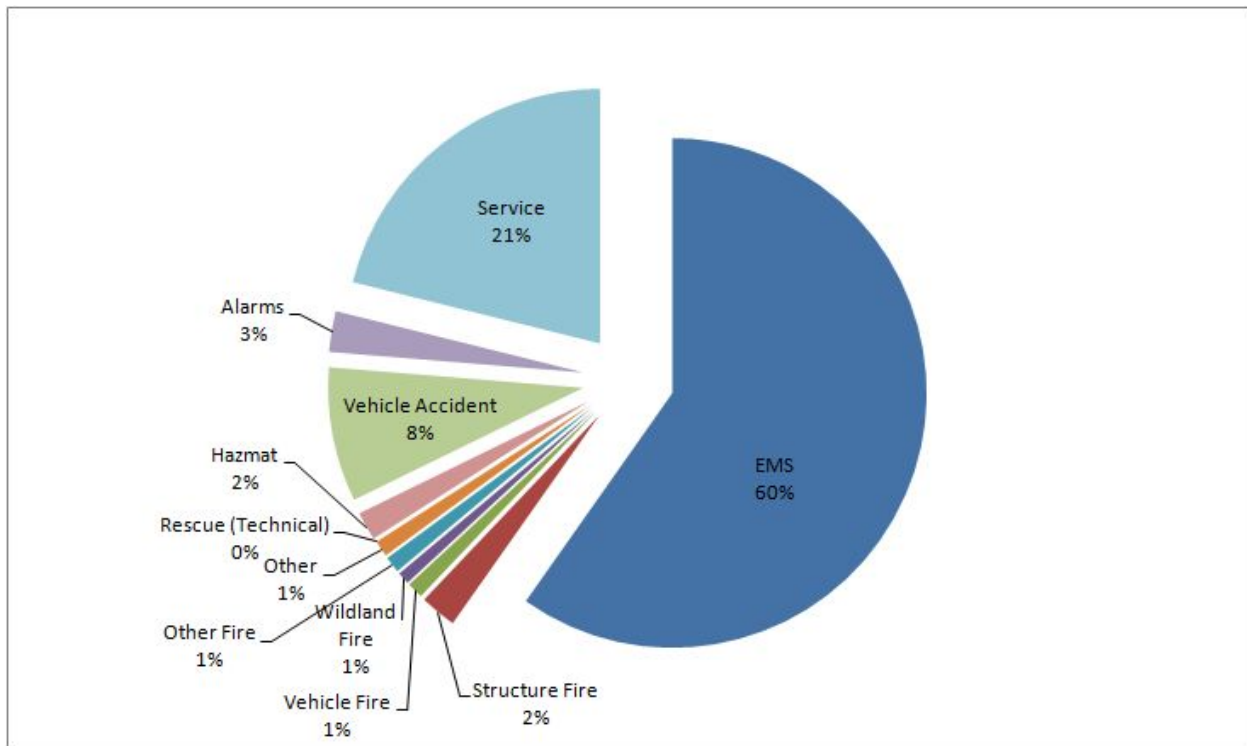
Source: Santa Cruz County LAFCo: Countywide Service Review, 2005^[1]

