



Ventura County Fire Protection District  
2012 Annual Report



# Message from the Fire Chief

Chief Mark Lorenzen

The year 2012 was a significant one for the Ventura County Fire Protection District. We changed leadership. We've renewed our commitment to the environment, and we're focusing on the future.

In March, Fire Chief Bob Roper retired after serving nearly 15 years as the department's chief and almost 33 years as a member of the department. I was both proud and honored to be selected as his replacement. And now, after almost a year in the position, I can truly see the quality of the organization he built and that I am privileged to lead.

The legendary coach of the Green Bay Packers, Vince Lombardi, said, "The achievements of an organization are the results of the combined effort of each individual." That is clearly the case with the Fire District. I am very fortunate to be surrounded by people who are capable, competent and committed, and their united accomplishments keep our organization strong and focused on the future.

Our people are the key to the future of the Fire District and the caliber of our people is directly tied to our success. I am humbled to lead an organization that is so well-respected within the fire service, the communities we serve, and across the state and nation.

At the Fire District, we have always been concerned with our environment and natural surroundings. When the District was formed in 1928, our first fire chief, Walter Emerick, had already been the County's Fish and Game Warden since 1923. Over the years we have continued to pay special attention to our brush-covered hillsides, seeking to mitigate the wildfire hazard they pose, while preserving habitats, protecting native species and combating invasive species. Now we are taking conservation even further and applying it to our operations.

Our two newest fire stations, 43 and 47 in Simi Valley, were both built to tough environmental standards that reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills, conserve energy and water, and are healthier and safer for the firefighters who live there.

And finally, we are continually seeking ways to anticipate and respond to the needs of the diverse and dynamic communities we serve. Some of that is done operationally, through new equipment or training. But much of it is done through new processes and policies that encourage interaction with the public and make doing business with the District easier and less complicated.

As 2013 begins, the Ventura County Fire Protection District is strong – both operationally and fiscally – and we are moving into the future with purpose, pride and professionalism.

## Board of Directors

The Ventura County Fire Protection District (Fire Department) is a dependent special district within the county that was created by a special election. It was formed in 1928 to provide fire protection for most areas of the county. That area now includes the cities of Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley, Moorpark, Camarillo, Port Hueneme and Ojai, as well as the unincorporated areas of the county.

The County of Ventura Board of Supervisors acts as the Fire District's Board of Directors. One supervisor is elected from each of the five supervisorial districts within the county. These five supervisors appoint the fire chief to provide fire protection services for the District.

Currently, the Ventura County Fire Protection District Board of Directors is comprised of:



### District 1 – Supervisor Steve Bennett

He represents the communities of San Buenaventura, Montalvo, Saticoy, Ojai Valley, City of Ojai, Upper Ojai Valley, Riverpark, Northwest Oxnard, and North Coast.



### District 2 – Supervisor Linda Parks

She represents the cities and areas of Thousand Oaks, Newbury Park, Westlake Village, Oak Park, Bell Canyon, Hidden Valley, Lake Sherwood, Somis, Las Posas Valley, California State University Channel Islands, Portions of the Oxnard Plain, Santa Rosa Valley, Naval Base Ventura County Point Mugu, California Air National Guard, and South Coast.



### District 3 – Supervisor Kathy Long

She represents the communities of Camarillo, Port Hueneme, Southeast Oxnard, East Oxnard Plain, Santa Paula, Fillmore, Piru, East Lockwood Valley, and Eastern Portion of Naval Base Ventura County Port Hueneme.



### District 4 – Supervisor Peter C. Foy

He represents the communities of Simi Valley, Moorpark, Santa Susana Knolls, Box Canyon, Chatsworth Peak, Home Acres, Sinaloa Lake, and Tierra Rejada Valley.



### District 5 – Supervisor John Zaragoza

He represents the communities of Oxnard, Oxnard Shores, Mandalay Bay, Silver Strand, Hollywood Beach, Hollywood By-the-Sea, Channel Islands Harbor, El Rio, Nyeland Acres, Del Norte Area, Oxnard College, Oxnard Plain, Strickland and Portion of Naval Base Ventura County Port Hueneme.



