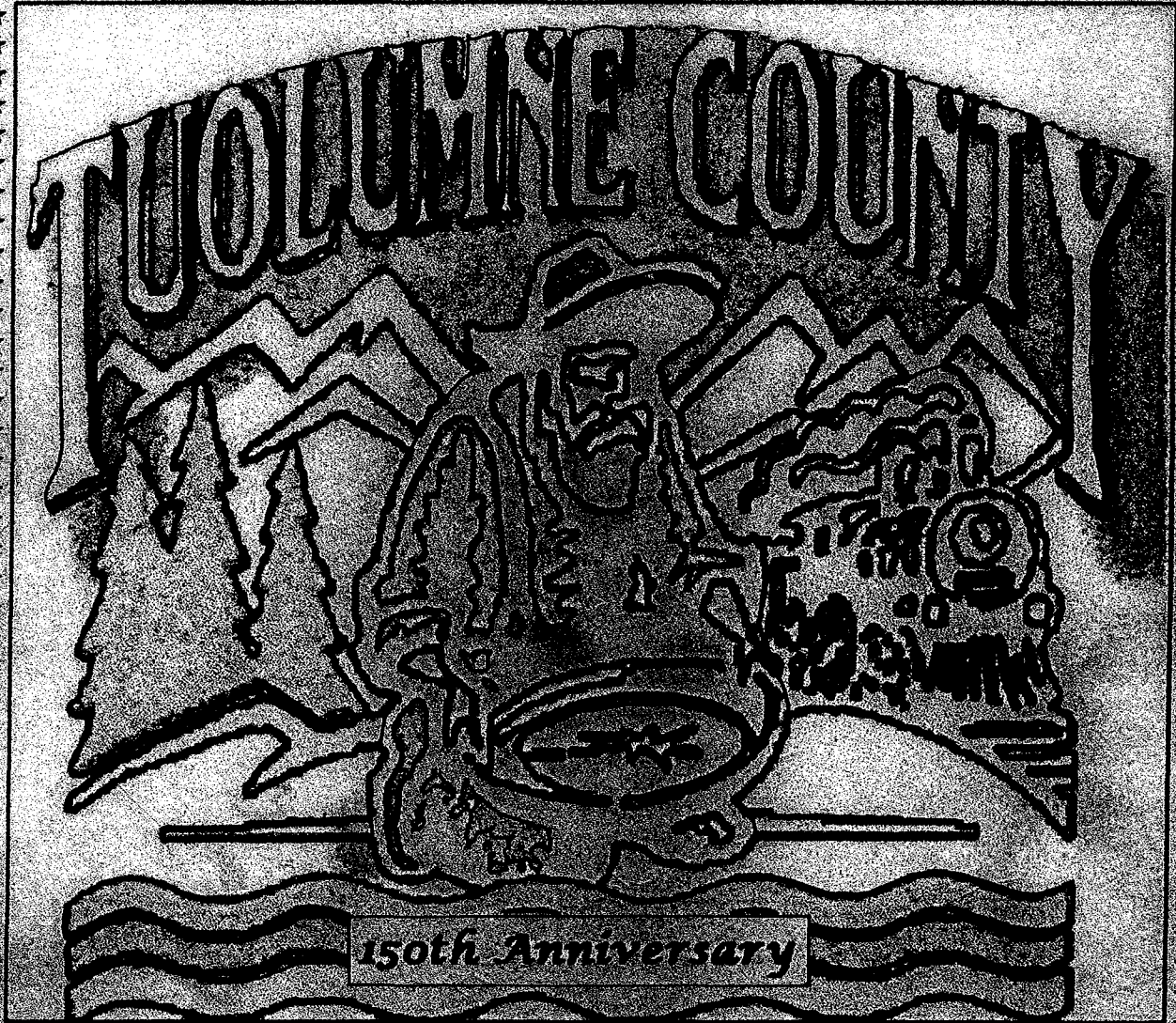




GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT



1997 - 1998

The Honorable Eric DuTemple
Judge of the Superior Court, Tuolumne County
41 West Yaney Avenue
Sonora, California 95370

Dear Judge DuTemple:

The 1997-98 Tuolumne County Grand Jury is pleased to submit its Final Report to you and the citizens of Tuolumne County.

Our report reflects a cumulative effort of all members totaling over 1400 hours in regular meetings, many hours in committee meetings and investigation time, and countless miles traveled.

We wish to commend the County administrators and staff for their assistance in our investigations. There was complete cooperation from all departments reviewed and all efforts were made to furnish us with the time and materials we required to complete our task. We also wish to thank you and District Attorney Nina Deane for counsel and support during the year.

All members of our panel appreciate the opportunity to have represented the community in its investigation of various departments of County Government, and hope our efforts will result in improvements for all citizens.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David C. Harmer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a stylized "H".

David C. Harmer
Foreman, 1997-98 Tuolumne County Grand Jury

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OATH OF GRAND JURORS

When the panel has been completed, the following oath, quoted from California Penal Code Section 911, is administered to each of the Grand Jury:

“I do solemnly swear (affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States and of the State of California, and all laws made pursuant to and in conformity therewith, will diligently inquire into, and a true presentment make, of all public offenses against the people of this state, committed or triable within this county of which the Grand Jury shall have or can obtain legal evidence. Further, I will not disclose any evidence brought before the Grand Jury, nor anything which I or any other Grand Juror may say, nor the manner in which I or any other Grand Juror may have voted on any matter before the Grand Jury. I will keep the charge that will be given to me by the court.”

