

**HERALD FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

**MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW and  
SPHERE OF INFLUENCE UPDATE**

**February 2, 2005**

**Prepared By:**

**Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission  
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**SACRAMENTO LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION**

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**12/29/04**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that the Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission adopt the following findings and determinations:

1. The Herald Fire Protection District provides efficient, comprehensive emergency and regulatory services to the residents and visitors of the Herald area and does so in a highly professional and cost-effective manner.
2. The Herald Fire Protection District collaborates with surrounding fire agencies and other local jurisdictions, ensuring coordination of programs, services and emergency response. Proactive communications with surrounding adjacent fire protection agencies and the Sacramento Municipal Utility District has minimized redundancy of services, and has enhanced the region's overall emergency response levels.
3. Herald Fire Protection District's involvement with local, state and federal agencies to maintain excellent emergency response across jurisdictional borders benefits not only the residents served by the District, but also nearby areas.
4. The Herald Fire Protection District Sphere of Influence shall remain coterminous with District boundaries.
5. Municipal Service Review Determinations:
  - a. Regarding infrastructure needs or deficiencies, the Commission determines that the District currently has no immediate unmet infrastructure needs or existing deficiencies at the current levels of coverage and service response. Herald Fire District is an effective fire district as it relates to emergency responses related to fire, medical aid and other critical services. The Herald Fire District serves a rural population with predominately volunteer firefighters from the local community and it has mutual aid agreements with Wilton Fire Protection District, Galt Fire Protection District and the Elk Grove Community Services District.
  - b. Regarding growth and population projections for the affected area, the Commission determines the District is capable of providing service that includes the growth and population projections for the affected territory for the next five years.
  - c. Regarding financing constraints and opportunities, the Commission determines that the District has no serious financing constraints at this time.

- d. Regarding cost avoidance opportunities, the Commission determines that the District uses its best efforts to take advantage of all reasonable cost avoidance opportunities.
- e. Regarding opportunities for rate restructuring, the Commission determines that the District's Tax Rate Area method of financing is reasonable for providing emergency services. The District is a non-enterprise entity but when appropriate, it charges fees for services, e.g., plan check and inspection fees for new development.
- f. Regarding opportunities for shared facilities, the Commission determines that the District shares facilities with other agencies and continually reviews new opportunities to do so. The District participated with the Sacramento Fire/EMS Communication Center.
- g. Regarding government structure options, including advantages and disadvantages of consolidation or reorganization of service providers, the Commission determines that the District currently provides services primarily to a specific geographic area containing 96 square miles. Services are provided primarily by approximately 25-30 volunteers and one full-time Fire Chief. The District has two fire stations. There are not any benefits to consolidation or reorganization of district operations at this time.
- h. Regarding evaluation of management efficiencies, the Commission determines the District operates with a high degree of efficiency and professional cooperation with the community and other private/ public agencies.
- i. Regarding local accountability and governance, the Commission determines that the District's Board of Directors represents an adequate level of special district accountability and governance. The District is represented by five directors elected at-large.

## **Introduction**

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization (CKH) Act of 2000 requires that each Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) prepare Municipal Service Reviews and update Spheres of Influence for all cities and independent special districts within its jurisdiction.

A Sphere of Influence is defined by Government Code 56425 as:

A plan for the probable physical boundary and service area of a local agency or municipality.

A Municipal Service Review is defined by Government Code Section 56430 as:

A means of identifying and evaluating public services.

A Municipal Service Review may be conducted prior to, or in conjunction with, the update of a Sphere of Influence.

## **SPHERE OF INFLUENCE**

### **Purpose**

In order to carry out its purposes and responsibilities for planning and shaping logical and orderly development as well as the coordination of local governmental agencies so as to most advantageously provide for the present and future needs of the County and its communities, the Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission must develop and determine the Sphere of Influence of each local governmental agency within the County.

### **Requirements**

When adopting, amending or updating a Sphere of Influence, the Commission shall, according to Government Code, do all of the following:

- (1) Require districts to file written statements specifying the functions or classes of services provided.
- (2) Establish the nature, location and extent of any functions or classes of services provided by the districts.

In determining the Sphere of Influence of each local agency, the Commission shall consider and prepare determinations with respect to each of the following:

- (1) The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open space lands.
- (2) The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area.

- (3) The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides, or is authorized to provide.
- (4) The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the Commission determines they are relevant.

