

G. Mission Soledad Rural Fire Protection District

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Website: www.ci.soledad.ca.us/index.aspx?nid=169 (City of Soledad FD)
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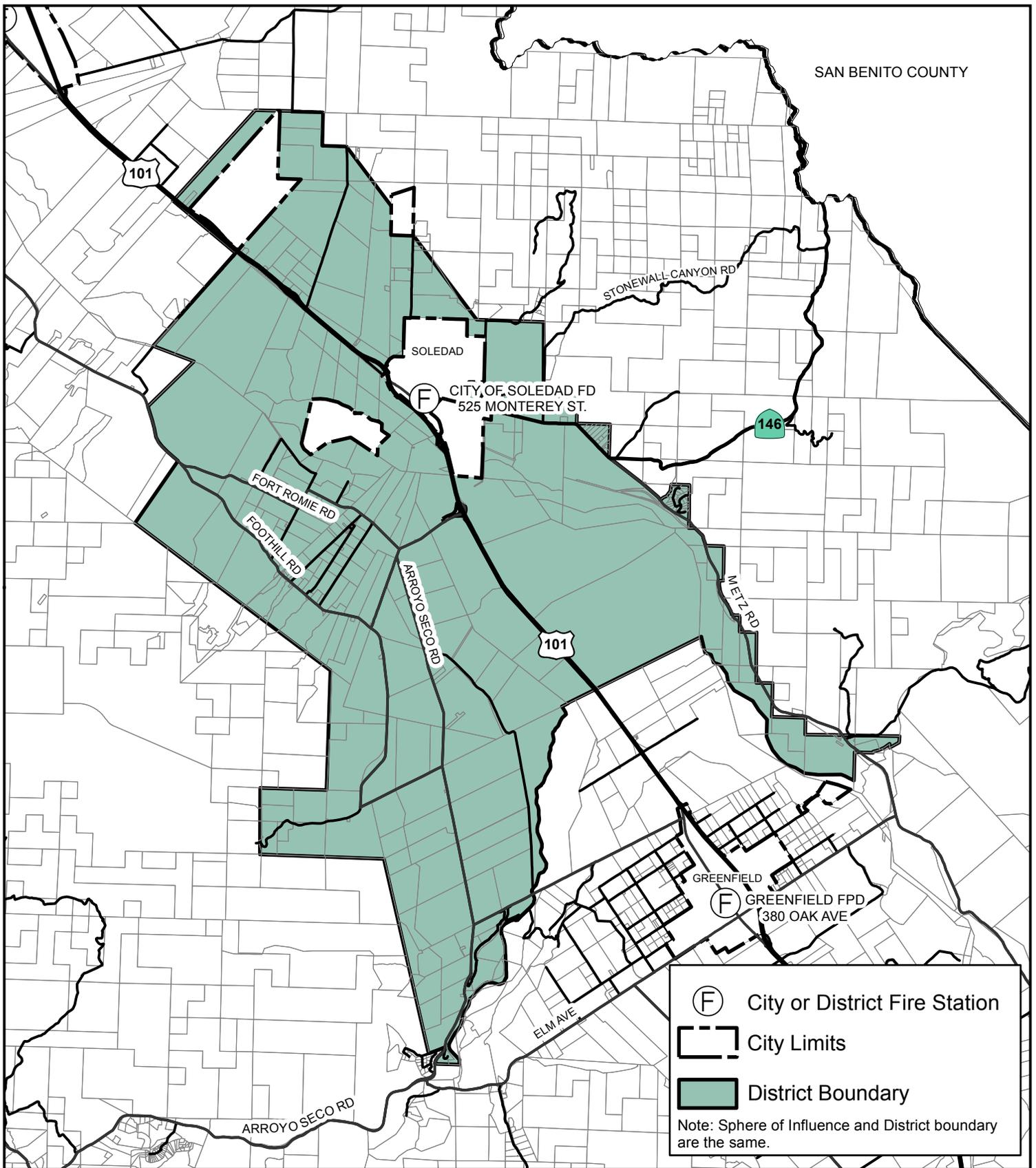
SUMMARY

The Mission Soledad Rural Fire Protection District protects approximately 1,100 people who live in the 60 square miles surrounding the City of Soledad. The District contracts with the City to provide fire protection service within District boundaries. The District provides approximately \$200,000 a year to the City in compensation for these services. This simple relationship allows rural residents to receive services through the City Fire Department. It is assumed that this relationship will continue into the future. In 2011, the Soledad City Council recently voted to disband the City-employed firefighting force and to contract with CAL FIRE for services to both City and District residents. The District has financial procedures in place to ensure the preparation of timely agency audits. The City maintains an ISO Public Protection Classification of 4. The ISO Rating for the Mission Soledad Rural FPD is 9/10. The District boundary and Sphere of Influence are the same and the District does not have immediate plans for expansion.