TUOLUMNE COUNTY GRAND JURY

1997/1998

Active Members

David Harmer, Grand Jury Foreperson
James Hodges, Foreperson Pro-Tem
Edith Kelly, Secretary
Jack Baker
Patricia Conner
Stephen DesGeorges
Tina Dutra
Joyce Gray
Catherine Lincoln
Kimberley McIntosh
Jacquelyn Munger
Ronald Parish
Rodney Ristow
Wesley Roome
Maxine Rosario
Shirley Stone
Tom Thalass
Michele Wells

Sonora
Sonora
Soulsbyville
Sonora
Sonora
LaGrange
Sonora
Sonora
Big Oak Flat
Big Oak Flat
Columbia
Sonora
Long Barn
Sonora
Sonora
Sonora
Sonora
Groveland

Resigned Members

Robert Kelly
Douglas Macy
Denise Galinis

MiWuk Village
Groveland
Jamestown

HISTORY OF GRAND JURY SYSTEM

One of the earliest concepts of the Grand Jury dates back to ancient Greece where the Athenians used an accusatory body. Others claim the Saxons initiated the Grand Jury system. For example, in the years 978 to 1016, one of the Doms (laws) stated that of each 100 men, 12 shall be named to act as an accusing body. "They shall not accuse an innocent man nor spare a guilty one."

The origin of the Grand Jury can also be traced back to the time of the Norman conquest of England in 1066. There is evidence that the courts of that time summoned a body of sworn neighbors to present crimes which had come to their knowledge. The members of that accusing jury were selected from small jurisdictions; thus it was natural and indeed expected that the members would present accusations based on their personal knowledge.

Generally, historians agree that the **Assize of Clarendon** in 1166 was the genesis of our present Grand Jury system. During the reign of Henry II (1154-1189), in an effort to regain for the crown powers usurped by Thomas Becket, Chancellor of England, twelve "good and lawful" men in each village were assembled to reveal the names of those suspected of crimes. It was during this same period that juries were divided into two types: civil and criminal, with the development of each influencing the other.

Originally, an "assize" meant a court session or assembly. As used today, it refers to accomplishments or enactments of such groups, thus, the **Assize of Clarendon**, in which the jury was used for the purpose of discovering and presenting to the royal officials persons suspected of crimes, and to report on other matters relating to the maintenance of order and good government in their district. The oath taken by these jurors was that they shall "do this faithfully that they will aggrieve no one through enmity nor deference to anyone through love, and that they will conceal those things by which they have heard."

By the year 1290, we find that the accusing jury was given the authority to inquire into the maintenance of bridges and highways, the defects of jails. and whether the sheriff had kept in jail anyone who should have been brought before justices.

A le grand inquest evolved during the reign of Edward II (1368) when the accusatory jury was increased in number from 12 to 23, with the majority vote necessary to indict one accused of crime

The Massachusetts Bay Colony empanelled its first Grand Jury in 1635 to consider cases of murder, robbery. and wife beating. As early as 1700, the value of the Grand Jury was recognized in opposing the Royalists. These colonial grand juries expressed their independence by refusing

to indict leaders of the Stamp Act (1765), and a Boston Grand Jury refused to bring libel charges against the editors of the *Boston Gazette* (1765). A union with the other colonies to oppose British taxes was supported by the Philadelphia Grand Jury in 1770.

By the end of the colonial period, the Grand Jury had become an indispensable adjunct of government: "they proposed new laws, protested against abuses in government, and wielded tremendous authority in their power to determine who should and who should not face trial."

Although originally the Constitution of the United States made no provision for a Grand Jury, the Fifth Amendment, ratified in 1791, guaranteed that:

"...no person shall be held to answer to a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces or in the militia when in actual service in time of war or public danger..."

Public support, sustained through the Revolutionary period, began to wane in the early 1800s. Adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868, made it illegal to "deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law." As interpreted by some states, this amendment no longer required prosecution of crimes by Grand Jury indictment or prohibited direct accusation by the prosecutor (information). California was one of the states to initiate prosecution by either indictment or preliminary hearing

The first California Penal Codes contained statutes providing for a Grand Jury, to be empaneled quarterly, at the same time as the trial jurors were drawn. Early grand juries investigated local prisons, conducted audits of county books and pursued matters of community interest.

As cited, the role of the Grand Jury in California is unique in that by statutes passed in 1880, the duties included investigation of county government by a Grand Jury beyond alleged misconduct of public officials. Only California and Nevada mandate that grand juries be empaneled annually to function specifically as a "watchdog" over county government. It is interesting to note that while the Grand Jury was abolished in England in 1933, it has established itself as a component part of our judicial system.

As constituted today, the Grand Jury is a part of the judicial branch of government - an "arm of the court." It does not have the functions of either the legislative or administrative branches and is not a police agency. It is an inquisitorial and investigative body and is part of the machinery of government having for its object the detection and correction of flaws in government and the detection of crime among its citizens.

IT HAPPENED HERE , TOO

DATE: Thu 22-Jan-1998

Tuolumne County's part in the Gold Rush came about a few months later in 1848 than the discovery of gold at Coloma on Jan. 24, 1848.

Woods Crossing in Jamestown is most often credited as the site of the first gold strike in the county, in August 1848. Some historians, however, say strikes may have been made earlier that year by Mormons along Mormon Creek or by Native Americans along the Stanislaus River.

Whatever the exact date, 1848 is the year that started the Gold Rush in the county, and 1998 will be full of sesquicentennial celebrations. Among the observances will be a wagon train from Twain Harte to Sacramento in August and recognition of businesses and organizations with at least 100 years of service in the county.