## **MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW**

### **Requirements**

The Commission shall include a written statement of its determinations with respect to each of the following:

- (1) Infrastructure needs or deficiencies.
- (2) Growth and population projections for the affected area.
- (3) Financing constraints and opportunities.
- (4) Cost avoidance opportunities.
- (5) Opportunities for rate restructuring.
- (6) Opportunities for shared facilities.
- (7) Government structure options, including advantages and disadvantages of consolidation or reorganization of service provision.
- (8) Evaluation of management efficiencies.
- (9) Local accountability and governance.

## Map

## DISTRICT SUMMARY PROFILE

District: **HERALD FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

Location: 12746 Ivie Road  
P.O. Box 52  
Herald, California 95638

Station 87: 12746 Ivie Road, Herald  
Station 88: 11620 Clay Station Road, Herald

Telephone: (209) 748-2322  
FAX: (209) 748-2363  
e-mail Address: [heraldfire@softcom.net](mailto:heraldfire@softcom.net)

Administrator: Glen Hendrickson, Fire Chief  
Contact: Jeanette Marciel, Administrative Assistant

Staffing: Volunteer Fire District  
1 FTE and 1 Part Time Employee

Services Authorized/ Provided: Fire protection and suppression; emergency medical services  
No latent powers.

Service Area: Southeast corner of County of Sacramento  
(includes Rancho Seco) 96.4 Square Miles [23,235 Acres]

Sphere of Influence: Coterminous with current District boundary.

Population: Estimated at 4, 500, based on 1643 parcels, as of 7/11/97  
County Assessor's Secured Roll Report

Registered Voters: 1,561

Date of Formation: October 21, 1946

Enabling Act: Health and Safety Code, Section 13801

Governing Body: Five Member Elected Board of Trustees with  
Four year staggered terms.

Total Budget: \$341,792 (FY 2002-2003)

Primary Revenue Source: Property taxes.

District Fiscal Health: Adequate level of service is being provided.

## **Background Information**

The Herald Fire Protection District was established in 1946 for the purpose of providing local fire, rescue and emergency medical services to the Herald community. The District was formed pursuant to Health & Safety Code Section 13801 and is governed by a five-member Board of Directors. The District serves approximately 96 square miles.

## **District Area**

The District is located in the southeastern corner of Sacramento County and encompasses the unincorporated community of Herald. The District is generally bounded by the San Joaquin County line (centerline of Dry Creek) on the south, the Amador County line on the east, and Cherokee Lane on the west; the northern boundary consists of Arno Road and Laguna Creek.

The general land use consists of general agriculture and agricultural-residential development. Further agricultural and residential development is expected in the future. This type of development would be served by wells and septic systems. This type of development is considered a relatively low residential rural development with minimum infrastructure and amenities, e.g., no curbs, gutters, sidewalks, park facilities, libraries, street lighting, etc.

The Rancho Seco Nuclear Generation Plant, owned by the Sacramento Municipal Utility District, is located within the boundaries of the Herald Fire Protection District. Based on a voter initiative, SMUD was required to close the nuclear plant. However, SMUD is in the process of developing a portion of this site for a natural gas generation facility (Cosumnes Power Station). SMUD on-site staff are trained to fight fires and provide emergency medical services to its facilities. Nonetheless, this type of operation may have potential impacts on the Herald Fire Protection District.

## **County Planning Growth Estimate**

The surrounding area is predominately rural in character. The predominant land uses are agricultural and agricultural-residential. The surrounding areas are served by three fire districts: Galt Fire Protection District, Wilton Fire Protection District, and Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District.

## **Land Use Authority**

The Herald Fire Protection District lies entirely within the unincorporated area of Sacramento County. Land use decision within this territory is determined by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors.

The Herald Fire Protection District lies within the Southeast Community Planning Advisory Council. The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors appoint Community Planning Advisory Councils to provide a local forum for citizen involvement in developing community planning goals and to assist in carrying out community plans as well as the County General Plan.

The Planning Advisory Councils provide comments and recommendations to the County Project and Policy Planning Commissions as well as the Board of Supervisors on proposed General Plan and Community Plan amendments, zoning changes, conditional use permits and other matters affecting the community.

Community Plans are used by the Board of Supervisors to guide physical development of the community areas. The Plans evaluate the condition of existing services, recreational facilities and land use patterns.

### **Other Service Providers**

#### **Water**

Domestic water service is provided in this area by private wells. Rural irrigation is provided by Clay Water District and Galt Irrigation District. Rancho Seco has its own water supply via the Folsom South Canal.

#### **Sewer**

This area does not have a sanitation treatment system. All dwellings use individual septic systems.

#### **Solid Waste Disposal**

Independent disposal service is provided to this area. The independent disposal service collects, transports and disposes the solid waste. The solid waste is transported to the County of Sacramento land fill site at Kiefer Boulevard and Grant Line Road.

