



Rodeo-Hercules Fire District

Proposal for Strategic Consulting Services

From

CliffordMoss.

CliffordMoss

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February 25, 2021

Fire Chief Bryan Craig
Rodeo-Hercules Fire District
1680 Refugio Valley Road
Hercules, CA 94547

RE: Proposal for Strategic Communications Consulting Services

Dear Chief Craig:

On behalf of **CliffordMoss**, thank you for the invitation to submit a proposal to assist **Rodeo-Hercules Fire District** (RHFD) in educating the public about the fire services acquisition/consolidation study currently underway in Contra Costa County and its potential impacts on your community. We have appreciated learning about RHFD, your needs, and potential challenges resulting from a possible change in fire services. The wildfires that have devastated our state over the past few years also remind us of the critically important work you do to keep residents safe and provide life-saving assistance when a fire, medical emergency, or natural disaster hits close to home. Thank you for your service. It would be our privilege to help you achieve your communications goals.

Accordingly, here is our CliffordMoss LLC proposal to provide strategic communications services to the Fire District. Our team provides industry-leading capabilities to ensure your success.

We'd like to start with a simple fact: CliffordMoss is not the typical communications strategy corporation. We are a boutique firm dedicated to bringing a spirit of innovation to our work that helps our clients achieve their goals via the most direct and satisfying route possible. Our winning track record is a source of pride for the firm. CliffordMoss successes include fire protection and public safety projects throughout the state, including a recent engagement with East Contra Costa Fire Protection District impacted by the County's fire services consolidation study that may also impact RHFD.

Since we opened our doors in 2012, CliffordMoss has helped improve the quality of local public safety, transportation, educational, and other public services and institutions across California. We are now assisting several public organizations across the state navigate the COVID-19 environment, staying mission-focused on core operations while also taking on new, more pressing challenges. **Our goal is to help you navigate your communications challenges and opportunities successfully.** We understand that your primary focus is public safety. With that said, our job is to help *facilitate, train, and coach* you through a process to help you navigate the communications space wisely.

We think that you will find our qualifications, our attention to client service, and our genuine interest in YOU and your Rodeo-Hercules Fire District community to be exceptional. It all starts with a story – your story. Our job is to bring that story to life. **Let us tell your story.** Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Bonnie J. Moss
Principal, **CliffordMoss LLC**
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1. Your Story

Helping your community understand the County’s current fire services study process as well as possible impacts it may have on local fire and emergency services **starts with meeting your residents where they are**. This is where CliffordMoss will begin – taking the time to learn your story *in your words*. We are driven to understand your uniqueness and translate that into a story that attracts broad support for the direction you want to take. Accordingly, we find the following elements of your story most intriguing.

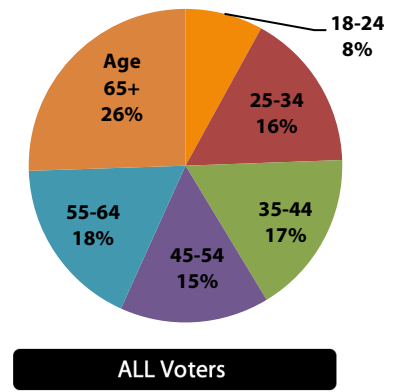
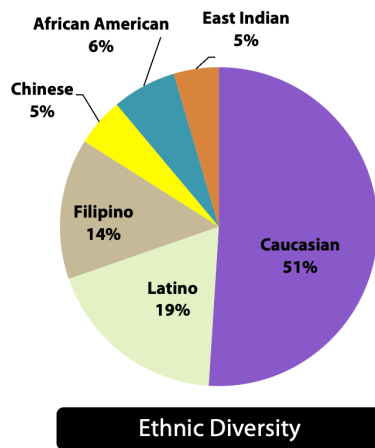
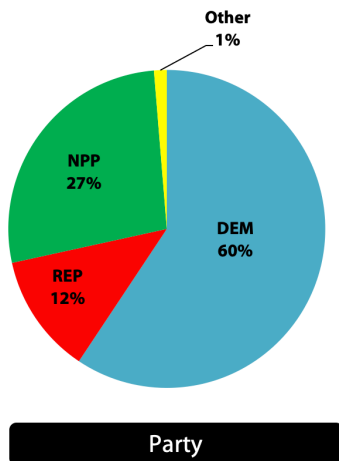
The District operates two fire stations to serve your community, pulling additional support when needed from nearby Con Fire and Pinole fire departments. RHFDD enjoys strong support from local residents and businesses in its service area covering primarily the city of Hercules and unincorporated community of Rodeo. As evidence of the outstanding community support you enjoy, in 2016 local voters passed Measure O, a local parcel tax measure, with a whopping 78.15% voter support. Amazing!

