

To: Mark Derry, Editor, Gilroy Dispatch
From: Joe Kline, Public Information Officer, City of Gilroy
Date: July 1, 2011
Re: Response to JEERS in the July 1st Dispatch

Editor-

The “Jeers for the news that the City of Gilroy spends more on fire services than any City in Santa Clara County,” which appeared in the “Our View” section of the Friday, July 1st, 2011 Dispatch is extremely misleading and does not accurately convey the sum of the findings in the Grand Jury report that surveyed all fire services in Santa Clara County.

In surveying the eighteen cities and special fire districts within the County, the Grand Jury did in fact find that Gilroy allocates approximately 21% of its general fund budget for fire services. This figure, taken alone, does not begin to tell the story, as Gilroy currently has one of the lowest city budgets per capita in the county, largely as a result of aggressive and proactive cost-cutting measures which have taken place over the past two years. These measures have also placed the City of Gilroy in a much stronger financial position than most other cities in the county.

To best illustrate the point, the Grand Jury also found that the City of Gilroy spends the second lowest amount, per capita (per resident), on fire services as compared to the other seventeen agencies. On a per capita basis, Gilroy spends \$156 for fire services compared with \$871 for Los Altos Hills Fire District (the highest).

Efficient and effective public safety continues to be the City of Gilroy’s highest priority. It is important that the citizens of Gilroy understand that the City Council and City Administrator continue to maintain this priority, while providing the many other services that the citizens of Gilroy expect and deserve. A full understanding can only be expected when all of the facts are presented.

Joe Kline
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