#### **Parks and Recreation**

Park and recreation services within the boundary of the Herald Fire Protection District are provided by County Service Areas 4-B and 4-D. The level of park service is minimal based on the rural nature of the area. These County Service Areas will be discussed in their respective Municipal Service Reviews.

#### **Storm Drainage**

This area is not served by a drainage district, nor is it within a County drainage zone.

#### **Resource Conservation**

The Herald Fire Protection District service area lies within the Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District. A Resource Conservation District provides soil conservation planning, erosion control, water development and distribution and control of water run-off.

## **Police Protection**

The County Sheriff serves the unincorporated territory within the County of Sacramento.

## **Miscellaneous Service Providers**

Sacramento Municipal Utility District provides electric service to this unincorporated territory. No Reclamation District or Flood Control Agency serves the territory within the boundaries of the Herald Fire Protection District. The area is within the Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District. Galt-Arno Cemetery District serves the area. Roads are maintained by the County of Sacramento, except for private roads. Private utilities provide telephone service, cable service and propane gas.

## **DISTRICT OPERATIONS AND SERVICE**

### **Fire Prevention and Suppression**

The Herald Fire Protection District operates two fire stations and related equipment. The fire stations are located as follows:

Station #87: 12746 Ivie Road  
Built 1975; Expanded 1985  
Serves the western part of the District.

Station #88: 11620 Clay Station Road  
Built 1967  
Unmanned station.  
Serves the eastern part of the District.  
Equipment:  
1 Engine  
2 Grass Rigs  
1 Rescue

The District provides fire protection service primarily through the use of volunteer firefighters.

Staffing: 1 Fire Chief (Full Time)  
1 Administrative Assistant (Part Time)  
25-30 Volunteer Firefighters

### **Emergency Medical Services**

The District provides Basic Life Support (BLS) medical response to residents and employees within District service territory.

## **Miscellaneous Services Provided**

The District also provides a number of public and community services, such as:

- Use of District stations for community events and meetings.
- Use of District stations for public polling places.
- Distribution of commodities for State Emergency Assistance Food Program.
- Use of District table and chairs for community events.
- District facilities used by Sheriff and Code Enforcement for special assignments.
- Station Tours for local schools.
- Provide Fire Safety demonstrations and local schools.
- Volunteer labor for park up-keep as well as fuel and maintenance for park maintenance equipment.

## **I. INFRASTRUCTURE, FACILITIES/ GROWTH AND POPULATION PROJECTIONS**

### **Current Service Demand/ Population Growth**

The District responds to an average of about one call per day, or 33 calls per month; approximately 400 calls per year. The District anticipates that by 2009, it will respond, on average, to about 700 calls per year. The District provides the same level of service to all District residents.

### **Projected Service Capacity**

The District indicates that it can respond to 2 to 3 calls per day, or up to 1200 calls per year, based on existing resources. The District has developed a Master Plan for staffing and capital improvements to respond to 2,400 calls per year by the year 2009.

Population growth is based on the Sacramento County General Plan. This area is expected to remain rural; it is anticipated that there will be continued agricultural-residential development.

Service needs are forecast by monitoring permits, development plans and applications submitted to Sacramento County Planning and Community Development Department. The District also tracks calls for service on a month to month basis. The District attempts to project future demand by reviewing the number of calls, the time of day, location, response time, the type and how many responders were present.

### **Service Levels**

The District provides the same level of service to all residents within the District. The District does not provide service outside of the District boundaries except for mutual aid responses.

## **Maintenance and Infrastructure Requirements**

### **Maintenance**

The Herald Fire Protection District conducts routine and preventative maintenance on all of its facilities, vehicles and equipment to ensure a safe and efficient working environment. The District indicates that there are no areas of deferred maintenance.

### **Infrastructure**

The District indicates that it will need to upgrade and remodel Station No. 88 to provide a larger truck bay in order to accommodate equipment needs as well as provide bedrooms for future full time firefighters. The District also considers replacement of older fire apparatus to provide modernized standards.

### **Provision for Emergency Back Up Systems**

The District has provided for emergency back up systems for fuel, water and power. Station No. 87 has a 750 gallon gasoline storage tank and a 250 gallon diesel storage tank. The District indicates it can be refueled within 24-hours. In addition, in emergencies, fuel can be supplied by farmers as well as the local school.

Station No. 87 holds 6,400 gallons of water and the water tender holds 4,000 gallons. The water tank at Station No. 88 holds 6,400 gallons. Also, water is available from City of Galt fire hydrants, approximately four miles away.

The District has a generator for back-up power. In addition, the District may solicit mutual aid from surrounding fire districts.