You want to continue to maintain the consistently high level of community support that RHFDD has earned over the years, no matter how the County’s fire consolidation study process goes. You understand that this means **YOU** must inform your community, tell your story, and drive this conversation in your community.

COVID-19 has rapidly changed the world as we collectively know it. In addition to the rapid-response life-saving services that RHFDD provides, the District has maintained public access to virtual meetings when needed to give local residents a voice on issues of importance. Even in the new age of COVID-19, you have met the challenges while also maintaining high credibility as a trusted source of information for the public you serve. We salute you for these accomplishments and your caring, competent, rapid response services that save lives and property every day.

Understanding the uniqueness of your universe of voters will be critical to achieving your communications goals. Your community is diverse, likely increasing the challenge of creating a message that is universally understood and supported. To that end, we will dig deep into voter data to understand your voters. Here are some preliminary essentials to consider:

Descriptor	Voters - #	Households - #
ALL Voters	22,406 Voters	10,482 Households



2. Firm Overview

CliffordMoss, LLC

5111 Telegraph Avenue, No. 307
Oakland, CA 94609
Firm Structure: LLC – Limited Liability Company
510-907-3195 / info@cliffordmoss.com

Primary Contact:

Bonnie Moss
Title: Principal, CliffordMoss
Phone: 510-757-9023
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About CliffordMoss

CliffordMoss is a leading-edge California-based public communications firm specializing in the strategic communications consulting services that the Rodeo-Hercules Fire District (RHFD) needs. We are based in Oakland, California and led by principals Bonnie Moss, Tom Clifford, and Amanda Clifford. To stay nimble and responsive to clients, we have eight employees as well as a network of highly qualified associates throughout the state that join us on projects when needed. Collectively, we bring decades of experience guiding a wide array of local public agencies to achieve their desired end goals.

Our team is driven by three core principles:

YOUR community is unique ♦ Listening is a lost art ♦ People support what they help create

We use these principles to help you tell your story in an honest and compelling way. We use them to help you engage, listen, and build relationships – one conversation at a time. Most importantly, we use them to help you see opportunities through *a win-win lens*, so **you** inspire *others to rise* and champion your cause from the outside in.

Our style employs our leading edge, built-in “FACILITATE, TRAIN, & COACH” communications approach that guides our clients successfully through a complex, organic, often uncertain process to achieve their goals. Our aim is to leave clients with clear and compelling WINS (no matter how they define winning), and earn their respect as raving fans. We make the effort to LISTEN in all directions. We work hard to get things right the first time. These are important commitments we bring to the job in a different way than others.

Our process focuses your team on: 1) accurately assessing the political climate ahead of you; and 2) developing a successful strategy based on your specific circumstances and needs. Because we believe *people support what they help create*, we partner with you in this process using our “FACILITATE, TRAIN, & COACH” approach. We **want** your input and involvement. We work with you on communications strategies that we develop together, bringing fresh energy to the challenges and opportunities you face, rather than applying a “one size fits all” or “been there, done that” approach. Together, we will establish (or strengthen) relationships of trust with your key stakeholders and micro-communities of voters. Working together, we will develop and implement a plan that ensures community support and protects your strategic interests.

We take the time to understand **you** and the parts of **your community** that matter most. Our community engagement work employs the best time-tested strategies and tactics: precise targeting; customized messaging; grassroots organizing; disciplined field work; and intelligent direct mail and online strategies. As we work with you, look for us to bring an extra creative advantage, enhancing proven techniques with cutting-edge technology, innovative approaches to new media, and robust, customized online campaigns.

