

### Agency Profile

The Diamond Springs Volunteer Fire Company was established on February 1, 1949 because of consistent, destructive fires that often originated from river drainage areas. The town of El Dorado started its own volunteer fire company in the 1800's. The Diamond Springs Fire Protection District was formed in 1968. In 1979, the consolidation of the Diamond Springs Fire Protection District and the El Dorado Fire Protection District resulted in the current Diamond Springs/El Dorado Fire Protection District (DSP), which was formed under Government Code §61000, et seq., for the purpose of providing improved fire protection and related services. DSP is located in the south-central portion of El Dorado County (refer to Map B). In addition to the communities of Diamond Springs, Missouri Flat, Sleepy Hollow, Logtown and El Dorado, the DSP service area also encompasses the East China Hills, Golden West, Grassy Run, Greenstone Circle, Mortara Circle and Sierra Oaks CSDs. The Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians' Rancheria and the proposed Foothill Oaks Casino are within DSP's boundaries. All of the communities in LTB are major risk areas for wildland/urban interface.

### *Land Use Character*

Encompassing 93 square miles, DSP can be divided into four major land use types: Industrial, commercial, semi-urban and rural. The two industrial areas are located on the corner of Highway 49 and Missouri Flat Road in Diamond Springs and along Mother Lode Drive and Pleasant Valley Road area west of El Dorado. Commercial areas are concentrated in the upper mid-eastern portion of the district, around the towns of El Dorado and Diamond Springs and along the Missouri Flat Corridor. Semi-Urban Residential uses consist of single-family dwellings on less than five acres of land. These areas are located immediately north and south of the district's commercial and industrial center. Rural residential areas consist of single-family dwellings on five or more acre parcels and can be found in the far north and south areas of the district. These areas are furthest from the district's commercial center and can be very isolated. The southern part of the district has agriculture, cattle and grazing. There are pockets of crops and orchards, but the area is mostly devoted to grazing.

### *Level of Service*

DSP provides a moderate level of services to its residents district-wide. Its per capita district expenditure was \$58.62 in Fiscal Year 2003-2004. Its main funding mechanisms for these services are property taxes and development impact fees. Its six fire stations provide sufficient coverage for the district; however, some of those stations are partially staffed due to the occasional shortage of volunteers.

### Commission's Policies and Guidelines

LAFCO Policy 4.4 requires the Commission to review the following topics before making sphere-of-influence determinations. The Commission's recent review of fire suppression and emergency services addressed these requirements as noted below. All citations are from the Final Countywide Fire Suppression and Emergency Services Municipal Services Review, adopted by the Commission in August, 2006.

**1. Service capacity, level and types of services currently provided by the agency, and areas where these services are provided**

Refer to pages 52-54, "Services and Programs;" pages 55-56, "Infrastructure and Facilities;" pages 57-58, "Equipment and Vehicles;" pages 59-61, "Personnel and Staffing;" page 286, "Table 107 – Comparative Ratio of Firefighters to Population per Agency;" pages 296-297, "Diamond Springs/El Dorado FPD (DSP);" and Map 9 – "South County Stations."

**2. Financial capabilities and costs of service**

Refer to pages 65-69 "Funding and Budget;" pages 319-321, "Agency Funding;" page 342, "Table 113 – Comparative Ratio of Fire Protection Expenditures to Population per Agency;" and page 343, "Table 114 – Comparative Personnel Cost Percentage of Total Budget per Agency."

**3. Topographic factors and areas of social and economic interdependencies**

Refer to pages 49-51, "Diamond Springs/El Dorado Fire Protection District;" and page 309, "Table 111 – El Dorado County Land Use Forecasts."

**4. Existing and planned land uses, land use plans and policies, consistency with county and city general plans, and projected growth in the affected area**

Refer to page 51, "Growth and Population;" and pages 307-312, "Growth and Population Projections for the Affected Area."

**5. Potential effects on agricultural and open space lands**

Agricultural lands within DSP form a U-shaped band on the southern portion of the district and surrounding Union Mine Road and Highway 49. The northern portion and the middle of the district is composed mostly of medium to low density rural residential with the exception of the industrial and commercial areas of Diamond Springs. The 2004 General Plan directs unincorporated growth to already existing population centers, or "community regions," such as Diamond Springs and El Dorado. Most of the commercial, light industrial, educational and manufacturing facilities development is concentrated in the upper mid-eastern portion of the district, around the towns of El Dorado and Diamond Springs and along the Missouri Flat Corridor.