The sesquicentennial celebration will continue in 1999 and 2000, marking, among other things, the establishment of Tuolumne County, the founding of Sonora, Columbia, Groveland, Jamestown and other towns, and California's admission to the Union.

(c) 1998 Union Democrat.

Grand Jury Final Report

Animal Control

Overview:

Tuolumne County Animal Control and the Humane Society of Tuolumne County (H.S.T.C.) are currently occupying the new 15,000 sq. ft. building located off Victoria Way in Jamestown. Animal Control occupies 4,987 sq. ft. and has an agreement with H.S.T.C. to share common support areas of 2,100 sq. ft.

Reason for Investigation:

The Grand Jury Committee wanted to evaluate the newly constructed animal control facility in Jamestown.

Methodology:

The Grand Jury Committee inspected the new facility, interviewed the Animal Control Director and staff, reviewed construction plans and budget reports. The Committee requested and received copies of the building lease agreement with H.S.T.C. and Animal Control's budget.

Findings:

Prior to occupying the building, Animal Control paid \$105,000 during the three-year construction phase. The 1997-98 budget for Animal Control is \$320,967. This pays for the \$25,000 yearly lease, four full time employees (Animal Control Officers) and three part-time employees. It also pays for the cost and expenses of three vehicles, which they use to patrol approximately 30,000 miles per year.

To date, Animal Control has occupied but has not officially accepted the building due to ongoing problems with the construction of the building. A major problem is drainage throughout the building because the floors are incorrectly sloped. This problem to date has not been corrected. Another problem is drainage pipes protrude into kennel spaces causing additional sanitation problems.

Effective Dec. 17th 1993 Tuolumne County is obligated to a 75 year lease with H.S.T.C. (owners of the building) to be paid on the following schedule: \$35,000 per year for the first three years. \$25,000 per year for the remaining years, adjusted for inflation annually. In conjunction with the lease the Humane Society will furnish some services for Animal Control.

The facility is designed for growth with space for more animal cages when needed. They have built in many provisions for the housing and sanitary care of animals. The dogs and cats have separate quarters. There are separate rooms for sick animals, with provisions for treatment and/or euthanasia. There is a space for a crematorium, but due to lack of an oven for this purpose; this function is not available. Currently, dead animals are disposed of through Cal-

Sierra. The facility has a large refrigerator for dead animal storage. This saves time and expense for the department's trips to Cal-Sierra.

The cement floors have been sealed to make the cleaning and disinfecting of animal cages easier. Disinfecting of cages is performed daily and they are taken outside and thoroughly washed and cleansed weekly.

It was also noted that the front door opens inward which is the opposite direction required by County building code. This will cause a problem in the event of a fire

The facility - both H.S.T.C. and Animal Control are on a single utility meter. This creates a budget problem.

Conclusion:

Under the lease, Animal Control will have a very high cost per animal considering the current overhead.

Facility maintenance and care of the animals in their charge is excellent. The staff is concerned for the welfare of the animals.

It is the Grand Jury's opinion that the Animal Control Department is doing a good job under the existing conditions, This Grand Jury commends them for their efforts.

The department is understaffed for the workload they perform.

Recommendations:

Recommend a review of the lease and the problems with the building. The County should consider a more cost-effective facility, which could expand to accommodate future growth.

Recommend if a more cost effective facility is not possible, the building not be accepted until the contractor fully corrects the drainage problems and location of pipes protruding into animal spaces.

Recommend Animal Control and the Humane Society install separate utility meters,

Recommend the front door be changed to open both directions.

Recommend a larger budget to allow for one full time attendant and one full time officer.

Grand Jury Final Report

Office of Auditor/Controller

Reason for Investigation:

Although there were no complaints, the Grand Jury Administrative Committee decided to investigate three areas of concern:

1. to review the County purchasing procedures and controls since the dissolution of the County Purchasing Department,
2. to determine policies for internal departmental audits,
3. to investigate the general ledger and budgeting problems of Tuolumne General Hospital, which ultimately delays the County budget process.

Methodology:

The Committee met with Auditor/Controller, Tim Johnson, and Assistant Auditor/Controller, Debi Russell, on November 20, 1997. The interview covered many areas of concern. Discussed were concerns such as staffing, responsibility for the general budget, and procedures of both financial and performance audits. County purchasing procedures were discussed, including practices of both large and small procurements, payment and levels of purchase authorization. Other general categories covered were collections of bad debts, and the availability of training for County employees to help them become more efficient in their work. Tuolumne General Hospital's financial problems were reviewed. Exhibit collected was the County General Budget.

Findings:

The procedures for departmental purchasing are controlled by the Auditor/Controller's Office (ACO). All departmental purchase requisitions must be entered into the central computer system. The ACO reviews the requisitions. Approved purchase orders are printed overnight and funds are committed. Upon satisfactory receipt of purchases, checks are approved and printed. Some hand-written checks are issued for emergency needs of welfare cases and other immediate pay items. For purchases over \$300, verbal bids must be obtained. Purchases over \$5,000 must have a written bid. Debi Russell is the Deputy Purchasing Agent and has a \$10,000 limit on approvals. The County's Chief Administrative Officer acts as the County Purchasing Agent and is involved with large purchases, which must also be approved by the Board of Supervisors.

The ACO staff is short two people; those positions are scheduled to be filled. Due to lack of staff, the ACO has been unable to conduct internal financial audits on departments for several years, except for verification of remaining budget amounts to cover purchase orders issued. Department travel requisitions are monitored. Individual expense reports are not audited. Authorization from the ACO is required before funds can be transferred between department budget accounts. Financial audits are performed regularly on the County Treasurer's cash.