TIME is our most valuable collective resource in this process; you will see us use it wisely. We will advocate for regular contact with you. Some clients require meeting more often at certain times of the project, and we allow for that. We use the full spectrum of communications channels, including conference calls, email, phone appointments, etc.

3. Project Team

Our team is well suited to help you bring your vision to life. Here is more on our proposed project leads:

PROJECT MANAGEMENT & COMMUNICATIONS - From CliffordMoss:

Bonnie Moss, Principal, CliffordMoss. Principal Dedicated to Your Project.

Bonnie is a 30-year veteran of successful local public initiatives, political campaigns, and marketing and communications strategies that have created impact and winning results across hundreds of communities in California and the nation. Over the past 20+ years, she has earned a reputation as one of California's leading local revenue measure and public sector strategic communications consultants, guiding must-win projects to success. A native of California, she attended MIT and Wellesley College, graduating from Wellesley with a BA in Urban Studies. Bonnie's consulting career was built on a foundation of 17 years in private sector community relations leadership positions in California and Texas, and eight years as a local elected official in Alameda County. In 1999, Bonnie moved into political and communications consulting with a leading California firm, where she found enormous success combining her personal and professional passions. She left in 2012 to form CliffordMoss with partner Tom Clifford. Bonnie has guided hundreds of local projects, securing billions of dollars for California communities, **including local fire projects**. Most recently, she has worked with East Contra Costa Fire Protection District helping to navigate a series of thorny communications issues. When she is not traveling the state guiding, coaching and celebrating her clients' hard work, Bonnie lives and chills out in her Hayward hills home.

Ze-Kun Li, Senior Project Advisor, CliffordMoss.

Ze brings a decade of community organizing experience to CliffordMoss and our clients. He got his first taste of grassroots organizing in 2010 helping to rally a 15,000-person march in San Francisco to advocate for adequate educational funding. Since then, Ze has helped guide California state senate, assembly and county wide electoral campaigns as a campaign coordinator, field director, campaign manager and political advisor. He recently helped guide the Santa Cruz County Fire CSA 48 to a Prop 218 victory and worked tirelessly to help the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District build trust with its residents. Ze is a natural practitioner of CliffordMoss' "people support what they help create" philosophy. His ability to connect authentically with stakeholders creates campaign momentum when it's needed most. Ze graduated from Santa Clara University with a degree in political science. In his spare time, he lives in Oakland and enjoys practicing yoga, playing basketball, and watching his Bay Area sports teams win their championships.

CliffordMoss Design/Production Support Vendors. We work with a group of peak-performing industry vendors to deliver outstanding results to our clients. Our team includes a world-class graphic designer, best in the business print-production teams, experienced data services provider, innovative online advertising and communications firms and media consultants. We foster positive working relationships with vendors that share our commitment to excellence and innovation for CliffordMoss clients.

Frontline Field Staff. CliffordMoss maintains relationships with qualified professionals who are skilled in the disciplines of community organizing, communications, online and social media communications. We will recommend a frontline coordinator to help provide day-to-day community engagement and organizing support for your project. Working together, we can successfully navigate virtually any community dynamic.

Research Firm: CliffordMoss knows and maintains relationships with all of the leading research firms that work with fire districts. We will be happy to make a recommendation if your budget allows for research.

4. Scope of Services

Our goal is to help you engage your community **to provide clarity** about what is likely to result from the County's fire services consolidation study process, **to manage community expectations**, and **to maintain the high levels of resident satisfaction** as the County's study is completed and any transition results.

FIRST AND FOREMOST – We will make the time to LISTEN to you. At CliffordMoss, we believe LISTENING is a lost art. Many firms will come in and tell you exactly what you should do without getting to know who you are and what makes your district unique. CliffordMoss would never substitute “nearby experience” for the real thing. **Your unique RHFD terrain matters.** Experience has taught us to respect that *every community is unique – including and especially yours.* So, we will make the time to sit with Chief Bryan Craig, Board members, and other key RHFD communicators until we fully understand you, your needs, and the unique conditions and factors that will help make this process a success for you and your community.

