

Paradise Lost and The Camp Fire's Lasting Effects

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CSMFO JANUARY 2020

PRESENTED BY:

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The Camp Fire

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The Camp Fire was the deadliest, most destructive fire in California history. More than 19,000 structures burned, including over 14,000 homes, 86 people died, and 153,336 acres burned. Evacuations were in place for 85 days. Sheltering continued for a year.



November 8, 2018 – 6:30am

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- Fire was ignited in a remote area of Butte County
- “Camp Fire” was driven North West by intense winds in areas of high fuel loads
- Moving from ridge to ridge, in less than 12 hours fire burned through communities of Concow, Paradise, Magalia, and Butte Creek Canyon.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WuOcyM3KYrA#>



Town of Paradise

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- Walkthrough with IT
- Business Continuity
 - Hardware & Software Availability
 - Business Resources
 - Communications



Butte County Population Pre-Camp Fire

228,000 Residents

- 93,000 Chico
- 26,000 Paradise
- 18,000 Oroville
- 8,800 Gridley/Biggs



Butte County

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- Oroville is the County Seat
- Roughly 2,150 Employees
 - Over 15% of employees directly impacted by the fire
 - Many more with indirect impacts & secondary trauma
- Relatively Poor County
- 6 Federally Declared Disasters Since 2008
 - 2008 Lightning Complex
 - 2017 January Storms, February Storms, October Fires (Oroville Dam Spillway Incident and Evacuations)
 - 2018 Camp Fire, February Flooding



County Emergency Operation Center (EOC)

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- Public Information
- Sheltering People and Animals
- Coordination w/Sheriff & Fire Operations
- Coordination w/Communities, Nonprofits, Elected Officials
- Roads
- Public Health
- Logistical Support
- Cost Recovery