BACKGROUND

The Mission Soledad Rural Fire Protection District was formed in 1950 for the purpose of providing fire protection service to the rural areas surrounding the City of Soledad. The District contains an estimated population of 1,143 residents and an area of approximately sixty square miles. Significant increases in the District's population is not expected, as population growth in the area will likely be accomplished through annexation to the City of Soledad, and detachment from the District.

The Mission Soledad Rural FPD contracts with the City of Soledad to provide service within the District's boundaries. The City population in 2010 was listed in the U. S. Census at 25,738. Of this total population, the Correctional Training Facility (CTF) fire department provides the primary firefighting response for the estimated 10,000 incarcerated men within CTF and Salinas Valley State Prison, both of which are within the city limits.



SAN BENITO COUNTY

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FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICTS

**MISSION SOLEDAD RURAL
FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

2012 Municipal Services Review
Map Produced on 10/11/2011

OPERATIONS

The City of Soledad provides fire protection service to the Mission Soledad Rural FPD through a fifteen year agreement that was entered into in 1998. This agreement calls for the District to provide all of its revenues to the City, less the amount needed for the District's administrative expenses. Property taxes are the District's largest revenue source providing approximately 50% of all revenues. A benefit assessment on parcels which was approved by voters in 1980 constitutes an additional 30% of the District's annual revenues. As of June 30, 2009, the District maintained \$86,275 in unrestricted net assets. The District also has no long-term debt.

Until 2011, the City of Soledad was unique among southern Salinas Valley communities in relying primarily on paid city firefighters. The City Fire Department has had a workforce of three captains, 3 engineers, and 2 firefighters. This full time career force has been backed up by 17 paid call volunteer firefighters.

However, the provision of Soledad's fire protection service recently changed. The City Council approved a contract for services with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) in August 2011. CAL FIRE began phasing in its administration of the department in October 2011. Through this contract CAL FIRE provides the management and personnel needed to provide fire protection and emergency medical services to the City and the surrounding Mission Soledad Rural FPD. The City, with the District's financial support, continues to provide the fire station, apparatus, and equipment.

The number of firefighters has decreased to five with the new CAL FIRE management. The longer duty shifts employed by CAL FIRE – 72-hour shifts versus the City's 56-hour shifts – allow CAL FIRE to maintain constant two-person staffing of the engine company with fewer firefighters. All of the firefighters that had been employed by the City became CAL FIRE employees, although some were assigned to other CAL FIRE locations. The City estimates that this change will save the City approximately \$200,000 a year. This will be the first city in Monterey County to contract for services with CAL FIRE, although CAL FIRE contracts with other cities in the State and with five Monterey County special districts.

The City fire station handles approximately 1,600 to 1,900 calls a year, excluding calls for mutual and automatic aid. Approximately 72% of all calls are for medical emergencies, with assistance in the Rural Fire Protection District primarily provided to elderly rural residents and agricultural workers.

The City acknowledges the need to ensure the timely replacement of fire equipment and for capital improvements to the existing fire station. Funds are not currently being set aside for these programs due to budget shortfalls.

The City participates in the State mutual aid system and has automatic aid agreements with the City of Gonzales, the Greenfield Fire Protection District, and the State Correctional Training Facility fire department.

The importance of well-coordinated local fire protection and emergency services was dramatized, in April 2009, when a bus carrying French tourists overturned on a Soledad highway overpass. The Soledad Fire Department was first on the scene, approximately three minutes after the call was received. Within a short amount of time the Soledad fire chief and a lieutenant from the California Highway Patrol formed a unified incident command operation. The fire crew started a triage to identify victims by the category and seriousness of their injuries. All 36 people on the bus were injured, 23 of these sustained major injuries. Three of those with major injuries died at the scene of the accident; two others died later from their injuries.

Seventeen fire engines from neighboring fire agencies responded to this multi-casualty incident. The Emergency Services Agency of the County contacted Central Coastal medical facilities to determine their availability. Within ninety minutes every victim was transported. All together the services of fourteen ground ambulances and eight helicopter ambulances were needed.