### Ventura County Fire Department

165 Durlay Avenue • Camarillo, CA 93010

805-389-9710 • Fax: 805-388-4364

<http://fire.countyofventura.org> • <http://vcreadyssetgo.org>

<http://www.facebook.com/venturacountyfire>

## District Promotions

### Promoted to County Fire Chief

Mark Lorenzen

### Promoted to Deputy Fire Chief

Michael La Plant

### Promoted to Assistant Fire Chief

Keith Gurrola

### Promoted to Division Chief

Andrew Ortega

### Promoted to Battalion Chief

Bill Breuklander      Gary Monday  
Todd Leake              Jerry Vandermeulen

### Promoted to Captain

Lance Austin            Jeff Pike  
Paul Barrera            Jeff Studt  
Michael Fine            Kenneth Van Wig  
Jason Hansen           Robert Welsbie  
Steven Matsuura       Danny Whelan

### Promoted to Firefighter Trainee

Peter Duran            Gregory Peters  
Michael Kennedy      Jeffrey Whitehouse

### Promoted to Senior Fire Control Worker

Ryan Eaton

### Promoted to Fire Equipment Mechanic

Ryan Lee

## District Retirements

### County Fire Chief

Bob Roper

### Battalion Chief

Jim Ackerman  
Bob Ameche  
Ranger Dorn

### Captain

Michael Eul  
Rick Frebe  
Gary Gallion  
Jules Griggs  
Ron Lauer  
Tom Law  
Tom Retan  
Daniel Rodriguez

### Engineer

Mark Carrillo  
Jeffrey Norcott

### Firefighter

Daniel Salas

### Public Safety Dispatcher II

Vicki Crabtree

### Office Assistant III

Ann Patton

## Department Profile

The Ventura County Fire Protection District response area covers 848 square miles, an area about half the size of the state of Rhode Island. The county has 42 miles of coastline and ranges in elevation from sea level to 8,831 feet at Mount Pinos in the Los Padres National Forest. The District provides fire, emergency medical and rescue services in areas as diverse as urban centers, the coastline, farmlands and wildlands.

In 2012, District firefighters responded to 34,779 calls for service – an average of over 95 every day – under an adopted operating budget of just over \$126 million. Currently, the District serves about 57 percent of the population of Ventura County, more than 480,000 people in six cities and the unincorporated areas of the county.

### FIRE DEPARTMENT PROFILE

#### PERSONNEL

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Safety:<br>(firefighters, battalion chiefs, etc.)                         | <b>395</b> |
| Non-Safety:<br>(fire prevention, fleet maintenance, administration, etc.) | <b>158</b> |
| Total Allocated Positions:  | <b>574</b> |
| Fire Stations:  | <b>32</b>  |
| Administration and Support Facilities:                                    | <b>4</b>   |

#### APPARATUS

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| First-Run Fire Engines:                                   | <b>31</b> |
| First-Run Quint Apparatus:                                | <b>1</b>  |
| Ladder Trucks (incl. 2 reserve):                          | <b>5</b>  |
| Paramedic Squad Vehicles:                                 | <b>2</b>  |
| Wildland Fire Engines:                                    | <b>11</b> |
| Crash Truck:  | <b>1</b>  |
| Crew Transports:  | <b>3</b>  |
| USAR Vehicles:  | <b>2</b>  |
| Reserve Fire Engines:                                     | <b>16</b> |
| Fire Boat and Water Rescue Craft:                         | <b>5</b>  |
| Command Vehicles:   | <b>14</b> |
| Heavy Equipment:<br>(bulldozers, loaders, backhoes, etc.) | <b>9</b>  |
| Other Emergency Response Vehicles:                        | <b>34</b> |



# 2012 Highlights

## Transition at the Top

The United States has inaugurated three presidents since the last time the Ventura County Fire Protection District named a new leader. That changed in March 2012, when Mark Lorenzen was selected to replace Bob Roper as the Fire Chief.

Roper had served as Fire Chief since May 1997, and retired in March after almost 33 years of service to the citizens of Ventura County. During his tenure, Roper and the District received numerous awards and became a nationally renowned and respected fire department.

“Chief Roper left me a strong and fiscally sound organization,” said Lorenzen, “but our greatest asset is the people we have working for us. Our firefighters set the bar for others to follow and our other employees are true professionals. I’m both humbled and proud to be leading them.”