Butte County EOC Position Assignments

Management Team

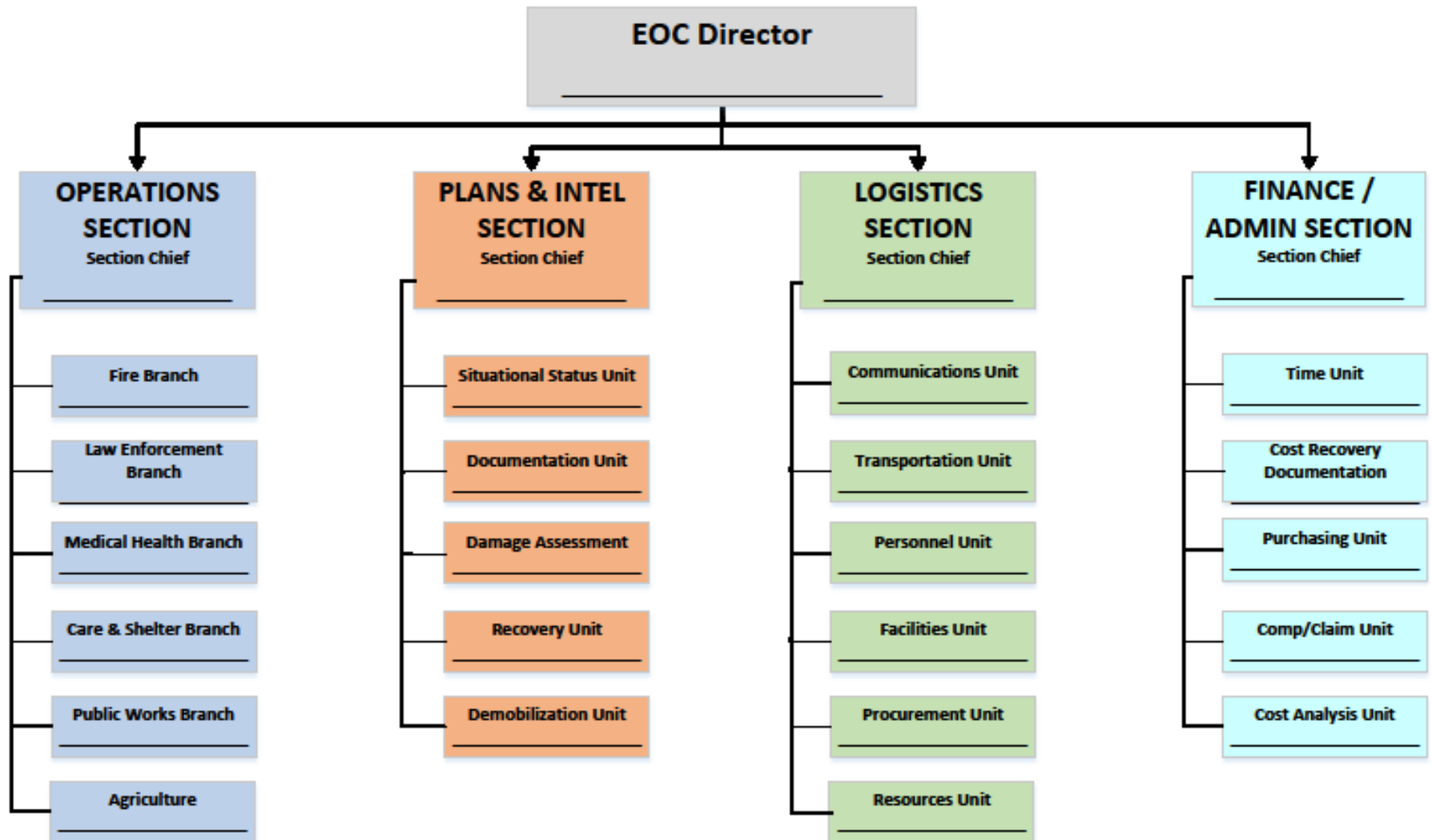
EOC Director

Public Information
Officer

Liaison Officer

EOC Manager

Safety Officer



What Worked

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- Trained, Practiced & Dedicated Staff
 - Senior team with significant experience
 - Staff lost homes and were displaced
- Experience
 - Systems in place to track time & purchases – 214s
 - Robust, experienced logistics team that knows FEMA requirements
 - Good coordination with Sheriff & Fire
 - System in place for staff to get through road blocks
 - Contacts in our phones (staff & otherwise)
- Relationships
- Innovation
 - Square peg in a round hole
- Bring Department of Finance and Legislators to Visit
- Retired Annuitants



Working with CalOES & FEMA

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- ✓ They are here to help...and overwhelmed too
- ✓ Staff will change & replacements won't be briefed
- ✓ Get everything in writing (and it still might change)
- ✓ Recognize FEMA is largely designed for hurricanes
- ✓ Bring in your leadership when needed – no's can turn to yes



I Wish Butte County Would Have...

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- Realized Earlier How Overwhelmed We Would Be
 - We Needed More of Everything
 - Everything Needed to Be Scaled Up
 - ✦ Tracking Systems, Reporting, Everything
- Requested Mutual Aid Earlier, Working Side by Side
- Learned More from Napa/Sonoma/Shasta Events
- Had Plans in Place to Deal with Trauma in our Staff
- Got it in Writing
- Figured Out How to Integrate EOC and Recovery Operations



Town of Paradise – Lessons Learned

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1. Understand insurance policy limitations
2. Be persistent finding assistance
3. Be pro-active about staff retention
4. Physical and mental support for staff while preparing for turnover
5. Engage with the community & professionals
6. Realistic expectations
7. Pace yourselves



County Financial Impacts

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- Uncertainty Continues
- Disaster Related Costs – \$30 Million & Still Spending
 - Cat A&B Response & Debris 2.5% local share
 - ✦ Authorized for regular staff time for Cat A
 - ✦ Mutual Aid Payments Pending
 - ✦ Debris Removal & Collections Process
 - ✦ Tree Removal & Collections Process
 - Cat C-G Infrastructure 6.25% local share
 - ✦ Coordination with Insurance Process
 - ✦ Infrastructure Damage During the Event
 - ✦ Infrastructure Damage from Debris/Tree Operations