Our subsequent goal is to help you develop a messaging strategy that reflects the intersection of interests, or “sweet spot”, between what you know you need and what the community tell us they want. This can be a complex process with many moving parts. We simplify the process for you and provide you and your team with the tools and guidance you need to achieve success.

Once we have a solid understanding of your district, we will work quickly to make recommendations for the best public engagement approach. Below are some proven tools that we might recommend to help you navigate the way forward:

- **Research.** Given adequate resources, we have employed two types of research to provide public agencies with relevant insight to navigate potentially tough political environments. 1) **Focus Group Research** creates an in-depth conversation with a small group of people fitting the profile of a defined “key constituency” (e.g. senior citizens, homeowners, etc.) to better understand the mood and state of your larger community. 2) **Public Opinion Polling** (usually via online and phone survey) scientifically measures awareness, perceptions and attitudes among a representative sample of residents and/or voters. Polling provides a 10,000-ft view of what residents are feeling and thinking. Conducting research helps us INFORM messaging strategy and tools in real-time, customized to your community.
- **Opinion Leader Work.** We recommend and use this methodology to engage community leaders as early as possible. As part of this effort, we may guide you in the process of “**network-mapping**” the community and engaging those who lie on the network map in opinion leader interviews and other strategic meetings to get their sense of the community, your needs and goals. Costs are minimal. Our team invests heavily in tools and client training to maximize impact. Even in the COVID-19 era, there are practical tools that work to engage and obtain input from opinion leaders. We look forward to showing you how this piece can work – simply and effectively.
- **Public Meetings.** We recommend this strategy to engage, educate, and gather input in an efficient way. We invest heavily in tools and client training here to maximize impact. In the COVID-19 era, we are conducting more virtual town hall meetings – and it is working well!



- Direct Mail.** Whether you like direct mail or not, this vehicle is still one of the most effective ways to communicate with voters at all levels. We have created winning public agency mail programs with a creative, customized focus on LISTENING and obtaining input from local residents. This approach can build interest in and awareness of your RHFD NEEDS. (Here is an example of a two-way “Survey” mailer we sent out from the City of Lodi during its pre-electoral public engagement process).



- Social Media.** Early in the communication phase, it is easy and important to plug into the existing infrastructure of the District to INFORM AND ENGAGE stakeholders. On a parallel track, however, we may recommend developing stand-alone electronic infrastructure that can eventually (at the right time) create a dynamic online presence independent of your traditional website. Your **online platform** should include: a website, a Facebook page, an email platform, a database of supporters, and other online tools. Depending on available resources, this platform may also include an “Online PSA” package which is targeted to individual voter IP addresses, encouraging residents to learn more about the District, complete an online survey about their priorities, and more. Using these platforms, we will have the ability to promote to and engage with key community targets through social media channels so that we can combine ground efforts with online efforts for maximum impact.



- ONLINE ADS.** Just as direct mail can be sent directly to voters and residents with a stake in RHFD – **so can online ads.** With 21st century tools, we can match real community members (through individual IP addresses) to provide information, gather their feedback, and even share information surrounding an event to attract attendance.



5. Case Study: East Contra Costa Fire Protection District

The East Contra Costa Fire Protection District (ECCFPD) is a fire district located in the Eastern part of the San Francisco Bay Area facing a massive under-funding problem. Serving a community of 140,000 residents across 249 square miles, the District currently operates just three fire stations (it should have nine!), with a total of only nine firefighters on duty at any given time. The problem: exponential growth in recent years without sufficient public funding, making the need for additional resources great and growing in a new era of wildfires, climate change and now COVID 19.

CliffordMoss was hired to help ECCFPD to tell its story and assist in preparing to go to the ballot with a local revenue measure (after multiple failed attempts in the past). Our job: provide strategic communications services to build awareness of ECCFPD needs while also helping ECCFPD get “election-ready” for a winning local revenue measure.

