After-Action Report
Stevens Fire

Cupertino
ARES/RACES

1. Overview

Description:	Stevens Fire
Event Date:	30-Aug-2007
Report Date:	10-Sep-2007
CARES Event:	CUP-07-100
RACES Event:	CUP-07-100
Control:	Cupertino OES
Report Revision:	1.1

- The fire was initially reported at 11:45 AM, grew to cover 150 acres.

- A Fire Base Camp was established off of Montebello Road in close proximity to the fire.

- Voluntary evacuations were implemented on Thursday 30-Aug, Cupertino's Quinlan Center was opened, closed later that evening.

- Cupertino ARES/RACES (CARES) was activated at the request of the Cupertino OES Director for a field response.

- CARES defined and staffed 3 six-hour shifts, and the 1st shift (3 field responders and 1 NCO) was deployed. The first field responder was on site by 2000.

- At approximately 2300, the Base Camp was moved to Vasona Park and CARES was directed to stand down.

- With the help of an inversion layer over the area, CalFire held the fire event area to 150 acres.

vii. Improvements, Conclusions, Recommendations:

As applicable, include a description of actions taken, assignments, associated costs or budget, timetable for completion or correction, and follow-up responsibility.

The following is a summary of the key Improvements, Conclusions, and Recommendations.

What worked?

- Combination of phone tree and OES email notifications reached a lot of people during the work day
- Enthusiasm and availability of CARES members to participate in the field deployment
- Net control procedures and good net discipline
- Radio coverage between the EOC and the Fire Base Camp

What didn't work / needs improvement?

- CARES shift planning
- No cell phone coverage in the EOC
- Could not reach our Fire Base Camp contact to inform him that CARES responders were on their way.
- Reaching the Base Camp by vehicle was difficult due to problems with directions, marking, and on-site instructions.
- There was co-channel interference by County Fire units (mobile and base stations) on all CARE 2 meter radios, Cupertino Radio 1670 AM station appears to be overloading the CARES ATV receiver.

Recommendation

Shift Planning

CARES operations were smooth for the processes that have been practiced. We have previously recognized the need to define and adopt procedures for managing resources, incoming field tasks, and assignments. This is particularly true when needing to staff multiple shifts.

1. Develop the necessary processes and procedures required for managing CARES resources, field tasks, and assignments that span multiple shifts.
2. Update the CARES Response Playbook to include elements of resources, certifications, and response scenarios.

Phone Tree

Changes in home, cell, and work phone numbers are a fact of life. It is the responsibility of all CARES members to ensure that their contact information is as up to date. Under ideal conditions – updated phone tree, phone tree list readily available, phone tree recipients available to take and make their calls – the phone tree process works relatively well. However, any break in the process results in members not being notified. Some CARES members never received their activation calls because of one or more of the above.

3. CARES to adopt the City's 3N System as its primary non-evident event notification system. The system needs to be loaded and tested within 30 days of this report.
4. CARES to reposition the Phone Tree Process as a secondary non-evident event notification process.

Field Deployment Specifics

The CARES deployment was hampered by incorrect and insufficient instructions on how to get to the assignment location. Better resolution maps at the EOC could have helped the EOC staff give better instructions to field responders instead of relying on the trial & error process of "scouts." Radio Room Staff did try to call our contact by telephone to alert him that the response team was en route, but all calls rolled into voicemail. Once on scene, field assignments were not clear as to who they should report to.

5. With the OES Director, clarity the official method by which CARES or the EOC Staff would make contact with requesting field officials such as County Fire, Sheriffs Office, etc., if needed.
6. Review the Field Resource Request process with Cupertino OES Director to identify process improvements.

<u>Field Communications Support</u>

The purpose for our assignment was to provide a link between the Base Camp and the EOC. However, it apparent that general communications with other non-EOC entities was also important. Members of the Sheriffs Office inquired if CARES could initiate phone calls with our equipment. Initiating phone patches has not been a procedure we have previous developed or practiced.

7. Investigate how CARES can provide general auto-patch support. This would include:
   - relocate the CARES' W6TDM Repeater from the Corp Yard to a more central city location that offers a higher antenna mount point and better city coverage, such as Cupertino City Center or the Cypress Hotel
   - work with local repeater owners on agreements on broader access to auto-patch capabilities during an emergency
   - investigate simplex auto-patch support from the EOC

EOC Cell Phone Coverage

This event demonstrated that cell-phone use is an anticipated means of communicating between EOC Staff and field-based ICS officials. The few times that field ICS officials were able to find a cell phone hot spot, they could not consistently contact EOC staff members who operated by cell phone because of little to no cell phone coverage in the EOC (basement of City Hall). The City has discussed plans to install a city hall-wide cell phone repeater to ensure adequate cell phone coverage; this project is expensive and currently not funded. There may more cost-effective alternatives that could be explored to initially cover the EOC only.

8. CARES to propose an EOC area cell phone extender to the OES Director.