The existing fifteen year agreement between the District and the City of Soledad was entered into on September 3, 1998. The City's CAL FIRE contract is not expected to change the relationship between the City of Soledad and the Mission Soledad Rural Fire Protection District.

The Board of Directors of the Mission Soledad Fire Protection District is made up of five Directors who are appointed to four-year terms by the County Board of Supervisors. The Board of Directors meets quarterly. While the District does not maintain a website, information on fire protection and EMS activities can be found on a website maintained by the City of Soledad. However, this website does not contain information on District Board Members or meetings.

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE & BOUNDARIES

The Sphere of Influence of the Mission Soledad Rural FPD is identical to the District's boundaries, which abut the Gonzales Rural FPD on the north and the Greenfield FPD on the south. The eastern and western boundaries of the District extend into the State Responsibility Area. A map of the District's Sphere of Influence and boundaries can be seen at the beginning of this profile. The District board is not currently planning to expand the District Sphere of Influence.

District boundaries will be reduced if the City of Soledad annexes surrounding parcels. While the detachment of land through city annexations is a common concern to many fire protection districts, the financial and service arrangements between the Mission Soledad Rural FPD and the City make these changes revenue and service neutral.

**Mission Soledad Rural Fire Protection District
Formation, Revenues, Attributes, Types of Service, and Resources**

District Formation and Duties	
Formation Date	1950
Legal Authority	Fire Protection District Law of 1961, Health & Safety Code, section 13800 et seq.
Board of Directors	Five Directors appointed to four-year terms by the Monterey County Board of Supervisors.
Agency Duties	Fire Protection / Emergency Medical Services

District Revenues (Two Year Periods)				
	2005-2007		2007-2009	
	Amount	% of Total	Amount	% of Total
Property Tax	\$205,707	50.7%	\$209,227	51.5%
Benefit Assessments	\$122,246	30.1%	\$125,714	30.9%
Proposition 172 Funds	\$60,907	15.0%	\$64,526	15.9%
Interest	\$15,767	3.9%	\$9,396	2.3%
State Tax Revenues & Other Income	\$1,167	0.3%	\$1,237	0.3%
Monterey County Allocated Loss	-	-	(\$3,687)	-0.9%
Revenue total	\$405,794	100.0%	\$406,413	100.0%

Source: Mission Soledad Rural FPD, Basic Financial Statements for the Two Years Ending June 30, 2007 (and for the Two Years Ending June 30, 2009) and Independent Auditors' Report: Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balances and Statement of Activities.

**Mission Soledad Rural Fire Protection District
Formation, Revenues, Attributes, Types of Service, and Resources**

Attributes	
District Area (est. square miles)	59.6
Population (2010 estimated)	1,143
Assessed Valuation (FY 10-11: Includes both City and District)	\$624,014,562
Number of Stations	None (Utilizes City Station)
Dispatch	CAL FIRE (Through City)
ISO Public Protection Classification:	
Within 5 miles of a Station and with a Credible Source of Water	9 (4 in City)
Without a Credible Source of Water	10
Regular Financial Audits	Biennial
Annual Revenue Per Capita (FYs 07-09)	\$178
Average Portion of County 1% Property Tax Received	8¢/\$1
Ending General Fund Balance (June 2009)	\$86,275
Change in General Fund Balance (from June 2007 to June 2009)	-5%
Total Fund Balance/Annual Revenue Total (FY 08-09)	21%

Source: District area estimated utilizing County of Monterey GIS Data; Population estimated utilizing 2010 U. S. Census Data, Assessed Valuation and Portion of County Property Tax Received are from County of Monterey Auditor-Controller’s Office; Fund Balance Information from District Audit; Other information from District.