Selected ACO personnel have taken a training course to prepare for performance auditing of all departments. Performance audits of county departments are due to start during the next fiscal year. It is forecast that the ACO will conduct two such audits per year.

Capital equipment is defined as a cost greater than \$1,000 with a useful life greater than one year. Department Supervisors must inventory and sign off annually on their department's list of capital equipment. Surplus capital equipment lists go to the Board of Supervisors for approval, then equipment is offered to other departments of the County. If it is not taken, then it is offered to the City of Sonora or other public agencies. When capital equipment is finally surplusd out to the public, independent auctioneers as mandated by law, handle the sale.

There are two serious problems at Tuolumne General Hospital (TGH), the operation of the TGH computer system and the high turnover of accounting staff. There is a current project to install a new computer system and develop a TGH/County general ledger interface. TGH has an accounting incompatibility problem because TGH uses a different chart of accounts than the ACO uses. Budgeting at TGH is hampered by all of these problems which in turn, delay the County budgeting and reporting process.

Conclusions:

Although controls on purchasing and payment authorization seem adequate in the ACO, the planned departmental performance audits are desirable to assure proper management and controls of all county departments. Tuolumne General Hospital will continue to have problems until a new computer system and interface to the County are operating, and qualified personnel are hired and/or trained in both accounting and the computer system.

Recommendations:

Recommend staffing be restored to an adequate level so that internal financial audits of County departments can resume.

Recommend travel and expense reports of individual department heads are reviewed and reported with the same level of visibility and disclosure as the Board of Supervisors.

Recommend the 1998-99 Grand Jury follow up on the progress of the new departmental performance and financial audits.

Recommend the 1998-99 Grand Jury review the status of the accounting interface between TGH and the County's computer system.

Final Grand Jury Report

Big Oak Flat-Groveland Unified School District

Overview:

The Big Oak Flat-Groveland Unified School District (District) is located in south Tuolumne County and is the only unified school district in the County. The District consists of Tenaya Elementary School with 440 students, Tioga High School with 127 students, and Don Pedro High School with 109 students.

Reason for Investigation:

The reason for the investigation was recent reports of financial difficulties.

Methodology:

The Committee met with and interviewed Mr. Dave Manship, Superintendent of the District. Later, several concerned members of the community were interviewed. The 1997-98 budget was reviewed and audit reports from the last three school years were obtained.

Findings:

The School District has gone through many administrative changes in the last few years. All three schools have recently changed principals, and Mr. Manship has only been with the District for little more than two years. The Board of Trustees has also changed many times and has currently replaced, by appointment, its third member in two years. The Superintendent, Principals, and Board Members seem to work well together.

The District is currently struggling with a limited budget. There are varied reasons for this. Among them is reduced Federal timber funds and a lack of building funds because of the slow real estate market the County has experienced in the last few years. Compounding this were non-standard accounting procedures and budget reports. The District is mandated by State requirement to have a 4% reserve in the budget. Currently the District does not have the required reserve but they are trying to correct the problem by reducing the upcoming budget. Restricted funds were improperly reported as part of the total available funds. Restricted funds are monies that can only be used for specified programs. District personnel did not realize this was the case even though it was referred to in the independent auditor's report. Overspending for several consecutive years added to budget shortfall.

The position of Business Manager has been eliminated and Mr. Manship and his staff are currently performing this function. They have no plans to fill this position. Staff reductions and program cuts are expected and the District is receiving additional support from the County Office of Education.

There are several areas of the budget that are currently quite high and could be reduced. Transportation is a big drain on the District's budget. The District covers a very large area from Yosemite National Park to Don Pedro and Chinese Camp. The bus routes are long and cumbersome. They are looking at several ways to save on transportation expenses. They have canceled many field trips and have implemented a fee schedule for those using bus transportation for after-school sports activities.

Another drain on the budget is the inordinate amount of classroom aides at Tenaya Elementary when compared to other schools in the County. There are very few schools who have aides in grades above the third grade, whereas Tenaya's aides go through the eighth grade. Reduction here could be a substantial saving; however, it would be difficult to implement because once having them, the school would probably not be willing to give them up.

The District is looking into starting Regional Occupation Programs (ROP) at both high schools. This is very commendable, but given the financial situation, sufficient funding needs to be assured before these programs are implemented. The high schools consists of portable classrooms; space requirements for these programs and classes could be a problem.

Conclusions:

Mr. Manship and the Board seem to be working together to meet the State mandated 4% reserve and trim the budget.

The fact that Mr. Manship is spending so much time on financial matters is a concern in regard to his other pressing duties as superintendent. A new State curriculum has been received and it is imperative that it be implemented as soon as possible, so the District's students do not fall behind the State standard. The Committee feels that Mr. Manship cannot do it all.

Transportation costs and the amount of miles traveled by busses in the District needs to be addressed. If the District changed boundary lines as recommended in the 1988 Tuolumne County District Organization and Boundary Study, bussing expenses would be reduced. Given that some students ride the bus for over 30 minutes to get up the hill to Groveland when another school may only be 10 minutes away, a school district line change should be seriously considered.

The number of aides hired to work at Tenaya Elementary School is considerably more than any other school in the County. Given the current financial situation it is probably excessive.

Recommendations:

Continue to work on the budget to reduce costs so as to obtain the required 4% reserve. Care must be taken to not cut base programs that students need to compete in the world.

Hire a competent business manager to handle the budgeting problems. This would free Mr. Manship up for his other duties.

