

Vice Mayor Rose Herrera
District 8



October 2016 Newsletter Message

Dear Neighbors,

Shortly after it erupted in the afternoon, the billowing black smoke emanating from the Loma Fire could be seen from city hall. The fire began on Monday, September 26th in the Santa Cruz Mountains near to the edge of San Jose. It was astonishing how fast it grew. At present, the fire has consumed over 4,000 acres of dry fuel. We're grateful to our own San José Fire Department for their quick response in deploying firefighting units to assist in the battle to contain the wildfire. Hundreds of homes lie in its path in addition to radio and television towers. Evacuations of residents have occurred and emergency shelters have been activated by the American Red Cross. Cal Fire will be joining local agencies and we all pray for speedy containment and the safe return of fire fighters and residents. By eerie coincidence, the start of the fire appears to have begun in the same area of the epicenter of the devastating Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989. Evergreen has drought impacted hillsides that must be alert for fires too. Disasters such as earthquakes can happen anywhere and anytime. So it's time to be prepared! In fact, the month of September is recognized as National Preparedness Month across the country.

For the past eight years of my tenure as a city councilmember and as Vice Mayor, I have been concerned for our preparedness (or lack of) for disasters. Due to budget cuts over the years, our city dropped funding for Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training. CERT training enables residents to prepare themselves, their families, and their neighbors to support the response to and recovery from large-scale, complex emergencies or disasters. In response to requests from residents, I requested restoration of this funding last year during our budget season and won support and approval for the funding. As this recent fire season has shown us, it is imperative that the City of San José provide disaster relief training and education to our residents. Ensuring that our community has adequate CERT training will increase the chances of survival in the event of an unpredictable, but likely to occur natural disaster such as the next large earthquake or wildfire. If you're interested in CERT training, the Office of Emergency Services will be posting class dates and times on their website later this fall. For more information please [go online](#).

In addition to the funding for CERT training, I have also authored a memo which included directing staff to include in work with all Council Districts to create, implement, and maintain a district emergency plan. This request has also been supported and implementation will be part of the Office of Emergency Services work plan.

We live in a large city and each resident should be aware that immediately following a disaster, everyone should be ready to fend for themselves for at least 72 hours. As we work to develop district and citywide Emergency Preparedness, I would also encourage you, your family, and your neighborhood to begin planning for disaster. View the city's most recent [emergency plan](#).

The first step in preparedness is to sign up for the reverse 911 call through AlertSCC. AlertSCC is a free, easy, and confidential way for anyone who lives or works in Santa Clara County to get emergency warnings sent directly to their cell phone, mobile device, email, or landline. AlertSCC can reach you wherever you are to provide information and instructions in a variety of emergency situations, which may include:

- Flooding, wildfires and subsequent evacuations
- Public safety incidents, including crimes, that immediately affect your neighborhood
- Post-disaster information about shelters, transportation, or supplies

It only takes a minute. [Sign up today](#) and tell someone everyone you know to sign up, too! The next step is to make a plan with your family. 1. Talk with family, friends and co-workers about what kind of emergencies might happen in your area and how you might respond to them. Our area is particularly vulnerable to earthquakes (updated predictions for a 6.7 magnitude or higher earthquake in the next 30 years is 63%), fires, and extreme weather (flooding). 2. Make a plan on what exits you might use and where you will meet up if you are not all at home. 3. Practice your emergency plan twice a year in order to be able to respond quickly during a real emergency.

Every resident should learn to be self-reliant in any emergency. I encourage you to create your own Emergency Kit which should include:

- Battery-powered radio, flashlights, and batteries
- Extra set of car keys
- Supply of easy-to-prepare, nonperishable foods (packaged snacks, fruits, water, and juices)
- Manual can opener
- Windup or battery-operated clock
- Cash, coins, and credit cards
- Change of clothing, rain gear, and sturdy shoes
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- If you have a baby, include extra diapers and other infant care items
- First aid kit
- Essential medicines and prescription information
- Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of doctors and pharmacist
- Extra pair of glasses, hearing aid batteries, extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, medication, catheters, food for guide or service dogs, or other special equipment you might need
- List of the style and serial numbers of medical devices such as pacemakers

Neighbors can also work together in preparation for disasters by identifying those in their neighborhood who may need extra help during an emergency such as elderly and handicapped residents. Get to know your neighbors and make an emergency plan for your neighborhood. You can start by gathering some of your family and neighbors and plan to attend a Community Preparedness Fair for more resources on Thursday, October 13th from 10 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. in the Rotunda at City Hall. For more details see the [flyer](#).

As we move into fall, the risk of wildfire in and/or around our community remains high. Please be vigilant and practice fire safe habits. For safety tips, please go to the Santa Clara County Fire Safe Council website to download a guide for [Living with Fire in Santa Clara County](#).

My thoughts are with the victims of the Loma Fire and the firefighters working to contain and extinguish the fire. If you want to help, please go to the [American Red Cross website](#).

As always, my office is open to input or questions by e-mailing district8@sanjoseca.gov or calling 408-535-4908.

I want to keep you informed! Sign up for the District 8 newsletter - go to www.sanjoseca.gov/district8.

Regards,



Vice Mayor Rose Herrera