Lorenzen, a 21-year veteran of the department rose steadily through the ranks and was named Deputy Chief in May 2010. He is a CPA with more than 20 years of accounting experience and he has earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of California at Santa Barbara and a Master of Public Administration from California State University, Dominguez Hills.

## Rolling Hazardous Materials Laboratory

In 2012, the District upgraded its ability to respond to hazardous materials incidents with the purchase of a new HazMat trailer. Based out of Station 50 in Camarillo, HazMat 50 replaces the former trailer, a converted horse-hauler, which was placed into service in the late 1980s.

HazMat 50 features a slide-out Command Post that provides additional workspace, multiple computer stations, large-screen monitors, a top-mounted camera with infra-red for night vision, a lab and workspace area and storage for a wide range of testing equipment, boots, gloves, breathing apparatus and other equipment.

A federal grant paid about 75 percent of the trailer’s cost. The remainder came from money budgeted over a period of years, making the purchase of HazMat 50 a sound fiscal decision.

## CERT Members Refresh Their Skills

In October, the District hosted the fourth annual CERT Refresher exercise at the Regional Training Center in Camarillo. The exercise gives community volunteers who have graduated from the Community Emergency Response Team program the opportunity to polish their skills and use them in a realistic disaster scenario.

More than 70 CERT graduates turned out for the all-day training. The day started with classroom training on search and rescue, fire suppression, first aid, and medical triage. In the afternoon, the CERT members entered a large-scale simulated disaster area where they were tasked with employing their skills to mitigate the incident. The scenario included fires, a vehicle accident and people trapped inside a building.

Firefighters, volunteers and other emergency service workers took part in the exercise including some who wore special make-up to simulate injuries.

## Uniforms have a New Look

For the first time since the District was formed in 1928, a departmentwide uniform patch has been approved and is now worn by all firefighters.

Various units within the department, including many of the fire stations, have had patches over the years. But the new shoulder patch is the first to be used by the entire department. The patches are in the shape of the fire service’s traditional Maltese cross and the County seal is in the center of the patch. Firefighters wear a dark blue patch while chief officers wear a black one.



# 2012 Highlights

## New Station Opens in Simi Valley

Station 47 on Erringer Road in Simi Valley was officially dedicated in November. Although a number of stations have been remodeled or relocated to new facilities, Station 47 is the first completely new station built by the District in over 10 years.

The station was constructed in response to the amount of development in the Big Sky area of Simi Valley, but the station is a benefit for the entire city as well. Its location north of Highway 118 allows very rapid access to the freeway, providing faster response time to other areas of the city when needed.

With the addition of Station 47, the Ventura County Fire Protection District now operates 32 stations in six cities and the unincorporated areas of the county. Station 47 is just over 7,000 square feet and features two apparatus bays and six dorms. It had a project budget of \$4.2 million and was built using an architectural design consistent with the community it serves.



## The District Goes Green

Concern for the environment has always been a focus of the District. This concern is usually seen in our wildland operations where fuel management to reduce the severity of wildfires is also designed to preserve habitats, protect wildlife and combat invasive species. But the District is taking conservation even further.

Much of our light fleet vehicle inventory now consists of hybrid cars, reducing both fuel costs and emissions. And our two newest fire stations – 43 and 47 in Simi Valley – were designed to internationally recognized green building standards that lower operating costs, reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills, conserve energy and water, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The District is also making more use of solar panels for power (photo) and reducing the impact of exterior lighting on the neighborhoods around the fire stations by using downward-facing lighting.



## 48th and 49th Fire Academies

In 2012, the District graduated two fire academy classes, the 48th and 49th. A total of 27 new firefighters joined the ranks after completing their 18-week academies.

Each academy is a comprehensive course in firefighting instruction. The trainees learn about every aspect of firefighting and much of the coursework is conducted outside the classroom as they learn fire suppression techniques, search and rescue, ladders, hose evolutions, roof operations and many other skills.

Each academy concludes with a public demonstration of their skills at the Regional Training Center in Camarillo. During the demonstration, the trainees conduct live-fire exercises involving a structure fire and a vehicle fire. They also put on exhibitions involving automobile extrications, rappelling, ladder and roof operations.

At a formal ceremony following the demonstrations, the new firefighters receive their badges in front of family and friends.