To build an effective plan CliffordMoss started with research, calling upon veteran pollster EMC Research to conduct a public opinion poll among local voters to inform the strategy. Armed with this revealing insight, we then built a detailed 29-page Public Engagement Plan with input from District leaders, laying out a customized strategy.

Our comprehensive and far-reaching communications program became known as the “We are Listening” Campaign. Key components included:

- A pocket-size “palm card” including brochure and informational postcards
- Community surveys
- Online ads and earned media
- A video series (7 short specific-topic videos, each less than 4 minutes, and a heart-felt “A Day in the Life of the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District” that could be easily viewed and shared online)
- An active social media presence and extensive “listening activities” using proven CliffordMoss tools.
- Bi-weekly community opinion leader calls to provide real-time input and assist in refining our messaging.



Video



Online PSA Package



Facebook Live Series

When face-to-face community outreach was impacted by COVID-19, we pivoted to virtual meetings. Facebook Live was employed to deliver outbound messaging and answer questions in real-time. This allowed residents to quickly share the Live sessions with friends, family, relatives and community members. The District's Facebook Live events would average over 10,000 people reached and 237 engagements.



Townhalls with a 30-minute presentation would provide in-depth explanation and a space for residents to ask questions. As we continued to provide more information, it became clear what the residents needed to see and hear to better understand the severe lack of funding the Fire District was facing. The diligent and extensive community outreach not only helped increase community understanding, but it led to transparency and more importantly public TRUST!

In the end, the strategy worked and awareness grew ... but so did political complexities. Most significantly and much to everyone's surprise, conditions changed late in 2020 to a point where a comprehensive consolidation of local fire districts within the county emerged as a viable solution to the under-funding problem. The consolidation scenario is now being studied in earnest and may avoid the need for a new local tax measure. *(To Be Continued as events unfold!)*

6. Management Plan and Timeline

Our goal is to make this process manageable and successful for you and your team. We understand your primary focus is on keeping the community safe each and every day. That said, helping your community truly understand *(and support!)* the County's proposed consolidation process **is a significant undertaking**. We are here to facilitate, train, and coach you so you can effectively inform and educate your community and work towards building the community consensus needed to ensure enduring support for Rodeo-Hercules Fire District through the transition to a better structure to deliver services.

Estimated number of meetings, conference calls and other work: We align to the needs of our clients first and foremost. We view **TIME** as your most valuable resource – you will see us use it wisely. We advocate for weekly core team meetings. We are big believers in using the full spectrum of communications channels to accelerate progress outside of meetings – including conference calls, email, phone appointments, etc. We strive to be 100% accessible to you.

Our Commitment to You: CliffordMoss will work with you to make prudent and smart decisions that position you effectively for future success. YOU will always be in the driver's seat about all budget-related decisions. Our management plan focuses on YOU and YOUR needs. Our choice of assigned team members and sub-consultants is deliberate – we choose peak-performing partners to ensure the very best results.

TIMELINE: Strategic Communications / Public Engagement Process

Assumption	Phase 2 of the County’s Consolidation Study is completed in July 2021
March, ASAP	<p>2 Priorities: Due Diligence & EARLY LISTENING.</p> <p>1. Due Diligence. Early assessment/analysis – assess current need/conditions.</p> <p>2. Early Opinion Leader (OL) Listening. Preparation for early OL engagement.</p> <p>Board Member Phone Interviews</p> <p>Preliminary Listening with strategic set of opinion leaders, stakeholders and influencers to assess community dynamic and help inform public opinion poll.</p> <p>Option: Conduct Professional Research. Prepare/conduct/analyze research.</p> <p>Develop Preliminary Messaging Strategy - Internal Messaging Platform, etc. Evaluate community input on a parallel track (diagnostics/analysis).</p>
April – May – June	<p>Public Engagement:</p> <p>Mailer #1 – provide community update/information (2-way mailer).</p> <p>Launch digital communications (web, email, online PSAs, social media).</p> <p>With Opinion Leaders – TBD based on Board/Chief input and real time conditions.</p> <p>Public Meetings - Zoom town halls, Facebook Live, etc. Technology platform – TBD.</p>
July	<p>Mailer #2 – “We listened. Here is what you told us”plus County process update.</p> <p>Public Meetings – “State of the District” - Technology platform – TBD.</p> <p>Opinion Leader Updates – Round 2 TBD.</p>

7. Proposed Fees and Budget

Fees

Our CliffordMoss fee structure is **specifically designed** to show that we are prepared to bring the very best strategic guidance to you to achieve YOUR strategic objectives, while also meeting prudent cost control requirements. Our clients tell us the investment in CliffordMoss is well worth it given our track record.