County Financial Impacts

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- Property Tax – 3% Reduction in County Assessed Value
 - Mid-year adjustment in 2018-19
 - Additional adjustments for 2019-20
 - Three year property tax backfill
 - ✦ \$1.5 million in 2018-19
 - ✦ \$4.3 million in 2019-20 (includes in lieu VLF)
 - ✦ Est \$4.2 million In 2020-2021
 - 14,000 Homes Destroyed, 1 year later 37 are rebuilt, best case is 1,000 at 2 year mark
 - \$4 million ongoing shortfall?
 - Base Year Value Transfers



County Financial Impacts

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- Other Revenues
 - Teeter Plan Revenue Reductions
 - Reductions to PG&E and Comcast Franchise Fees
 - One-time/limited time increase to Sales Tax
 - Departmental Revenues
 - Cost Plan Impacts
- New & Different Needs
 - Building Project Cost Increases
 - Limited Capacity to do Normal Work
 - Public Safety Power Shutoffs – Generators & EOC
 - Recovery Work
 - Housing Problems
- PG&E Settlement ?





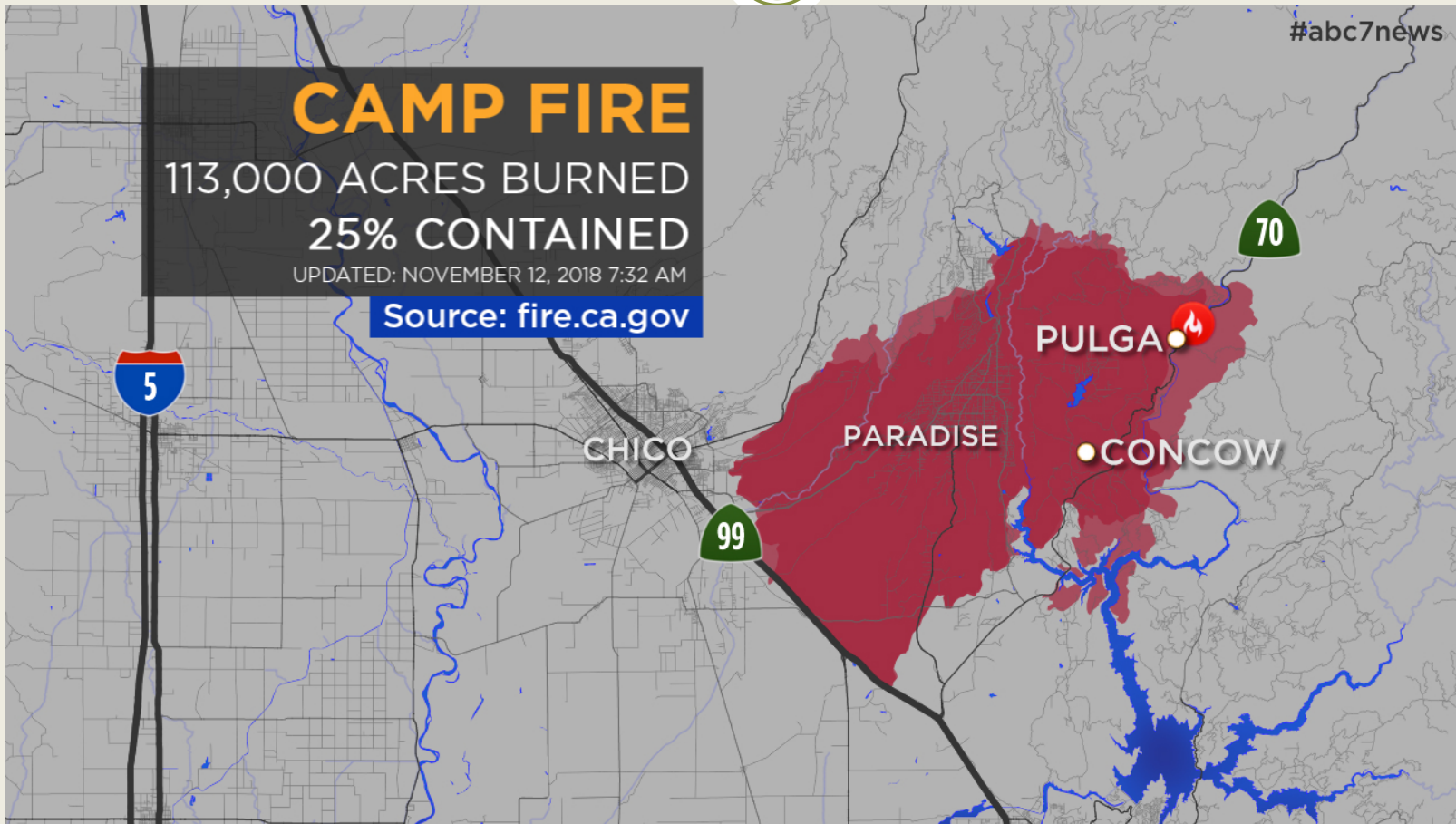
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The Camp Fire: Chico's Story