Ben Lomond Fire Protection District

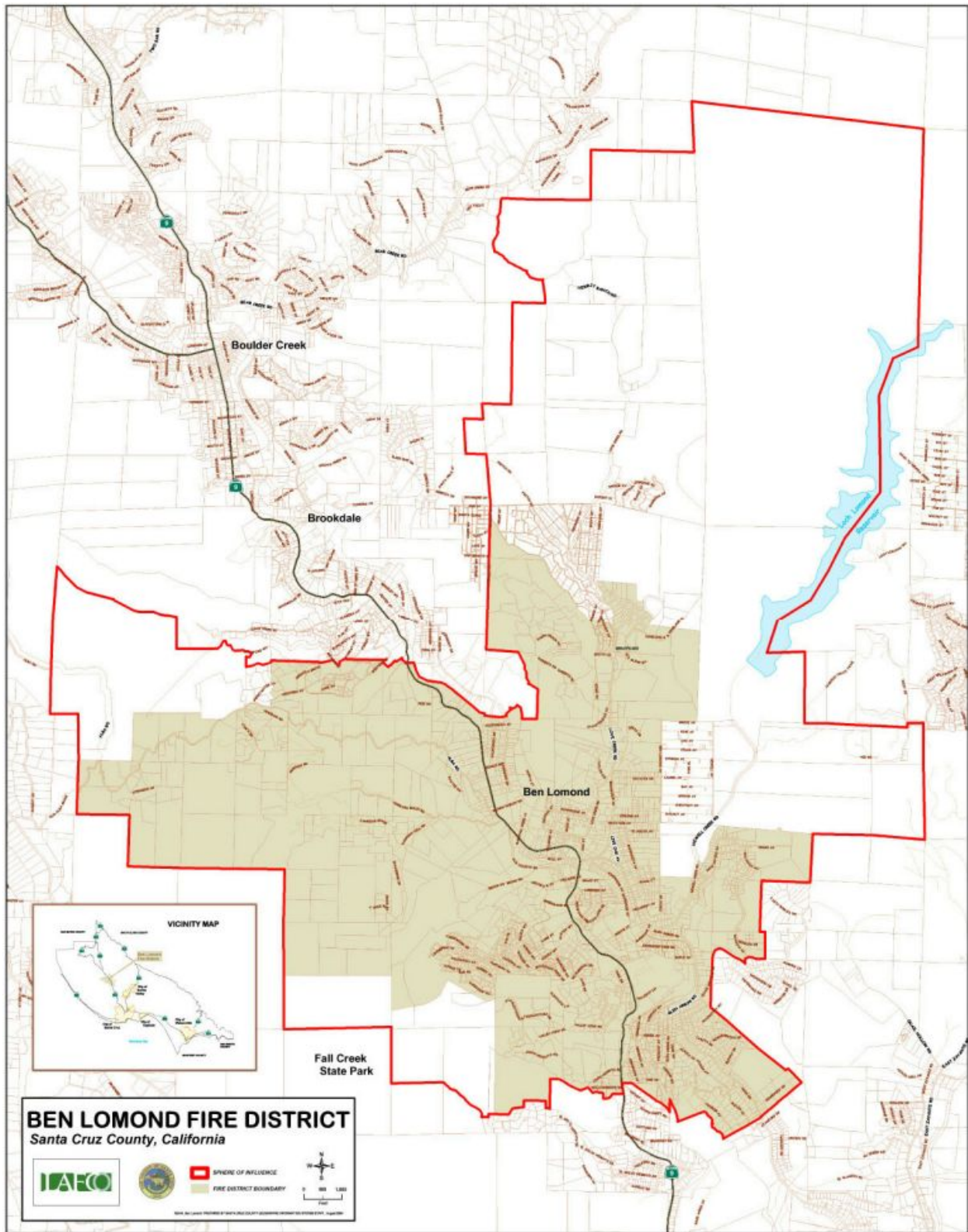
The Ben Lomond Fire Protection District (BLFPD) serves the unincorporated area of Ben Lomond. The district is served by one station located on Highway 9 in the middle of Ben Lomond. The district also owns the adjacent property which was secured in a failed plan to expand the Station. The property is currently leased to Henflings Firehouse Tavern. BLFPD serves the 6,234 residents who live in the seven square miles that fall within the district's sphere of influence. The district responded to 384 calls in 2014.

BLFPD is a volunteer fire district which is staffed by one full-time Fire Chief and 28 volunteers. The district has a sleeper program with three volunteers who live at the station in exchange for work around the station; they are required to be on site five nights per week. There are current plans to expand the program to encompass four to six volunteers by removing walls and converting the three bedrooms into a dormitory. The district also has a part-time office staff and pays a volunteer firefighter \$20 per hour to staff the station during the day (8-5). Current payroll is \$270,000 with the 28-30 volunteers costing roughly \$38,000. The district's revenue is approximately \$600,000.

Ben Lomond Fire Protection District 911 Calls by Type (2014)



Source: [Appendix B](#)