## **II. EVALUATION OF MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCIES**

The District is primarily a volunteer fire department. Consequently, the fire stations are not staffed 24-hours per day, 7 days a week. The Fire Chief is the only full-time firefighter. He wears a pager and responds to calls on a 24/7 basis. The Fire Chief is supported by volunteer firefighters who are paged when needed. The firefighters are on call 24/7. The volunteer firefighter is paid on a per call basis.

### **Training**

The District provides forty hours of classroom training for new recruits to outline overall responsibilities and duties and to provide recruits with the information they need in order to respond to a fire in an efficient and safe manner. On-going drills are held twice a month to build upon the initial classroom training.

Volunteer firefighters receive a policy and procedure manual. The manual contains general rules and regulations. The manual covers the following areas: equal opportunity employment, drug free workplace requirements, unlawful harassment, alcoholic beverages,

standardized operating guide, vehicle operating requirements, emergency vehicle driver training, sick leave, vacation and holiday policies.

Given the size of the Herald Fire Protection District and its financial/ operating constraints, it appears the District maintains an efficient operation.

### **III. FINANCING CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES/ OPPORTUNITIES FOR RATE RESTRUCTURING**

The District is funded by its share of the real property taxes it receives from the County Auditor. The District receives approximately \$300,000 per year in property tax. The District charges a \$100 per household for fire sprinkler inspections. Inspection fees generate about \$3,600 per year. In 2003, the District was awarded \$112,500 grant from FEMA to purchase a new water tender. In 2001, the District was also awarded a TOT grant in the amount of \$35,000 to upgrade Station No. 88 to meet ADA requirements. In addition, the District received grants totaling \$7,000 through the Rural Community Fire Protection Program for the purchase of safety and fire equipment.

The Herald Fire Protection District's primary revenue source is a factor of the District's pro rata share of property taxes collected from within the boundaries of the District. The property taxes are directly related to the assessed value of the real property located within the District. The assessed value is based on the current real estate market. Consequently, funding is somewhat fixed. Generally, property taxes will increase as real estate values increase. Currently, the Herald Fire Protection District does not have any special assessments, supplemental parcel taxes or developer impact fees. The District is considering engaging the services of a consultant to assess the feasibility of establishing an impact fee or new development for the purpose of upgrading facilities, equipment and staffing levels.

#### **Proposed Debt**

The District is considering a loan in the amount of \$200,000 for capital improvements consisting of:

- Larger truck bay to accommodate fire trucks.
- Bedrooms for future 24/7 staffing.
- Conversion of existing truck bays into a training area.
- Repair, upgrade and add additional parking lot and driveway.

#### **Investment Policies**

The District utilizes the Sacramento County Treasurer's Office to manage its funds and reserves through the Sacramento County Pooled Investment Fund. The District has a practice of maintaining 10 percent reserve to be used for capital expenditures, equipment and vehicle replacement.

#### **IV. GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE OPTIONS/ ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE**

The District is represented by five (5) directors elected at large. The terms are staggered and each director serves a four-year term. The governing board receives no compensation for meeting attendance. The Board of Directors meets on the third Wednesday of each month.

Notice of regular and special meetings are posted in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act. The District holds the meetings in the evening to encourage community participation and there is sufficient space to accommodate public attendance.

The District uses the Galt Herald newspaper to advertise meetings as well as posting notice in local community. The District also sends out fliers through Arcohe School. The District distributes annual fire season information through Arcohe School and posts notices at both the Post Office and the Herald Store.

#### **Level of Public Participation**

Generally, there is not a great deal of public participation during the District's public meetings. Therefore, there does not appear to be on-going controversy or dissatisfaction with the services currently provided. The Board of Directors addresses the concerns that are raised by residents when they are expressed.

Support is evidenced by monetary donations to the Volunteer Association, community support of various district endeavors and assistance with minor facility improvement projects.

#### **Reorganization/ Consolidation**

The District has not been involved in any reorganization and is not aware of any potential opportunity for consolidation or reorganization. The Herald Fire Protection District has a limited budget and as a result, all of its resources are appropriated to serving the needs of citizens within its boundaries. The residents of Herald participate as volunteers because they believe deeply in community identity.

The District makes its facilities available to 20 local nonprofit community groups for the benefit of the community of Herald. Potential reorganization could result in a lack of local control that could generate a lessening of accountability to the local residents and ultimately, a decline in service to the community of Herald.

The public has access to District business records and information by telephone, in person, or by mailing a request for information. The District also serves as a source of information on non-district related community services and activities and provides contact information for these community resources.