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BIDWELL PARK

The Camp Fire: Chico's Story

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BIDWELL MANSION & CHICO STATE UNIVERSITY



The Camp Fire: Chico's Story

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Change in Population Per DOF:

Population on January 1, 2018:	92,861
Population on January 1, 2019	112,111
Increase	19,250
% Increase	20.7%



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IMMEDIATE EFFECTS: **SAFETY RESPONSE**

- Fire crews responded to fire
- Police patrol units assisted Sheriff
- Public Works units worked on signal lights



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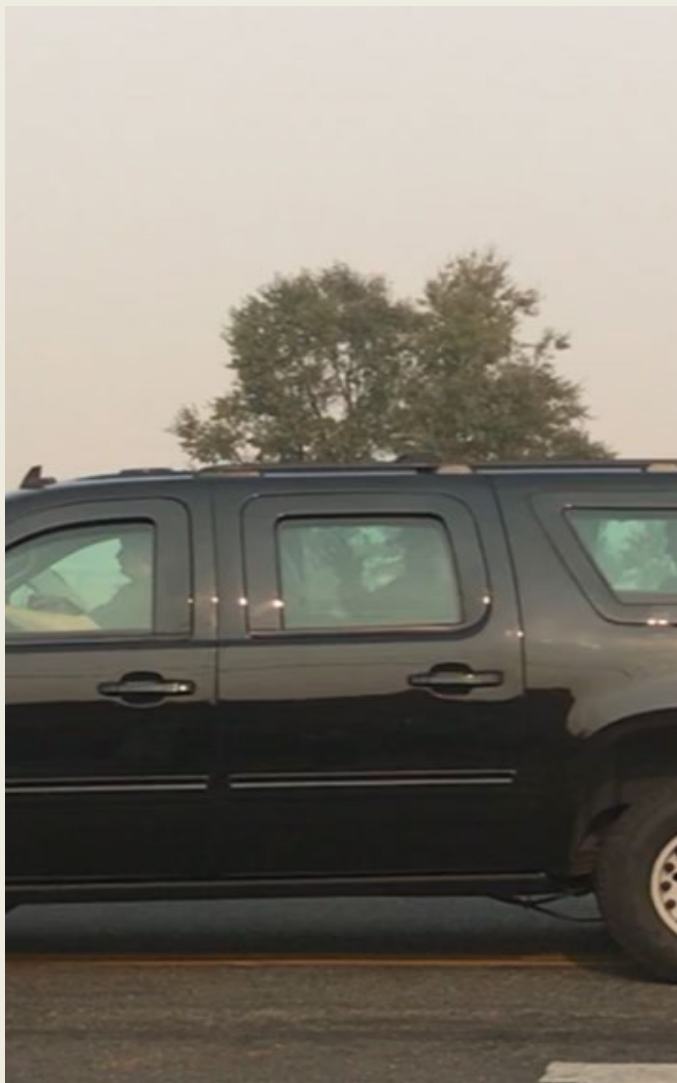
IMMEDIATE EFFECTS

- Smoke filled the sky
- Total darkness at noon next day
- No physical damage or burn scars in Chico limits

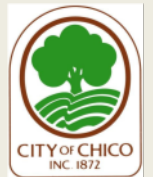


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**PRESIDENT
TRUMP VISITED
ON 11/17/2018**



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IMMEDIATE EFFECTS: **OVERNIGHT STAYS**

- Hotels filled to capacity
- “Couch Crashers” stayed with Chico family and friends
- Rental occupancy rate jumped to near 100%
- Home Sales