## 2012 Fire Season

Ventura County enjoyed a light fire season in 2012. For the third year in a row, wildfire activity was light despite the occurrence of Santa Ana winds and very dry vegetation.

Firefighters were able to keep the fires that occurred small because they were both well-trained and well-prepared.

In July, a series of live-fire exercises were held near Moorpark to help the District's firefighters train and refresh their wildfire-fighting skills. Firefighters from other nearby agencies were invited to participate as well. The exercises involved progressive hose-lays, pumping, communications and tactics.



# Bureaus

The Fire District is divided into six functional bureaus and units. Each performs specific tasks either to directly serve the public, or to support the District's mission of public service.

**The Bureau of Emergency Services** fulfills the core function of the Fire District. The bureau is responsible for all fire suppression and rescue activities, the delivery of emergency medical care, regional dispatching, and specialized responses such as hazardous materials incidents (HazMat), urban search and rescue (US&R) and water rescues.

The Fire District maintains 32 stations across the county, staffed 24-hours a day, for responding to emergencies. The fire apparatus at these stations are equipped to handle fires, provide emergency medical care and perform rescue operations. As a regional dispatch center, Public Safety Dispatchers at the Fire Communications Center direct responses from the Ventura County Fire Department and most of the other fire agencies and all of the ambulance services in the county.

In 2012, District firefighters responded to almost 35,000 calls for service.

**The Bureau of Support Services** consists of the Fleet Maintenance unit, the Wildland/Aviation unit and the Supply unit.

Fleet Maintenance is responsible for keeping the District's fleet of vehicles in service and available for response. This past year, the Shop achieved 100 percent completion of the Preventative Maintenance Program by coordinating and tracking the schedules for the District's various types of Fleet vehicles. This improved process resulted in cost savings and reduced the down-time of apparatus and vehicles. The Shop also took delivery of, and placed into service, eight new vehicles and ordered a new D6 dozer.

The Wildland Fire and Aviation unit responds to wildfires with hand crews and dozers to create firebreaks, conduct backfiring operations and assist in firefighting operations. It also coordinates the use of the Ventura County Sheriff's Department fleet of helicopters for Fire District missions.

The department was awarded the 2012 Western States Fire Managers Wildland Urban Interface Grant from the USDA Forest Service for the Buena Ventura Prescription Burn Project that will be implemented by the Wildland crew during 2013.

The Wildland unit has been selected by NASA and Chapman University to work in partnership on a satellite-based program to track fuel and soil moisture. This recognition is a result of Ventura County being one of the very few agencies that tracks its own fuel data.

The Supply unit receives and distributes all goods and materials for the Fire District. Most recently, staff ordered and issued the PPE and other equipment for members of the two fire academies held during 2012.

**The Bureau of Fire Prevention** is responsible for three functions that are both interrelated and mutually supportive. They are: Planning and New Construction; Code Enforcement and Licensed Care; and Engineering and Fire Protection Systems. Fire Hazard Reduction (weed abatement), Community Education and Filming, and Public Information are also units within the bureau.

In 2012, the Fire Prevention Bureau went online with a new land management software system called Accela. The Accela system improves data transparency for the District and the public, inter-agency collaboration on joint projects, project tracking, statistical/metric reporting and, most importantly, customer service.

The Community Education unit taught more than 300 classes, educating almost 14,000 people on such important topics as fire extinguisher use, emergency preparations and fire safety in the home.

**The Bureau of Planning and Technology** consists of the Training, Public Records, Computer-Aided Dispatch, Geographic Information and Mapping, Emergency Medical Services, Information Technology, Pre-Emergency Planning and Investigations, and Telecommunication units.

The EMS unit reported 31 CPR saves for 2012. These were all people who were found in full cardiac arrest, had a pulse re-established in the field and were later discharged from the hospital to resume a normal life. This is the highest number of CPR saves in a single year ever recorded by the District.

The Regional Training Center is responsible for fire, rescue and emergency medical training for the District's members. In 2012, department-wide training focused on live structure fire simulations to train firefighters to recognize rapid heat build-up and the proper use of nozzle applications in interior structure fire operations. The RTC also held promotional workshops for both captains and engineers and conducted behind-the-wheel driver's training for all firefighters.