Reduce the number of classroom aides at Tenaya, and substitute with a district-wide mentor program staffed with competent volunteers. This would save money and decrease any hardship to teaching staff created by reducing the number of aides.

Consider school boundary line changes as recommended in the 1988 Tuolumne County District Organization and Boundary Study. This would save on transportation costs and be a benefit to the students as well.

Look into grants and other means of support to start their ROP programs. Encourage community support to raise funds and equipment for these classes.

Encourage more community involvement in the schools through a volunteer mentoring program. This would benefit not only the students, but also the community. It could be a top priority of the District's Boosters and Parent Clubs.

Grand Jury Final Report Building Department

Reason for Investigation:

The 1996/97 Grand Jury Report recommended continued monitoring of the Building Department's practices and employee morale.

Methodology:

A Grand Jury Committee interviewed Greg Lamb, Director of Building. Committee members also talked with local builders and contractors.

Findings:

The Building Department is a well-organized unit. The staff of seven multi-certified building inspectors are qualified professionals. The aim of the Building Department is to work with the builders to achieve their desired goal. Their judgment is determined by the building codes defined by the Tuolumne County Ordinance Code.

While department morale is always open to debate, it appears the Building Department employees feel their efforts and accomplishments are being recognized. Management accepts the responsibility for the Department's morale. An increase in commercial building has added to the Department's workload. A request for an additional inspector has been made, and if granted, the pressure on the current staff will diminish.

Conclusion:

The Building Department appears to have a good working rapport with area builders, contractors and residents. The Department's efforts to maintain this relationship are to be commended. Management's commitment to staffing the department with qualified people is an indication of its desire to ensure quality construction within the County.

Recommendation:

Recommend the additional inspector requested be approved.

Grand Jury Final Report

Groveland Community Services District

Overview:

The District facilities include drinking water supply and sewage treatment for Groveland, Big Oak Flat, and Pine Mountain Lake. The District has an operating budget of approximately three million dollars. They have a staff of twenty-two employees, which include maintenance, water, sewer, office, and engineering. Many employees have been there ten plus years, a few twenty plus years. The facility is monitored by and reports to the Tuolumne County Department of Environmental Health and the State Water Control Board.

Reason For Investigation:

The Grand Jury is charged to review various departments periodically.

Methodology:

On September 16, 1997 the committee interviewed Ted Anderson, District Manager, and Tom Miller, District Engineer at the their office located at 18966 Ferretti Road, Groveland.

Findings:

The sewage treatment plant is located at the Ferretti Road location. The system includes over fifty miles of underground lines averaging twenty years old. There are sixteen lift stations (15 for Pine Mountain Lake, and 1 at Miner's Cafe) to accommodate the varied terrain. The sewage is treated with bacteria in open holding tanks. The treatment is closely monitored by the testing lab. The treated solid waste is placed in drying beds and then spread on the grounds and seeded. The treated liquid waste is irrigated onto the hillsides on the grounds. A zero waste factor is accomplished at this facility. In the event of heavy rainfall, overflows are caught by an early warning alarm system; high water is pumped into holding ponds to prevent spillage into local waterways.

The City of San Francisco Mountain Tunnel supplies the drinking water system. This water flows from Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, located within Yosemite National Park. The water is continuously monitored to assure absence of pollution and contamination. This water is pumped up from the Tunnel at two locations, the Big Creek Facility and the Second Garrotte Facility. These facilities are both newly rebuilt at a cost of \$4,500,000. The tunnel water fluctuates with the need to provide electricity for San Francisco. This necessitates the use of large holding tanks when there is no water in the tunnel. Each facility has a two million-gallon tank for storage and treatment. These facilities are automated and monitored by computerized sensors, the results are transmitted to the main office. Any equipment failures or water problems are flagged for immediate attention. The committee visited both the Big Creek and Second Garrotte Facilities. Hydrochloric gas is generated on-site for chlorinating, reducing costs and the hazard of handling

purchased chlorine gas. Safety labeling and written instructions were posted in compliance with safety regulations.

When asked for input about problems needing correction it was stated the radio signal from the Big Creek Facility is sometimes lost, inhibiting monitoring of equipment.

Commendations should be made to the staff for a clean and well-organized system, which their extra efforts demonstrate.

Conclusions:

The facilities visited were well maintained.

There is a need to improve radio communication at the Big Creek Facility.

Recommendations:

We recommend the installation of another radio antenna and repeater to remedy the weak signal at Big Creek.

Grand Jury Final Report

Health & Welfare, Social Services

Overview:

Tuolumne County Health Department Human Services Agency is composed of five departments. Social Services, Public Health, Environmental Health, Public Guardian, and Ambulance. Each department has a manager reporting to the Human Services Director, with the exception of Public Guardian. The Director is the Public Guardian for Tuolumne County.

Reasons for Investigation:

The Grand Jury acted in response to two complaints received from the public:

1. Child Welfare Services' method of reporting suspected child abuse cases.
2. Operation of the Area 12 Agency on Aging.

Methodology:

The Health and Welfare, Social Services Committee met with and interviewed Ann Connolly, Program Manager of Child Welfare Services, located at 20111 Cedar Road North. After the interview Committee members toured the facility and met some caseworkers. The Committee later met and interviewed Kent Skellenger, Director of Human Services Agency, located at 20075 Cedar Road North. After the interview, the Committee toured this facility and was given copies of the State Procedural Manual for Child Welfare Services. A salary study showing comparisons between Tuolumne County's Social Workers and those of other counties was made available.

Findings:

Mr. Skellenger, Director of Human Services Agency feels planned funding for all departments of Health and Welfare, Social Services is more than adequate for the years ahead. The facilities were found to be spacious and well staffed.