## **V. OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARED FACILITIES COST/ AVOIDANCE OPPORTUNITIES**

The District has mutual aid agreements with the Galt Fire Protection District, Wilton Fire Protection District and the Elk Grove Community Services District. The District also has a mutual aid agreement with the State of California Department of Forestry for wild land fire calls as well as joint training exercises. In addition, the District contracts with Sacramento Municipal Utility District to provide personnel and equipment for emergency responses to Rancho Seco.

The District participates in the dispatch services provided through Sacramento Fire/ EMS Emergency Communications Center. The District utilizes ambulance service provided by the Galt Fire Protection District.

Herald Fire Protection District allows other public agencies and community groups to use its facilities for meetings and other programs such as polling places, distribution site for Emergency Assistance Food Program, and other community activities. District staff and volunteers also do volunteer work for Herald Park maintenance as well as repairs and upkeep for Park equipment.

### **Cost Avoidance Opportunities**

The Herald Fire Protection District purchases liability insurance through the Northern California Fire District Association. In addition, the District is attempting to purchase Worker's Compensation Insurance through Fire Districts' Association of California/ Fire Association Self-Insurance System. The District is using the Orange County Fire Authority add-on program to purchase its new water tender.

### **Duplication/ Gaps in Services or Boundaries**

District personnel is unaware of any overlapping service boundaries, boundary issues or gaps in service due to non-contiguous boundaries with other fire districts. The District is unaware of any duplication of infrastructure and District staff is not aware of any feasible opportunity to reduce duplication of infrastructure by shared use with other agencies.

The Fire Chief does routine truck and facility maintenance, with the assistance of volunteers, as part of his daily duties. Repairs and maintenance are contracted out if it is not cost-effective to do in-house service or if it requires greater than on-site expertise.

The District's overhead and operational costs are skeletal because of limited financial resources. The administrative assistant is part-time and acts as Board Secretary, District Secretary/ Bookkeeper, and community liaison for use of District facilities. Volunteer labor is used whenever possible. The majority of the trucks are 10-15 years old and protective clothing is refurbished and re-used. The District has operated in the black during the last twelve years.

## **ANALYSIS**

The Herald Fire Protection District provides an adequate level of service to the residents within the community of Herald. The level of service is directly dependent upon community participation in the form of volunteers. Volunteers are the key to the continued provision of fire/emergency medical service for the community.

The District does not have the ability to control land use decisions. However, it must meet the demands of new development that is taking place in this rural territory. No doubt, increased population from agricultural-residential development will impact the District's ability to provide service. The residents should be aware that rural areas have different service levels than urban areas. It is likely that response times may be longer in rural areas. The quality of service, with continued training, should be comparable to other rural areas.

The service boundary is definite and certain. It does not overlap other providers and there are no service delivery gaps.

## **MUNICIPAL SERVICE FACTORS**

### **Infrastructure**

The District has adequate fire stations and equipment to serve the District boundary area. It has developed a Master Plan to meet future growth.

### **Growth and Population Projections**

The District has projected that it can meet the projected population growth during the next five years.

### **Financing Constraints**

The District has limited financial resources as do most property tax based special districts that are subject to Proposition 13 and 218. However, the District manages to operate within its budget.

### **Cost Avoidance Opportunities**

The District shares resources and staff with other agencies and performs maintenance on its equipment whenever possible.

### **Rate Restructuring**

The District does not have any significant opportunities for rate restructuring because it is a property tax based agency. It charges fees for plan check and inspections.

### **Opportunities for Shared Facilities**

The District allows other public agencies and non-profit community groups to use its fire stations for public meetings. Both fire stations are used as polling places; for the Herald Planning Advisory Council, it is almost like a community center.

### **Government Structure Options/ Local Accountability and Governance**

The District holds regular monthly meetings on the third Wednesday of each month. Public attendance is encouraged but generally there is little participation. Information is available and provided to the public when requested.

### **Evaluation of Management Efficiencies**

The District is efficient and cost-effective. The Chief performs many different functions from maintenance to training firefighters. The success of the Herald Fire Protection District is based on its ability to recruit and retain a volunteer work force.

### **SPHERE OF INFLUENCE**

No change is recommended in the Sphere of Influence for the Herald Fire Protection District. The District's current Sphere of Influence is coterminous with the District boundary. Based on present and planned land uses, there is a continued need for service in the Herald area. The population will most likely increase with continued agricultural-residential development.

The community of Herald is a distinct social and economic community of interest which requires public safety services. Even though other municipal services are not likely to be provided to this area in the near future, public safety services are needed to serve the rural residents.

PB:Maf  
(Herald Fire MSR)