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IMMEDIATE EFFECTS: **OVERNIGHT STAYS**

- Official Shelters established
- Unofficial Shelters established (Walmart Parking Lot)



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IMMEDIATE EFFECTS: **CITY EMPLOYEES**

- 35 City of Chico employees lost their homes
- 3 of 13 in the Finance Office lost their homes
 - Jessica moved to Colorado
 - Melanie stayed in a hotel for 3 months and later purchased a home in Chico
 - Crystal purchased a home in Chico
- Emotional effects on staff
- Overtime work by management staff



IMMEDIATE EFFECTS OF CAMP FIRE:

- Shared Resources
- Emergency Operations Center
- Information Systems Resources



**CITY OF CHICO OLD MUNICIPAL
BUILDING BECAME PARADISE TOWN
HALL**

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IMMEDIATE EFFECTS: **GENEROSITY**

- Many opened their homes
- Generous contributions of clothing
 - ✦ No where to store leftovers
- Contributions of gift cards
 - ✦ Others came from outside areas to get gift cards



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IMMEDIATE EFFECTS : **TRAFFIC**

- Usage of some roads increased by 77%
- Accidents increased by 29%
- Commute times increased



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IMMEDIATE EFFECTS: **SCHOOLS**

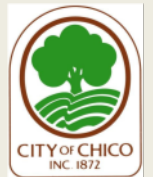
- Relocation of Paradise Schools
 - High School met in an unoccupied office building
 - Middle School met in an old OSH building
 - Charter school relocated to Church softball field
- Chico schools enrolled students



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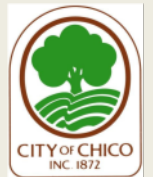
- IMMEDIATE EFFECTS: **AIRPORT**
- Terminal became an animal shelter
- Old army air base used as the FEMA, CalOES and Red Cross base camp



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LONG-TERM EFFECTS: CHICO



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LONG-TERM EFFECTS: **CITY RESOURCES**

- Additional resources needed to cope with population increase
- Estimated additional annual costs is \$13,400,000
- No new significant long-term revenue streams



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LONG-TERM EFFECTS: REIMBURSEMENTS

- FEMA & CALOES
 - Staff turnover = no consistency
 - No Physical Loss = No \$
 - Document, document & document
 - Subcontractor's get a higher reimbursement rate
- STATE LEGISLATORS VERY HELPFUL
 - \$3 million allocation to help mitigate effects
- GRANT REQUESTS
- OTHER



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LONG-TERM EFFECTS: **REVENUES**

- **Sales Taxes**

- Immediate need for vehicle replacements, etc.
- Large purchases made by Ridge residents in Chico before fire
- Revenue increase considered a “Blip”

- **Transient Occupancy Tax**

- Tax is 10%
- Exemptions for continuous stays over 31 days
- Concern that exemptions would eliminate tax
- Revenue increase considered a “Blip”



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LONG-TERM EFFECTS: **REVENUES**

- Property Taxes

- Year of disaster all county-wide agencies share in loss
- Loss Backfilled by State of California
- New home purchases
- Lingering effects of audits from year of disaster



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LONG-TERM EFFECTS: **SEWER**

- Sewer costs increased by 16%. No quick way to increase sewer fees
- Sewer costs could not be increased immediately to cover new costs



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LONG-TERM EFFECTS: **HOUSING**

- Shortages
 - Short supply before fire
 - Rentals converted to Sales
- Loss of new talent – No homes for new workers
 - ✦ Effects City of Chico Municipality
 - ✦ Effects on economic development (Hospitals)
- City enacted:
 - No price gouging emergency ordinance
 - New Auxiliary Dwelling Unit Standards (ADU)
 - Reduced costs for some development
 - Homeless task force and conference



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LONG-TERM EFFECTS: **EDUCATION**

- Secondary Schools increase in students
- Chico State and Butte College decrease in students
- Unknown the long-term effects



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THINGS LEARNED:

- Document everything
- Reach out to those who have lived through a disaster (City of Santa Rosa)
- Get a consultant
- Work with your legislators
- Create a resolution for straight-time reimbursement of overtime for management staff
- Do not give up!
- Pace yourself and get some rest



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