



# COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION  
DRIVE, ROOM 102A  
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

## SUMMARY REPORT

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**Agenda Date:** 3/3/2026

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**To:** Board of Supervisors, County of Sonoma  
**Department or Agency Name(s):** Emergency Management  
**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Jeffrey DuVall, CEM / 707-565-1152  
**Vote Requirement:** Majority  
**Supervisorial District(s):** Countywide

**Recommended Action:**

Adopt a Gold Resolution Recognizing Maricarmen Reyes as Recipient of the 2025 Pete Peterka Award

**Executive Summary:**

In addition to a long history of service to the County and the Community, over the last eight years since the 2017 Sonoma Complex Fires Maricarmen Reyes has worked tirelessly and effectively to increase her community's disaster preparedness through excellent leadership and diligent organization and hard work with an emphasis on improving the disaster resiliency of the non-English speaking community. Her dedication and efforts have been recognized by her being awarded the 2025 Louis "Pete" Peterka Award for Emergency Management by the Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management.

**Discussion:**

Louis "Pete" Peterka led what was then known as the Sonoma County Office of Emergency Services from 1977 to 1985. Pete is a legend in the field of emergency management and is recognized as one of the pioneers instrumental in turning declining local civil defense programs into functional, multi-hazard plans and response, not only in Sonoma County, but across the state. Pete was a visionary, looking at the needs of the present and the threats and hazards over the next 10+ years to build capacity and resources for them. Before Pete's time leading the Sonoma County Office of Emergency Services, he served as the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue coordinator, and 7 years in the U.S. Marines, and 31 years with the U.S. Army, where he retired as a Colonel with several awards and honors.

To honor and remember Louis "Pete" Peterka, the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) annually honors an individual, group, or program for their outstanding commitment to emergency management by presenting the Louis "Pete" Peterka Award for significantly advanced emergency management in the Sonoma Operational Area.

Annually, DEM opens nominations from the operational area for an individual, group, or program that has played a significant role in the phase of emergency management - preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation, and contributions are felt across the Operational Area.

With several nominations, the Department of Emergency Management and Sonoma County Operational Area recognize Maricarmen Reyes as our 2025 Louis "Pete" Peterka recipient.

Maricarmen Reyes has become one of the most trusted and passionate voices for emergency preparedness and resilience in Sonoma County including the Springs and beyond. Her work bridges language, culture, and community, ensuring that every community member especially those in the Spanish-speaking and underserved areas of the county have access to critical emergency information and the tools to act when disaster strikes.

Maricarmen's dedication to emergency management took root after the devastating 2017 wildfires. That experience made her acutely aware of the needs of unincorporated and linguistically isolated communities in Sonoma County. She saw first-hand how language barriers and limited access to information could endanger lives, and she committed herself to changing that. Since then, she has worked tirelessly to make preparedness inclusive, accessible, and community driven.

As the Outreach and Event Coordinator at Sonoma Valley Health Center, Maricarmen has been instrumental in organizing bilingual emergency preparedness events that directly engage residents where they live. She has led preparedness fairs, collaborated with the Department of Emergency Management on a community evacuation drill, and instituted the annual April Shake Out in Sonoma Springs. These are all events that bring together local community members, first responders, and partner organizations to strengthen neighborhood resilience. Each event she organizes is designed to inform, connect people, and foster emergency readiness as a shared responsibility.

Her leadership extends beyond events. Recognizing that true preparedness begins at the neighborhood level, Maricarmen spearheaded the creation of a *Map Your Neighborhood* group in the Springs area and continues to work to find ways to engage the local community. Through this initiative and others, she has brought neighbors together to identify local resources, plan for disasters, and build mutual support networks that can save lives during emergencies. Her ability to mobilize and inspire others has turned preparedness from an abstract concept into a community practice rooted in trust and cooperation.

Maricarmen has also played an essential role in regional preparedness planning. For the past two years, she has been a key participant in the Bay Area Urban Area Security Initiative's (BAUASI) Local Roadmaps to Resilience Project, where she worked with local and county partners to identify key community risks, develop mitigation strategies, and help move priority projects toward implementation. Her practical understanding of community needs has been vital in ensuring that resilience planning reflects the lived experiences of those most affected.

Training and education are central to her mission. As one of the first graduates of Sonoma County's Spanish-speaking SoCo Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program Maricarmen quickly became one of its most dedicated ambassadors. She now serves as a guest instructor for both English and Spanish CERT trainings, bringing warmth, empathy, and cultural understanding to every class. Her ability to translate complex emergency concepts into clear, relatable language has made her a beloved teacher and mentor within the CERT community.

Her commitment to accessibility has also driven her outreach efforts. Maricarmen has worked directly with community members who lack digital access or English proficiency, helping them sign up for emergency alerts, navigate online preparedness tools, and connect with local resources. Her work ensures that no resident is left behind when it comes to safety and preparedness.

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**Agenda Date:** 2/24/2026

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Through her advocacy, teaching, and community leadership, Maricarmen Reyes has transformed how emergency preparedness is practiced and shared in Sonoma Springs. Her efforts have not only built stronger systems but have fostered deeper connections, ensuring that resilience grows from the ground up.

In recognition of her remarkable work which embodies the spirit of collaboration, inclusion, and community service Maricarmen Reyes was awarded the Louis “Pete” Peterka Award for Emergency Management for 2025.

**Prior Board Actions:**

None.

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

N/A

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

N/A

**Attachments:**

Gold Resolution

**Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:**

None.