The Salary Study showed that Tuolumne County Social Workers I through IV are slightly below average when compared to other counties. Director Skellenger feels that a Masters Degree need not be required for Child Welfare Service Workers. (State guidelines suggest hiring people with a Masters Degree.)

Informational handouts on the Department's services and how to apply for them are available through doctor's offices, the Senior Center, and from all Social Service and Eligibility Workers.

The Human Services Agency and Child Welfare Services are now operating their own computer systems, but still require some outside assistance from County Information Systems and Services. Mr. Skellenger feels that the recent connection to the Statewide Automated Welfare System will help Tuolumne County reduce welfare fraud.

By State law, when a case of suspected child abuse is reported to a Child Welfare Services worker, the Agency must file a report with the State Department of Justice, even if there is no evidence to support the claim. The accused does not usually have knowledge that a report has been filed. Under current law, the only way this report may be removed from a person's record is for the child Welfare Services to remove it. No higher authority exists for an individual to clear his record with, unless he/she takes Child Welfare Services to court.

The Area 12 Agency on Aging is a State and Federally funded public organization. The Agency does not fall within the Grand Jury's area of investigation.

Conclusions:

There appears to be a lag in the length of time some Child Welfare cases are concluded. That may be due to a lack of cooperation by subjects under investigation.

The new Federal and State reforms of Welfare Law may not yield the desired results of meeting the needs of eligible people who apply for assistance.

Recommendations:

Recommend all the accused involved in a Child Abuse case be notified at the time a Child Welfare Services report is filed with the State Department of Justice.

Recommend the 1998-99 Grand Jury follow up on the timing of notification of all subjects involved in child abuse cases.

Grand Jury Final Report

Information Systems & Services

Reason for Investigation:

The IS&S Department (formally Data Processing) had not been reviewed in the past eight years and functioned without a department manager for about four years prior to selection of a manager in 1996. The IS&S department assumed responsibility for the computer system at Tuolumne General Hospital (TGH) in 1997. The TGH computer and proprietary software must be replaced by the end of December 1998 or it will fail on the year 2000 problem as of Jan. 1, 1999. The County computer system must also be replaced before the year 2000 as the current hardware is very old and the software will require expensive reprogramming.

Methodology:

Interviews were conducted with the former data processing supervisor of TGH, a former County Supervisor, a member of TGH board of trustees, Craig Pedro, Assistant County Administrator, Gregg Jacob, Manager of IS&S, and seven employees of IS&S. In addition, some information on IS&S activities was solicited from other county employees who utilize IS&S services. On Oct. 30, 1997 the jury committee met with the manager of IS&S to review the deficiencies found during the initial investigation. At this meeting five topics of concern were expressed to Gregg Jacob. On April 23, 1998 a follow-up review was made to evaluate the actions taken to correct the problem areas discussed in October 1997. A total of 53 man-hours have been expended on interviews gathering facts on the operation of IS&S.

Findings:

There are several problem areas within the IS&S department that reflect throughout other Tuolumne County departments. The problems primarily reflect the lack of management during the four years without a department head. No strategic plan existed to guide the operation of IS&S or to plan for future operations. During this period many personal computers were added to County departments. There was a lack of centralized control of how the computers were applied and what software was installed. No formal enforceable standards were established, nor are there any to date. A major problem with IS&S is the inability to establish and enforce standards controlling operating system software (DOS, Windows 3.1, Windows 95, etc.) and application software (Word, Word Perfect, Spreadsheets, etc.). This is compounded by use of many different version levels of the same software. In addition to the lack of standard software, IS&S employees reported many departments may be using unlicensed copies of software, which could result in legal action against the County. Also, departmental employees are loading unauthorized software, which could contain viruses. The results of this mixture is causing the IS&S employees to spend an inordinate amount of time pursuing problems with software that is not authorized or compatible. This, in turn, results in complaints about poor IS&S response to computer service calls. Because of these problems, we detected some frustration among the employees interviewed.

IS&S management states there are not enough personnel to handle the workload. This situation is becoming worse as more computers and software are installed. The IS&S department is moving ahead to install a Countywide network that will tie all departments together. This will cause more serious maintenance problems unless something is done to standardize the County software. Network management requires skilled personnel and disciplines that are not yet in place. There are other areas of concern, which can be addressed by the existing personnel if their time can be properly used. The important areas to be corrected are:

- lack of a disaster recovery plan, including the County A6 computer that processes Payroll, General Ledger, and Accounts Payable,
- lack of a strategic plan for the future,
- establishment of a committee comprised of Countywide department representatives working with IS&S to coordinate computer and software acquisitions and agreement on software standards,
- review and update of IS&S procedure manuals,
- employee training and cross training plans to meet the needs of IS&S.

All of the above problems have been discussed with the Manager of IS&S and the needs were acknowledged. The most important item agreed upon was to establish a strategic plan to correct the current problems and move ahead with new systems to bring the County computing needs up to date. In December 1997 a State contracted consulting firm, Carrera Consulting Group, was chosen to develop a strategic plan for IS&S to resolve current problems and update their computer hardware and software.

The Grand Jury Committee met with Greg Jacob on April 23, 1998 to review progress toward correcting the problems discussed at the October 1997 meeting. It is apparent that IS&S management is sincerely trying to do everything possible to correct the problems identified. IS&S is reviewing proposals for a central computer replacement and a countywide network. At the time of this writing, the strategic plan is about ready to be delivered by the consulting firm and many parts of the plan have already been reviewed.

