



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

RON ROBERTS 2014 SEP 12 PM 5 01
SUPERVISOR, FOURTH DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA ITEM

CLERK OF THE BOARD
OF SUPERVISORS

DATE: September 23, 2014
TO: Board of Supervisors
SUBJECT: PARTNERING WITH SDSU TO DEVELOP INNOVATIVE SOCIAL MEDIA
DISASTER COMMUNICATIONS (DISTRICTS: ALL)

Overview

The San Diego County Office of Emergency Services (OES) coordinates the region's response to wildfires and other disasters. OES's responsibilities include alerting and notifying appropriate agencies when disaster strikes, coordinating between agencies, ensuring resources are available and mobilized, and, in concert with the County Communications Office (CCO), disseminating timely and accurate emergency information to the public. During a disaster, CCO and OES also monitor media and public communications for on-the-ground information, the public's concerns, and rumors that need to be verified or refuted.

With input from OES, San Diego State University's Center for Human Dynamics in the Mobile Age is developing a social media analysis tool for emergency communications and monitoring. The project and its lead researcher, Dr. Ming-Hsiang Tsou, were recently awarded a competitive grant from the National Science Foundation. The nearly \$1 million award over four years will allow SDSU to work with OES to refine software the County can use to better identify trends, topics and influential messages disseminated through social media during a disaster. The project is expected to help County staff conduct further-reaching emergency communications by social media, while also improving staff's awareness of and response to the evolving emergency and the public's needs.

Today's action directs the Chief Administrative Officer to allow the Office of Emergency Services to work with SDSU's Center for Human Dynamics to develop software and tools to improve the County's ability to use social media for disaster communications and response.

Recommendation(s)

SUPERVISOR RON ROBERTS

Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to allow the Office of Emergency Services to work closely with SDSU's Center for Human Dynamics to develop software and tools to improve the County's ability to use social media for disaster communications and response.

**SUBJECT: PARTNERING WITH SDSU TO DEVELOP INNOVATIVE SOCIAL MEDIA
DISASTER COMMUNICATIONS**

Fiscal Impact

There is no Fiscal Impact as a result of this action.

Business Impact Statement

N/A

Advisory Board Statement

N/A

Background

Background

The Office of Emergency Services (OES) coordinates the region's response to wildfires and other disasters. OES's responsibilities include alerting and notifying appropriate agencies when disaster strikes, coordinating between agencies, ensuring resources are available and mobilized, and, in concert with the County Communications Office (CCO), disseminating timely and accurate emergency information to the public. During a disaster, CCO and OES also monitor media and public communications for on-the-ground information about the emergency, the public's concerns, and rumors need to be verified or refuted

The County aims to reach as many people as possible, as quickly and effectively as possible, in an emergency. Doing so requires using the diverse communications tools and mediums, including telephones, cell phones, email, traditional media, the County's emergency website, its SD Emergency mobile app and social media.

With social media, information is broadcast and rebroadcast in a dispersed network of users, presenting new opportunities and challenges in emergency communications. For example, in the May 2014 wildfires, updates from the County's official Twitter feed were sent directly to the County's thousands of followers. Those updates were in turn "retweeted" extensively. News media and on-the-ground users also shared photos and other information with tens of thousands of additional users, with many of those users also retweeting the messages. When information travels in such a network, tracking information and assessing its accuracy or impact is challenging for emergency managers and public information officers. With traditional media, emergency staff has only to watch TV news and listen to the radio to find out what the public is hearing and saying, and whether the County's official information is being reported. Social media requires new communications monitoring tools and protocols.

With input from OES, San Diego State University's Center for Human Dynamics in the Mobile Age is developing a social media analysis tool for emergency communications and monitoring. The project and its lead researcher, Dr. Ming-Hsiang Tsou, were recently awarded a competitive grant from the National Science Foundation. The nearly \$1 million award over four years will allow SDSU to work with OES to refine software the County can use to better identify trends, topics and influential messages disseminated through social media during a disaster. The project is expected to help County staff conduct further-reaching emergency communications by social media, while also improving staff's awareness of and response to the evolving emergency and the public's needs.

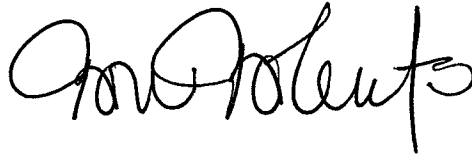
SUBJECT: PARTNERING WITH SDSU TO DEVELOP INNOVATIVE SOCIAL MEDIA
DISASTER COMMUNICATIONS

Today's action directs the Chief Administrative Officer to allow the Office of Emergency Services to work with SDSU's Center for Human Dynamics to develop software and tools to improve the County's ability to use social media for disaster communications and response.

Linkage to the County of San Diego Strategic Plan

Today's proposed action supports the Safe Communities Initiative of the County of San Diego's 2014-2019 Strategic Plan by ensuring the County works with regional partners to develop innovative and effective disaster communications tools.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron Roberts". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ron" and last name "Roberts" clearly distinguishable.

RON ROBERTS
Supervisor, Fourth District

ATTACHMENT(S)
N/A

SUBJECT: PARTNERING WITH SDSU TO DEVELOP INNOVATIVE SOCIAL MEDIA
DISASTER COMMUNICATIONS

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

REQUIRES FOUR VOTES: Yes No

WRITTEN DISCLOSURE PER COUNTY CHARTER SECTION 1000.1 REQUIRED
 Yes No

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:
N/A

BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:
N/A

BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:
N/A

MANDATORY COMPLIANCE:
N/A

**ORACLE AWARD NUMBER(S) AND CONTRACT AND/OR REQUISITION
NUMBER(S):**

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: District 4, Board of Supervisors

OTHER CONCURRENCES(S):

CONTACT PERSON(S):

Gabriel Gutierrez

Name
619-531-5544

Phone
Gabriel.Gutierrez@sdcountry.ca.gov

E-mail

Name

Phone

E-mail