However, the services provided by the District do not induce urban growth or the premature conversion of agricultural land to urban uses. In agricultural areas, the district's services protect farmland and the agriculture economy by responding to emergencies in undeveloped areas and minimizing the financial cost that a fire could cause to farmers. In the developed areas, these services protect the human, economic and resource assets of the community by responding to emergencies that threaten lives and property.

**6. A description of the services that will be provided to any areas which may be added to the sphere and the timing and method for funding expansion of facilities or services**

Refer to pages 52-54, "Services and Programs; page 55-56, "Infrastructure and Facilities;" page 57-58, "Equipment and Vehicles;" pages 59-61, "Personnel and Staffing;" page 286, "Table 107 – Comparative Ratio of Firefighters to Population per Agency;" pages 296-297, "Diamond Springs/EI Dorado FPD (DSP);" and Map 9 – "South County Stations."

**7. *An analysis of the effects of a proposed sphere of influence on other agencies and their service capabilities:***

Refer to pages 336-339, "Government Structure and Cost Effectiveness."

**DETERMINATIONS**

In determining the sphere of influence for each local agency, Government Code §56425(e) requires the Commission to consider and prepare a written statement of determinations with respect to four factors. Staff recommends the following determinations for amending the sphere for DSP:

**1. *The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open space lands.***

Present land use in the DSP area includes industrial, commercial, semi-urban and rural residential uses. Although residential areas are distributed throughout DSP, they are more concentrated in the northern portion of the district and along Highway 49 to the south. Future land uses are expected to remain relatively unchanged, with population growth that is likely to be consistent with the 2004 General Plan projections for the unincorporated portion of the County.

There are approximately 1,385 acres currently within the DSP sphere that are not within the district boundaries. Of these, approximately 1,267 acres are in agricultural production, while the remaining 118 acres are currently vacant with no specified land use. While these parcels are not within a fire protection agency, the vast majority of the area in question is surrounded on all sides by DSP boundaries, indicating that it would be the most likely agency to respond to a fire or medical emergency. This creates an issue of fiscal inequity to DSP, because it does not receive revenue from these parcels to offset the potential costs of service. One 160-acre parcel, outside of the district, but inside the current sphere, is located between DSP and EI Dorado County Fire Protection District (ECF) boundaries. The DSP and ECF chiefs have requested that this parcel remain within the DSP sphere for now, pending a future collaborative effort from all of the fire districts to reorganize their service areas, if necessary.

**2. *The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area.***

Although the overwhelming majority of acreage outside of the DSP boundaries is currently used for agricultural purposes, the 2004 General Plan has designated these areas for 271 acres of Medium Density Residential use, 56 acres for Low Density Residential and 118 acres Rural Residential. In those cases, it is conceivable that in the future, lands previously used exclusively for agricultural

purposes may have structures built on them or for large parcels to be subdivided into smaller parcels with residences on them. If this were to occur, it would lead to an increase in service demand to the district. However, fire suppression and emergency medical services, in and of themselves, do not increase the likelihood of this type of activity and, therefore, induce urban growth or the premature conversion of agricultural, open space to urban uses.

Parcels currently within the DSP district receive sufficient fire suppression and emergency response services as needed. If annexed, the areas described above would increase demand for these services and existing personnel and equipment may not be adequate to meet the level of service required. However, with the additional revenue received from these parcels in the form of increased property taxes and assessments, as well as development impact fees, the increased costs and required resources would be sufficiently offset to ensure the provision of services to the area.

**3. *The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides or is authorized to provide.***

DSP appears to provide moderate fire suppression and emergency response services within and, in cases of mutual aid responses, outside its boundaries. The district is compensated for these services primarily through property taxes and district assessments.

**4. *The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the Commission determines that they are relevant to the agency.***

DSP serves the communities of Diamond Springs, Missouri Flat, Sleepy Hollow, Logtown, El Dorado, East China Hills, Golden West, Grassy Run, Greenstone Circle, Mortara Circle and Sierra Oaks CSDs. Rancheria territory owned by the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians and the proposed Foothill Oaks Casino are also within the DSP boundaries, although the Tribe supports its own fire department.

Based upon the information contained in this document, it is recommended that the Diamond Springs / El Dorado FPD Sphere of Influence be updated to affirm its current sphere, as shown in Map B.