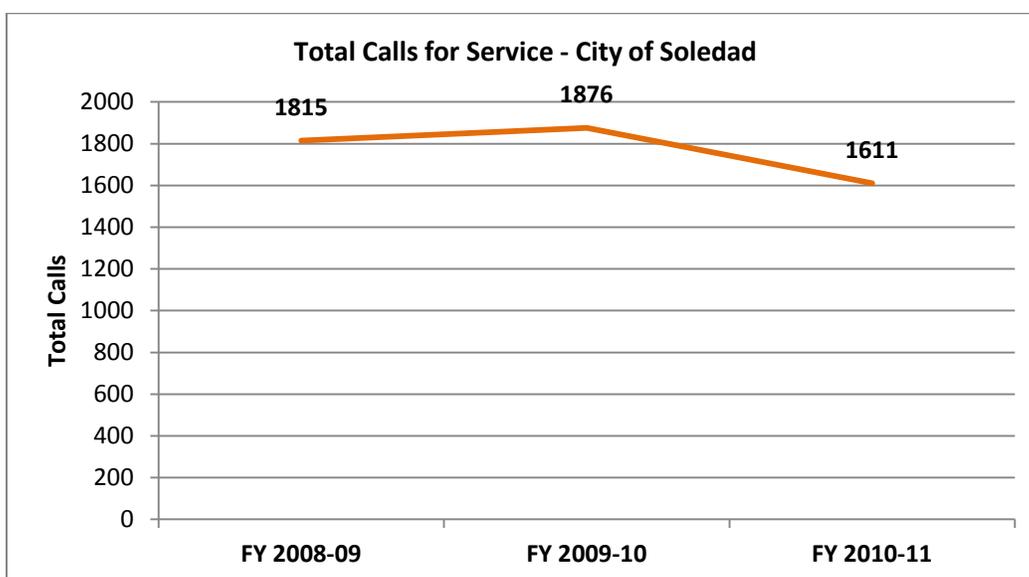
NOTE: The City of Soledad, which provided fire protection and emergency medical services to the District, covers approximately 4.6 acres and has a population of 25,738. Dispatch will change from the County to CAL FIRE on January 1, 2012.

Types of Services	
Fire	X
Technical Rescue	X
Basic Life Support (EMT)	X
Advanced Life Support (Paramedic)	-
Ambulance	-

**Mission Soledad Rural Fire Protection District
Formation, Revenues, Attributes, Types of Service, and Resources**

Station		
Address	Acquired/Built	Condition
525 Monterey Street, Soledad (City Fire Department Station)	1950	Good

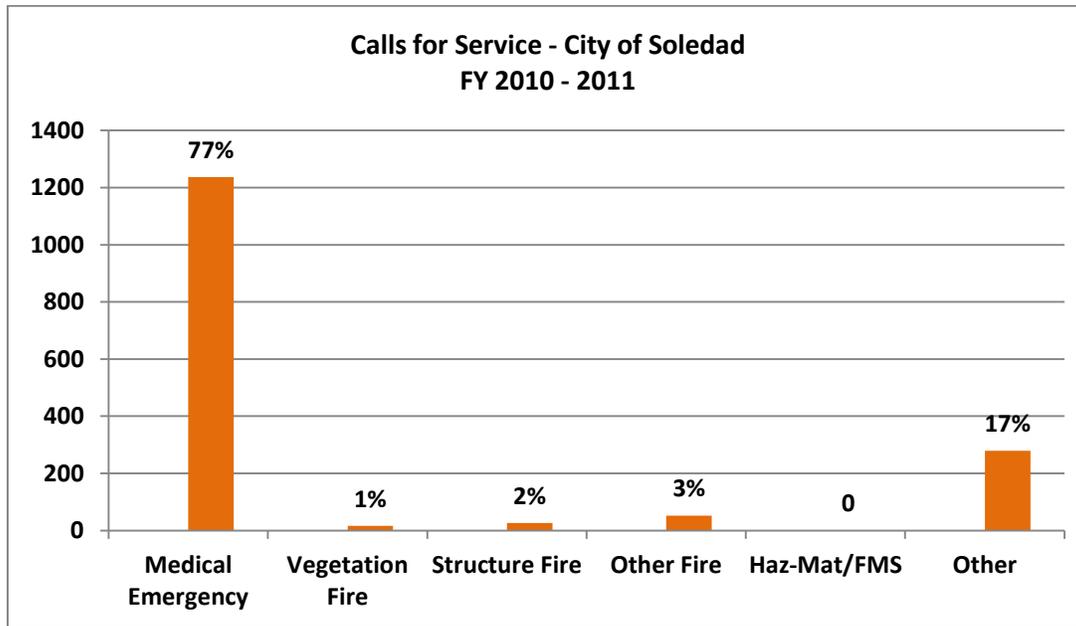
The Mission Soledad Rural Fire Protection District is contractually protected by the City of Soledad Fire Department which utilizes its own station and apparatus, and provides for staffing through direct hire or contract.



Source: County Department of Emergency Communications (911 System) Data.

Note: The above information includes all calls for service received by the Soledad Fire Department for services within both the City and the Mission Soledad Rural FPD. Also, this table tabulates calls referred to the District for primary response. Additional calls are referred - and responded to - for mutual and automatic aid.

Mission Soledad Rural Fire Protection District
Formation, Revenues, Attributes, Types of Service, and Resources



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