

CASE STUDY

YUBA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Yuba County, California, Uses Genasys Protect EVAC for targeted communication and cross-agency collaboration during Wildfires



Situation

Faced with the expanding threat of wildfires, Yuba County officials were looking for a way to communicate effectively with their public while also enhancing the collaborative relationships of neighboring counties similarly affected by the massive wildfires that strike annually.

Located north of Sacramento and reaching deep into both the Plumas and Tahoe National Forests, Yuba County was positioned at the forefront of multiple wildfire disasters including the **North Complex fire** in August 2020. The North Complex fire impacted Yuba, Butte, and Plumas Counties and resulted in over 2,300 structures destroyed and 15 deaths—making it one of California's deadliest wildfire catastrophes.

Problem

While Yuba County had implemented a mass notification system from another provider to communicate with the public, there was not a clear common picture of events that reached all public safety agencies. They needed to better target messages to specific locations, making sure that all agencies were working quickly in location identification and targeted communication. In addition, the Yuba County Sheriff's Department and Office of Emergency Services wanted to expand their capabilities during evacuations for a county with a largely rural and dispersed population.

According to Nicholas Morawcznski, Yuba County Undersheriff, "It's always a challenge with wildfires – **getting information out to the public**. How do we do that in a timely manner, and keep them updated as things progress?"



Solution

Yuba County implemented Genasys Protect EVAC (formerly Zonehaven) to work in conjunction with their mass notification system. With EVAC, they were able to **front-load zone-related information, designate traffic control points, and pinpoint evacuation areas** to be ready in real time during an actual wildfire evacuation.

According to Morawcznski, the EVAC technology was a game changer in collaborating with fellow agencies and notifying the public. Morawcznski stated, "Both of our local fire districts...and local law enforcement were using the system and running off the same map which made the process much easier for our collective response."



Results

By participating in a growing group of Northern California counties using EVAC for evacuation management and repopulation during wildfires, Yuba County has integrated EVAC as part of their overall collaboration with fire and law enforcement. They have also implemented continued public safety programs to educate their constituents and **local media** about EVAC and the **Genasys Protect App** which is positively impacting the 911 dispatch team and freeing them up by directing people to the app-based zone information.

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