The industry standard in the strategic communications services space is a monthly retainer arrangement, and we have found that our clients appreciate the certainty of that structure. Additional expenses (including our business expenses as well as program expenses such as design, printing, postage, online promotion etc.) will come at an additional cost. We collaborate with you to build a prudent budget for program expenses. We understand that every dollar invested into this project is precious.

Here is our cost proposal:

CliffordMoss Fee: **\$7,500 month** – Professional Service Fee
 Plus approved business expenses

Overall Budget Recommendation

Communications Budget Item	Budget
Frontline Part-Time Organizer/Coordinator	\$15,000
Direct Mail – assuming 2 mailers to all RHFD voter households	\$15,000
Online Ad Package – Concept/Design Development, Media Buy	\$8,000
CliffordMoss – Professional Strategy Fee @ \$7500/month	\$45,000
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$1,000
SUB TOTAL =	\$84,000
Optional: Research – 2 Professionally Conducted Focus Groups	\$18,000
TOTAL =	\$102,000

This is a preliminary budget. These are estimates only. All figures subject to change based on real-time conditions. We don't spend money frivolously. If we don't use resources in one area, we may reallocate them to another.

8. The CliffordMoss Promise

You have a difficult choice in front of you and many qualified firms to consider. As you deliberate, please keep in mind our core promises to you:

1. ACTIVE LISTENING. In this day and age, it often feels like *listening* is a lost art. Many consultants tell you exactly what you should do without ever getting to know who you are and what makes you and your cause unique. Our team is different. We will MAKE TIME to listen in all directions. From our very first meeting, you will begin to see that many of our diagnostic tools involve effective listening – listening to you, listening to public leaders, and listening to stakeholders, influencers, and voters who can impact your end-game goals. Providing effective assistance STARTS with quality listening.

2. DIAGNOSTIC EXPERTISE. We are data-driven. CliffordMoss employs a suite of proven diagnostic tools in our work. Strategic use of these tools helps maximize learning, improve political navigation, and keep clients focused on following the critical path to political success. **This is an ITERATIVE process** that you will be a part of – we will not force-feed outcomes and decisions. Our decision-making will be a collaborative process that leads to the right outcome, not just the outcome your consultant desires.

3. CANDOR. In our business, candor is a virtue. That’s why we strive to build a working environment where all parties have room to be authentic and real. Avoiding or sugar-coating tough issues doesn’t help. When we all commit to candor, we keep your path to success open.

4. WORK ETHIC. Our experience reminds us that highly complex, resource-tight projects like yours require significant effort from all invested parties. Our work ethic will be an asset to you. We believe in personal investment, hard work, discipline, easy and frequent flow of information, and continuous improvement in the work we do together. We practice these values in all aspects of our work from logistical and analytical elements to resolving community concerns, to developing policy, program, and project options. We commit ourselves 24/7.

5. CONSULTANT ACCESSIBILITY. Our team is comfortable leading (and following) in a high pressure, fast-paced environment. You can count on us to be with you from start to finish. You will have seasoned professionals at your side; we will not hand your project off to junior-level staff. When you need us, you will have the capability to reach us — quickly.

6. PASSION FOR YOUR CAUSE. We love the public engagement work we do for California public agencies. Leading members of our team have been practicing professionals for years. When you succeed, we succeed – that’s what motivates us to help you hit a grand slam. Our passion for the work helps us to go deeper with clients. Call our references and ask how they feel about our CliffordMoss commitment to their cause.

It all starts with a story – YOUR story. Our job is to help you bring **your story** to life. Let us put the CliffordMoss Promise to work for you.

Let us tell your story. Thank you!