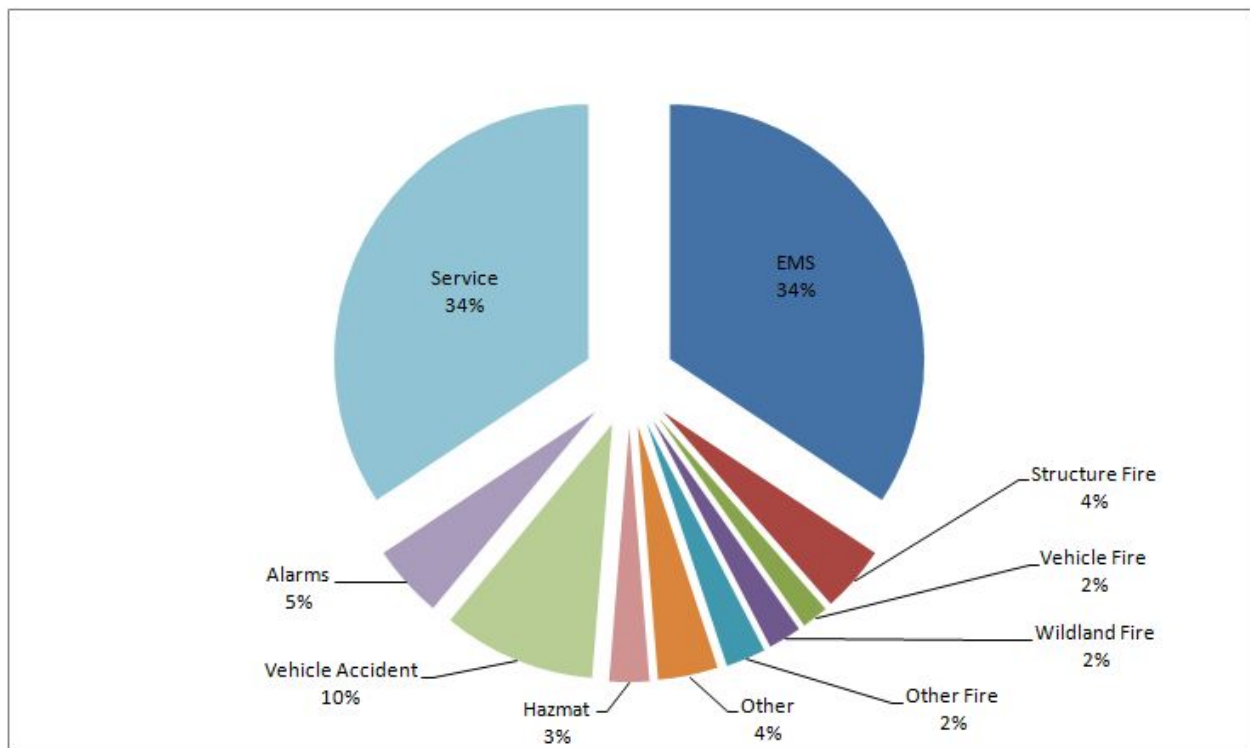
Source: Santa Cruz County LAFCo: Countywide Service Review, 2005^[1]

In addition to the standard fire fighting engines and water trucks, BLFPD utilizes a light rescue rig which can house two to six firefighters for EMS and small rescues. There is also a truck that is equipped to do heavy rescue. BLFPD is also unique in that the district withdrew from participation in the CALPERS retirement system and is currently paying off the \$360,000 penalty owed to the system. The first payment of \$60,000 was made last year. The district uses PARS (public agency 402k) to fund retirement for their full-time employees.