The Pre-Emergency Planning and Arson/Fire Investigation unit aids the District by preparing plans for District actions in the event of a major emergency or disaster, and investigating the causes of fires. In 2012, the Custodian of Records processed 2,329 requests for Public Records or subpoenas, and there were 165 fire cause investigations. The bureau is also responsible for training Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members and more than 400 people completed the training in 2012.

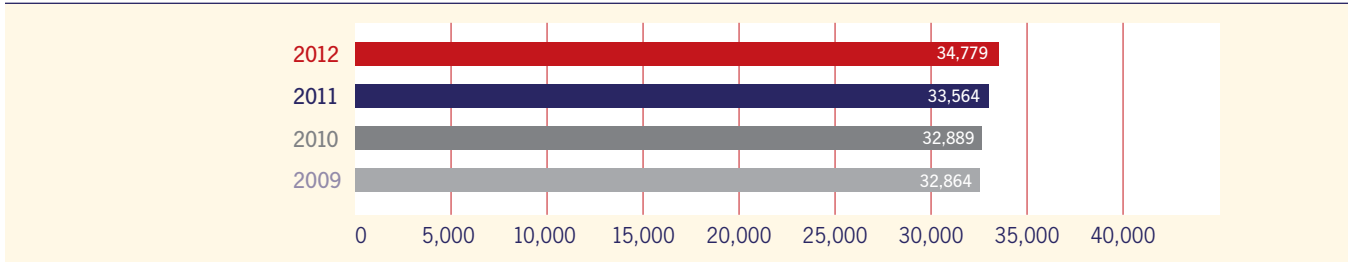
**The Human Resources Bureau** handles the recruitment, hiring and administration of the District's employees. It staffs the fire stations, coordinates insurance and other benefits, conducts testing for promotional opportunities and performs risk assessment for the department. Industrial accidents and injuries are also under the supervision of Human Resources.

In 2012, the Human Resources Bureau conducted a number of internal and external recruitments. Administered various promotional processes and facilitated department retirements.

**The Bureau of Administrative and Fiscal Services** is responsible for the financial management of the Fire District. Its functions include payroll, accounts payable, purchasing, budgets, financial analysis and facilities management.

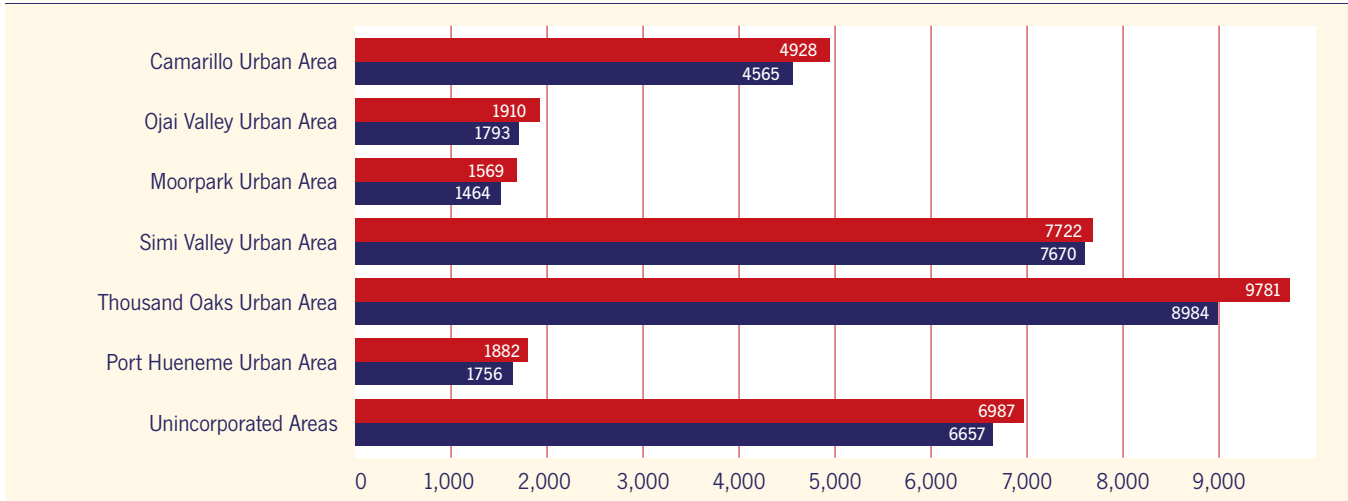
In the fiscal area, staff continued to refine procedures in payroll and purchasing to make functions more efficient. In addition, actions continued in implementing the department's cost recovery program which resulted in continued successes.