Tuolumne General Hospital has received proposals and chose Meditec to provide the software and installation services. The hardware will be from Data General Corporation, which may also provide compatible hardware for the new County data processing system. County software will utilize the same networking and data base systems as TGH, which will solve many problems currently experienced with diverse hardware and software. Included in the strategic plan are recommendations to add personnel for both network and database administrator positions, standardization on software for networking and productivity, more training and increasing the IS&S staff. The project of updating the IS&S department to meet its goals is not easy and will take at least until the year 2000.

The Hospital computer plan was prepared by an outside hospital consultant and included a contingency plan if new hardware and software could not be installed (including personnel training) by Dec. 31, 1998. However, at our April meeting it appeared feasible to install the new system before next year. This will require a great deal of training and onsite help from the software vendor. The vendor selected appears to have the knowledge and resources to solve the Hospital computer problems and offer many new applications.

Conclusions:

The IS&S department has serious problems which can be solved by an aggressive program of updating the hardware and software and accomplishing the goals set forth in the strategic plan. This would include installing departmental Local Area Networks (LAN) with standard software and extensive training of IS&S personnel on the new systems. There is also the necessity to bring County departments together to help establish needs, standards and compatibility. County Administrative Office support is needed to enforce the standards set by IS&S and the compliance of all departments.

The strategic plan appears to address the problem areas observed by this Grand Jury Committee.

Recommendations:

There will be a need for additional qualified IS&S personnel to properly implement the strategic plan during the next few years. The Grand Jury recommends capable personnel be hired as the success of IS&S affects all County departments.

Concerns:

Just prior to the deadline of this Grand Jury report, the final copy of the 38 page report "Tuolumne County ISS Strategic Technology Plan" was received. This report reflects the findings in the above report and offers a strategic plan to be implemented by IS&S to resolve current problems and future needs. A copy of the Executive Summary and the Introduction are included on the following pages. This will give an evaluation of the challenges faced by IS&S in the near future as presented by the Carrera Consulting Group.

The 1998-99 Grand Jury should review the progress of the IS&S department implementation of their strategic plan.

Tuolumne County ISS Strategic Technology Plan

Final Report

**Prepared by Kris Warren
Carrera Consulting Group**

**Tuolumne County
ISS Strategic Technology Plan
(Unisys A6 Replacement)**

**Presented June 2, 1998
to the
Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors**

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tuolumne must replace two major software application systems, the County Hospital Information System and the County Financial System. The need is urgent. Both of these systems lack vendor support. The Hospital Information system cannot be made Year 2000 compliant, and the Financial Systems running on the County's Unisys A6 computer would require major hardware and software modifications in order to make the Year 2000 transition. In January, 1998, consideration of proposals in response to an RFP for the new Hospital System was well underway. But there was insufficient time to take the same course for replacement of the Financial system before its projected failure by the Year 2000. For this reason, Carrera Consulting Group was retained to assist the county in the establishment of a strategic direction for technology, which could then be used to assist in the selection of a replacement system. This report addresses the strategy and results of the replacement selection process as well as the strategic implications of the expanded use of modem technology in Tuolumne County.

Examination of the functionality of the current system is a means of establishing a baseline of needs. This process is called a Needs Assessment and forms the foundation for selection of a new system. Both management teams and experienced users play an important role in this process. Once the needs are established the appropriate level of technology can be identified in the market. Tuolumne County's needs and size place it in the mid-market range of computer products. This is a very good place to be as there is a very broad selection of products available in this range. The best characteristics of this range can be used to form Strategic Building Blocks for a Strategic Technology Plan. This plan is simply a guide for the consistent selection of products which will work together. Finally, the issue of risk must be addressed. Tuolumne County does not have time to be "breaking new ground". Candidate software systems must have a proven California track record and there must exist an available resource pool of qualified assistance to aid the County in a rapid deployment. Only by addressing these risk factors will Tuolumne County have a chance of completing these projects on time.

The Selection Team put together by Tuolumne County performed their selection process in a very disciplined and effective manner. Applying the County Needs, the Strategic Building Blocks, and the risk avoidance principles, PeopleSoft software was chosen. The Selection Team chose this software because it was judged to have the lowest risk and best fit of all of the candidates. The PeopleSoft suite of software will meet most but not all of the County's needs. While some additional selections may still need to be made, they do not pose the same degree of risk as the main systems, and need not distract the implementation process.

Implementation of these two large application systems (Financial and Hospital) will result in a fundamental change in the County's use of technology. The ISS department will become vitally important to the effective operation of the County's business. Two entirely new positions, a Network Administrator and a Data Base Administrator, are mandatory requirements for the effective operation of both of these major application systems. Technology properly applied is very cost effective. People are still more expensive than machines. Tuolumne County has a good track record for the effective application of technology to help control costs. But as the county becomes more and more dependent on technology, it becomes imperative that the technology be properly maintained. Customer Support becomes a necessary and strategic resource. In a professional Customer Support organization, service levels are formally established, performance is objectively measured, and goals are set for continuous improvement. The payback comes from the return on investment in the software systems which can then do the job for which they were intended - the elevation of each and every County employee's potential and productivity.

Some elements of the current ISS Department are still needed as well. Functional Analysts are still needed to support individual departments. But even here, the opportunity exists to better utilize those resources by consolidating functions according to skill set and cross training along departmental lines. A Financial Analyst should be able to support both the County and the Hospital, for instance. Similarly, a HR Analyst should also be able to aid in the Personnel and Payroll issues for both the County and the Hospital. Skill set should be the determining factor in how to best support a department's needs. By building a consistent and integrated data processing environment county-wide, the opportunity for shared support resources and cross training will only grow.