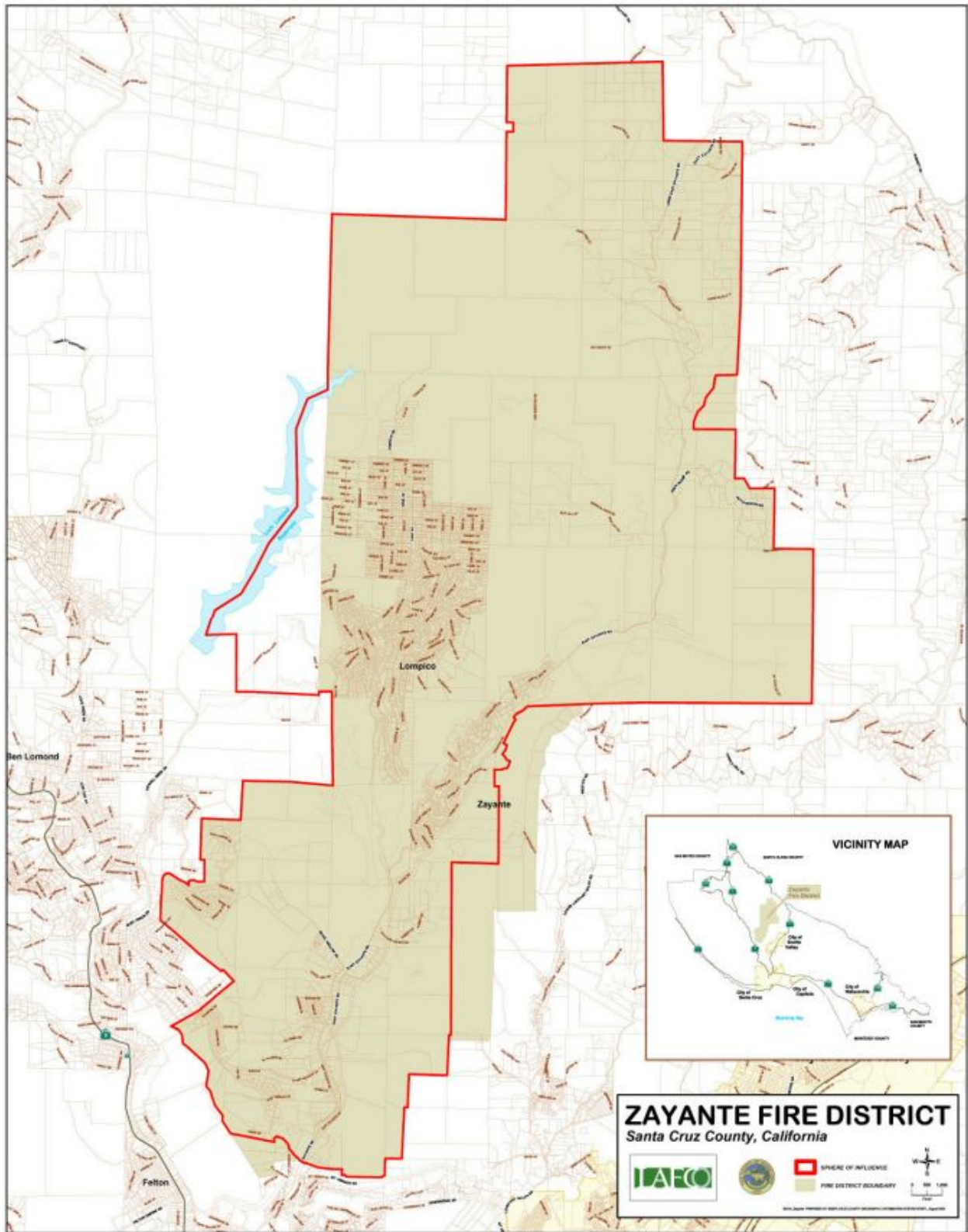
Zayante Fire Protection District

The Zayante Fire Protection District (ZFPD) was formed in 1958 and serves the area of Zayante and Lompico Roads. The district has three stations located throughout the district. Station 1 serves as the main station and office for the district; Stations 2 and 3 are garages that house apparatus needed to respond to calls in the more remote areas of the district. Station 2 houses a Chevrolet Tahoe that has been converted to a mobile command post, and a Type 1 engine with a 500 gallon tank. Station 3 houses a smaller Type 1 engine with a 500 gallon tank.

Zayante Fire Protection District 911 Calls by Type (2014)



Source: [Appendix B](#)



Source: Santa Cruz County LAFCo: Countywide Service Review, 2005^[1]