## Annual Calls for Service



## Calls for Service by Community

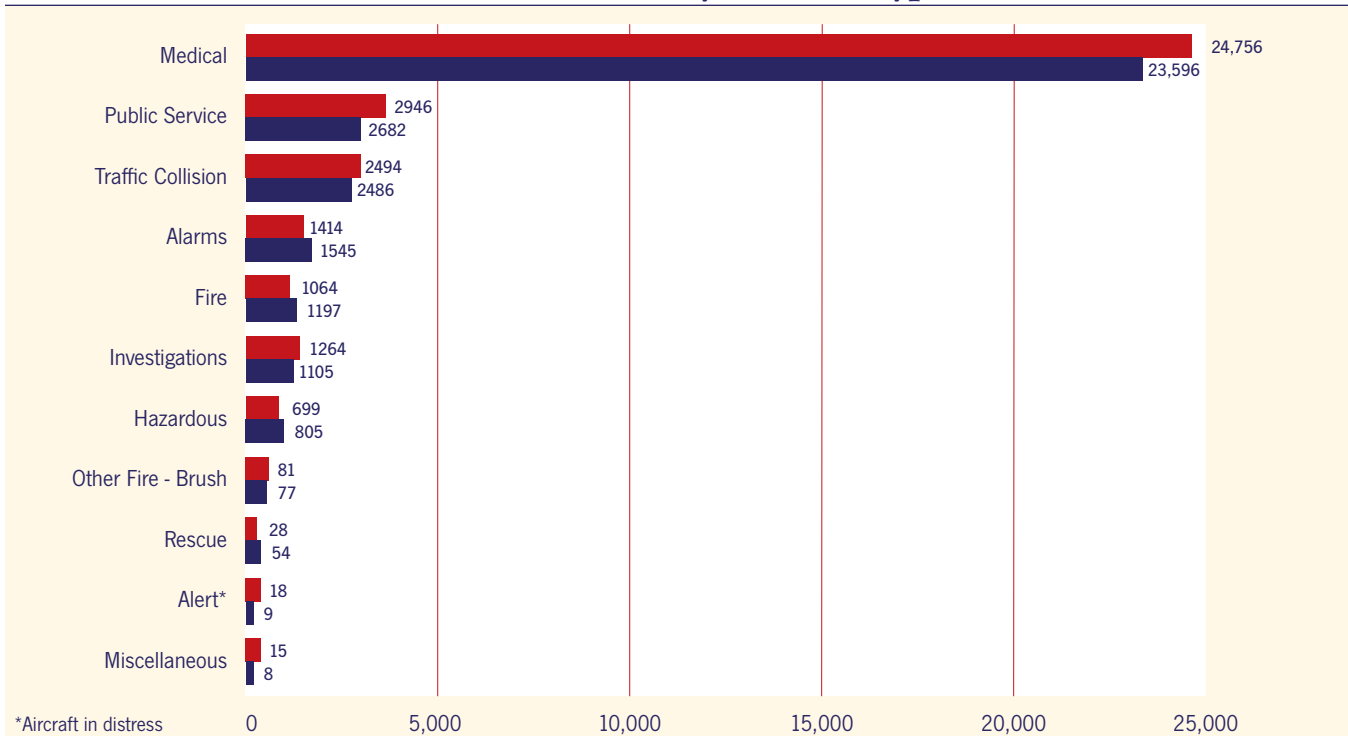
2012: 34,779 2011: 33,564



The statistics shown in this graph are generated from the District's Computer-Aided Dispatch system. The CAD system dispatches the closest resource to a call without regard to city boundaries. As a result, the statistics are shown by area, not city. Some results for 2010 have been restated in this publication due to changes in reporting methods. The Ojai Urban Area includes Oak View. The unincorporated areas include brush areas, the Camarillo and Oxnard Plains, portions of Malibu, and the communities of Oak Park, Casitas Springs, El Rio and Piru.

## Calls for Service by Incident Type

2012: 34,779 2011: 33,564



\*Aircraft in distress

