

ISSUE # 7: TECHNOLOGICAL IMPROVEMENTS

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Problem

Most governmental agencies do not take full advantage of available technology, particularly public safety agencies.

Solution

Local government should redouble their efforts to improve the region's capabilities in several areas using technology. The use of federal Homeland Security grants should be continued, specifically in areas related to fire safety. The San Diego region generously donated over \$20 million after the fires; perhaps a regional technology solution could be funded the same way. Lastly, local government needs to place a high priority on the application of technology for adequate fire protection.

While many examples of technology improvements exist, a few specific examples are offered in the following categories:

Aerial Assets

The use of unmanned aerial vehicles (as covered in the Aerial Assets Issue) offers great promise to the future of data management for wildfire Incident Commanders, and should be pursued to enhance firefighting efforts.

The purchase of current technology equipped helicopters complete with night vision goggles should be a top priority for California officials.

Notification/Evacuation

The county's purchase of the 'Reverse 911' technology was an improvement over the efforts made during the Cedar fire, but the reality is the system is fraught with problems. Other emerging technologies, particularly one from a San Diego-region high-tech firm, will allow Incident Commander's to specifically direct customized messages to individual neighborhoods using current infrastructure, and at no cost to local government. Since homeowners would be responsible to purchase this inexpensive equipment, perhaps the



state could offer a small tax rebate (\$25 or less) to reimburse property owners for their expense.

Staffing and Apparatus Issues

Homeowners who choose to stay and defend or prepare their homes prior to evacuation may wish to be trained in the use firefighting gels which may be used to pre-treat their home in advance of an oncoming wildfire. Kits are available for purchase that will allow the homeowner to pre-treat approximately 4,000 sq. ft. of exterior surfaces per kit.

A website for this product and other homeowner devices is listed in the reference section of this document under the title **Fire-Etc.**

References:

Fire-Etc. Website: www.fire-etc.com