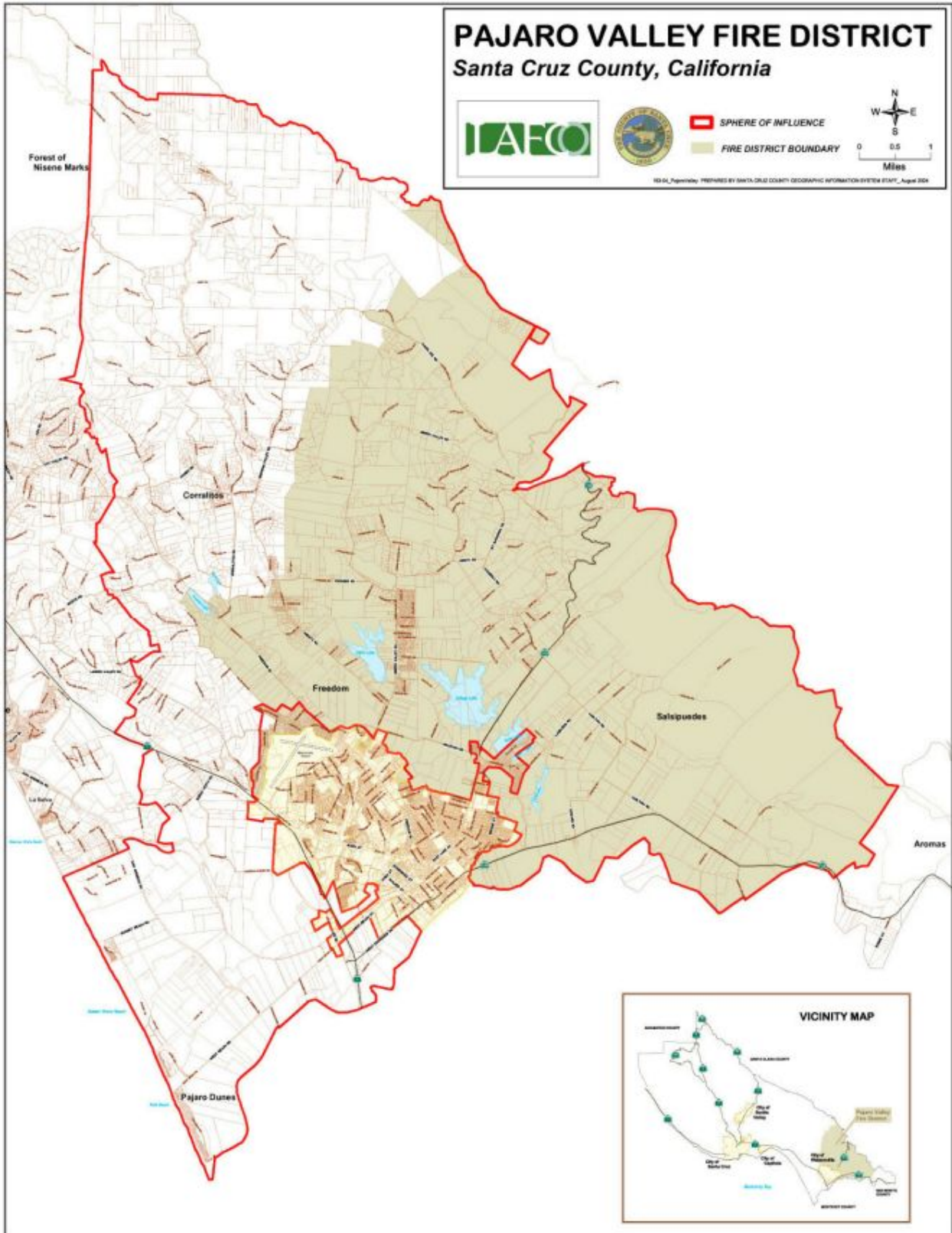
ZFPD uses paid staff during the day to cut down their response time on calls. During the night they use a sleeper program that houses three volunteers at Station 1. These sleepers live at the station in exchange for work at the station and a set number of hours of availability during the evening hours.

Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District

The Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District (PVFPD) was formed in 1994 by consolidation of the Freedom and Salsipuedes Fire Protection Districts. The district serves a rural portion of the unincorporated area covering approximately 52 square miles, making it the largest fire district in the county. This area encompasses both Local Responsibility Area (LRA) and State Responsibility Area (SRA) lands. The population of the district is approximately 18,000.^[42] PVFPD responded to 702 calls in 2014.^[36]

PVFPD differs from the other Fire Protection Districts in the county in that they have elected to contract with Cal Fire to provide fire and EMS services to the residents. This contract has been in place since 1997. Because of the contract with Cal Fire, PVFPD is dispatched through the Cal Fire command center in Felton^[43] rather than the SCR911 dispatch center. The district is staffed by 9 full-time firefighters. The district participates in mutual aid, most frequently with the city of Watsonville and County Fire, which is also dispatched by Cal Fire. PVFPD has contracted with CFPD to use their Fleet Maintenance services.

SCR911 data show that 702 calls for service were transferred to Cal Fire's dispatch center for PVFPD. Since PVFPD's dispatch is handled by Cal Fire's dispatch center, statistics regarding types of calls are not included in this report.



