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How have counties adjusted their disaster preparedness approach since COVID?

COVID-19 has changed how to approach natural disasters, especially wildfires, which remain our immediate threat. With wider-spread disasters, counties have been preparing contingency plans, which include:

1. Providing shelters in hotels and motels rather than evacuation centers
2. Providing physical spacing at community centers where residents can go to charge phones and electronics, and
3. Adjusting how cooling centers and clean-air facilities can function with social distancing protocols.

Emergency shelters are still planned in many areas, but social distancing is needed to minimize the spread of COVID-19. CSAC has hosted a series of calls between state officials and boards of supervisors to provide direct access to answer pressing questions during the COVID-19 pandemic...

How can cities, counties and special districts work together to better prepare for and respond to natural disasters?

Counties are working together to share best practices for handling natural disasters—both before, during and in the recovery phase. Staying in close communication in all phases is paramount to being ready for a disaster. Local agencies working together to identify critical infrastructure and to build an emergency response network to assist in delivering essential services for life and property during a disaster, from water and wastewater services, to identification and support for medically fragile individuals, necessitates communication across agencies and jurisdictions...

What are the biggest challenges local government will face in the coming months? What are the biggest opportunities?

Recovering and improving after the COVID-19 pandemic is an historic challenge that cannot be overstated. The opportunity before us is to get reforms in place as we emerge from the crisis. We can enhance health care availability, better prepare for the next pandemic, improve social cohesion, prioritize civic engagement, expand housing availability and homeless services, enact aggressive climate change legislation, and focus on mitigating the profound effects of income inequality in the Golden State.

Favorite quote?

“The cave you fear to enter has the treasure you seek.”

Yoda, Empire Strikes Back