Projects:	Sonoma County Fire Early Detection Camera System and the Rapid Warning System (Sirens)
Lead Department:	Department of Emergency Management

Funding Requested:	$2,700,000		
Estimated Total Cost:	$3,600,000	Estimated Grant Start Date:	October 2019

PROGRAM SUMMARY. Improved early identification of fire ignition and targeted emergency response will assist the County and emergency officials in reducing risk and preventing damage that would otherwise occur. In order to prevent small fires from becoming catastrophic, Sonoma County is implementing a system for rapid detection and notification of impending wildfire.

PUBLIC BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM. Decrease likelihood of catastrophic wildfire by enhancing situational awareness and offering a method of warning to the public to take protective actions during an emergency.

WILDFIRE IN SONOMA COUNTY. In a 50 year span from 1964-2015 Sonoma County has experienced 18 major wildfires that destroyed nearly 2,000 structures, and then the "Sonoma Complex Fires" resulted in the loss of 43 lives, destroyed nearly 7,000 homes, and burned more than 100,000 acres in Sonoma County and surrounding counties. The "Sonoma Complex Fires" burned in nearly identical footprints to 1964's Hanley Fire and Nuns Canyon Fire.

THE PROBLEM. *The October 2017 fires represent the brutal reality that new, innovative methods be utilized to reduce the loss of life and property from wildfire.* When the wildfires broke out in Sonoma County, some started in neighboring Napa County and quickly spread into Sonoma driven by 60+ MPH winds until they engulfed many neighborhoods and became one of the most destructive wildfires in California's history. Because of the speed in which the disaster developed, established detection and emergency alert systems were strained.

THE SOLUTION

- ❖ **Fire Cameras.** Early detection is key to preventing the rapid spreading of wildfire. The Early Detection Fire Camera System will identify precise locations that can be immediately confirmed and then transmitted to fire fighters or other resources. Emergency managers will use this data to assess the degree of risk and view real time developments to provide early evacuation warnings to the public. Images from the cameras are posted publicly on the alertwildfire.org website.
- ❖ **Sirens.** For disaster threats, the more methods of alert and warning we have, the better our chances of alerting the community and allowing them to seek safety. The sirens project bolsters notification capability by providing an audible warning signal in places where other communication means have difficulty reaching people even in ideal conditions. While siren use is not an optimal stand-alone system, the use of sirens to augment the telecommunications and media network has the potential to help save many lives.

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