Source: Santa Cruz County LAFCo: Countywide Service Review, 2005^[1]

Appendix B

SCR911 End of year report: Calls-for-Service by Station and Type (All Agencies)

District	Station	Structure Fire	Vehicle Fire	Wildland Fire	Other Fire	EMS	Hazmat	Vehicle Accident	Alarms	Service	Rescue (Technical)	Other	Total Calls
ALSFPD	Station 1	17	7	1	9	631	21	52	99	68	6	12	923
ALSFPD	Station 2	13	10	6	5	542	13	86	97	102	0	15	889
ALSFPD	Station 3	7	15	9	5	250	7	32	70	78	10	3	486
CFPD	Station 1	35	14	4	28	1200	27	88	110	131	34	23	1694
CFPD	Station 2	7	7	1	2	902	7	49	99	45	0	10	1129
CFPD	Station 3	17	9	5	7	680	26	122	86	128	2	22	1104
CFPD	Station 4	27	12	3	15	1203	27	93	118	117	14	18	1647
SVFPD	Station 1	22	40	20	23	1258	43	171	118	221	2	24	1942
BFPD	Station 1	4	3	2	1	59	3	8	5	70	0	4	159
BLFPD	Station 1	9	4	3	4	232	7	33	10	82	0	4	388
FFPD	Station 1	15	3	8	10	347	12	63	47	165	1	12	683
ZFPD	Station 1	10	4	5	6	81	6	23	11	81	0	9	236
BCFPD	Station 1	14	4	5	13	364	15	60	17	159	1	19	671
BCFPD	Station 2	4	0	2	4	93	8	8	7	28	1	3	158
SCFD	Station 1	45	18	3	47	2711	73	177	241	209	16	70	3610
SCFD	Station 2	40	23	9	35	2368	45	266	170	190	7	51	3204
SCFD	Station 3	41	4	10	33	1186	74	140	344	201	55	49	2137
SCFD	Station 4	8	1	0	1	110	19	12	45	35	0	6	237

District	Station	Structure Fire	Vehicle Fire	Wildland Fire	Other Fire	EMS	Hazmat	Vehicle Accident	Alarms	Service	Rescue (Technical)	Other	Total Calls
WFD	Station 1	41	15	26	52	2082	42	176	247	213	1	45	2940
WFD	Station 2	32	22	14	19	1240	30	139	244	122	0	16	1878
Totals		408	215	136	319	17539	505	1798	2185	2455	150	415	26120

Source: SCR911 Fire Incident Recap by Station and Incident Type Reports 2014

Appendix C

Fire Protection District Statistics

	Stations	Firefighters	Volunteers	Income	Expense	Calls
Aptos/La Selva	3	30	0	\$9,106,204	\$8,906,593	2182
Ben Lomond	1	1	28	\$706,315	\$678,971	384
Boulder Creek	2	1	35	\$1,099,241	\$688,785	782
Branciforte	2	4	18	\$713,528	\$675,210	153
Central	4	44	11	\$13,847,260	\$12,743,057	5372
Felton	1	2	28	\$572,697	\$977,574	644
Pajaro Valley	1	9	0	\$1,724,804	\$1,870,111	702
Scotts Valley	2	16	15	\$5,724,649	\$5,686,060	1848
Zayante	3	1	30	\$542,136	\$556,005	266

Source: Grand Jury Interviews, District websites, Board of Directors Packets, [California State Controller's Office Website \(2013 data\)](#), and SCR911 Fire Incident Totals 2014

Appendix D

Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District Public Records Act Requests

Aptos Fire received 22 PRA requests during the period of November 2013 through May 20, 2015:

- 19 from a district resident (including one from a PRA advocate working on behalf of a district resident)
- 1 from a lawyer connected to a district resident's request
- 1 from a news group
- 1 from a website that helps issue anonymous PRA requests

\$11,000 estimated cost of PRA requests. The cost estimate is largely based on staff time to cull through thousands of emails and review several years worth of Board audio tapes. This cost estimate is not inclusive of postage, paper, ink or copying time.

Source: Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District Records 11/2013--5/15/15

Note: Actual names removed

Central Fire Protection District Public Records Act Requests

PRA Requestor	Number of Requests	Employee Hours	Employee Cost	Attorney Cost	Total per Requestor
Aptos Resident	1	9	\$554.15	\$333.00	\$877.15
Employee	16	100.7	\$4,441.08	\$943.50	\$5,384.58
Individual	1	0.5	\$46.74		\$46.74
CALPERs board	1	1	\$27.64		\$27.64
News Group	1	2	\$55.28		\$55.28
PRA Website	1	1	\$27.64		\$27.64
Oversight Website	1	1	\$27.64		\$27.64
Aptos Resident	20	85.5	\$5,297.93	\$943.50	\$6,241.43
Totals	42	200.7	\$10,478.10	\$2,220.00	\$12,688.10

Source: Central Fire Protection District Records 4/1/14--4/20/15

Note: Actual names removed