The selected software packages will establish what can be called "enabling technology." That is, they will form a foundation upon which subsequent technology acquisition can build. They will establish the future direction the County should take in all subsequent acquisitions. The selected packages share a common network architecture and their implementation will establish a County Wide Area Network or WAN. All subsequent network construction should be brought into this standard. The selected packages share a common Data Base product. All subsequent data base applications should conform to this standard whenever possible. These packages also exemplify the best in modern software structure which is termed an "open architecture". This architecture is based on the principles of inter-connectivity and information sharing. This too should become the County's standard for future acquisitions. To further maximize the potential of this new environment, the county should establish a Desktop Standard including common software for everyday use. Departments should not be just similar in their desktop environment, but as close to uniform as possible. This will maximize the ability for support technicians to quickly solve a user's problem regardless of the department. Finally, the County network is going to grow. It cannot be avoided. A Network Strategy/Implementation Plan is needed to guide that growth and ensure that growth is cost effective and not wasted in misdirection and inconsistency.

All of the County departments were invited to participate in one of five Focus Group meetings. Every department participated. In each of these meetings, the A6 Replacement Project was described from the point of view of the "enabling technology" its implementation would introduce. Each group was then asked to consider how technology effected their ability to get their work done. How did they think the use of technology might improve their work and the services they provide to the public? while each group had many good ideas unique to their individual departments, one central message was repeated over and over. Universal Access to systems and information was a key strategic opportunity for the County. It was clear to all concerned that the result would be inter-departmental synergy, a process wherein everybody becomes much more productive, much more than "the sum of the parts". And the path was clear: build on the established base. This is the very essence of enabling technology, but it requires a paradigm shift, a change in thinking about how network access and communications services are acquired and paid for. No one questions whether to provide telephone service to a new county facility and costs are uniformly shared. Universal Access implies the same rationale for network connections. Building on the established base, the County would only have to add county-wide e-mail to realize an immediate improvement in inter-departmental coordination and information sharing. Access to information is best managed by security and privacy concerns - not by the absence of physical connection capability. Individual departmental acquisitions of technology then broaden other departments' capabilities in ways unanticipated.

Also clear in these meetings was the growing use of the Internet. Some county departments have created Web sites in a completely ad hoc manner. This carries the very real potential for the public to be presented with an inconsistent and even contradictory image of county government. This is best avoided through the development of a County Internet Strategic Plan. In addition, there should be a new position added to the ISS department: a Web Administrator to oversee departmental efforts, ensure consistency and enforce compliance with the plan. This position is necessary to protect the County's interests as a whole, even if the County chooses to contract out the actual maintenance of the Official County Web Sites

In summary, the County is really facing three large concurrent implementation projects, Financial Systems replacement, Hospital Information System replacement, and the construction of a County-wide Network. Each of these projects must be done immediately, and each cannot be allowed to fail. The necessary time frames are both fixed and short. The County should explore the use of automated tools wherever possible to aid in the transition from the old systems to the new. The County should acquire as much assistance in each of the three areas as it can afford, because even so, the drain on County resources is going to be severe. There are definitely going to be tough times ahead, but better times will follow. The County can look forward to smoother growth in the future, for having invested in a quality infrastructure today. Planning is the key.

II. INTRODUCTION

As the Year 2000 approaches, Tuolumne County faces one of its biggest challenges to date. Most of its major automated systems are in need of repair or replacement. The most strategic of these, the systems controlling financial processing for the County Hospital and the systems controlling financial processing for most other county functions are both in need of replacement. Both are running on hardware which has become outdated and difficult to maintain, both lack vendor support for the software, and both will not make the year 2000 transition without introducing serious errors into the process and subjecting the county to serious liability. In the case of the Hospital Information System, all support will be lost by January 1, 1999. As a result, the County embarked on a two-track process to quickly address these needs. One track focused on replacing the Hospital Information System. As this was the most urgent, this track was begun first. The second track focused on the remainder of the county systems with special emphasis on the replacement of the financial systems.

Historically, the growth of technology in Tuolumne County has proceeded in an ad hoc manner. That is, each department (or sometimes a group of departments) considered and justified the introduction of an automated process on a stand-alone basis. As a result, the county now has more than 550 Personal Computers (PCs) networked into more than a dozen separate Local Area Networks (LANs). Some departments are electronically isolated from one another. Very little automated information is shared across departments which results in data being redundantly entered into different systems, sometimes (as in the case of arrest warrant information) as much as three times. The results are a loss of productivity, and, as information volumes and complexities grow, declining service levels to the public. Effective use of technology can make the difference between a public service, such as the processing of an application, taking hours or minutes to complete rather than days or weeks.

Thus, replacement of these major strategic systems offers the County an opportunity to significantly improve the ability of county departments to serve the public through better use of technology. In order to achieve this improved performance, the County must have a strategic plan to guide the future acquisition and implementation of technology. With this in mind, Carrera Consulting Group was contracted to assist the County in the development of a plan to address the second track and to guide the county in achieving overall service level improvements. This project includes a plan for the replacement of the Financial Systems running on the Unisys A6 computer, and the development of a high level vision or road map to guide future acquisition of

technology with the goal of making all county processing more effective. This report will address both of these goals.

The organization of this report reflects the process followed during the project. The first step is the examination of the existing environment. By focusing on what the current system does well and what is lacking, a Needs Assessment (Chapter 3) was determined. By comparing these needs to current technology trends, a Strategic Direction (Chapter 4) was established. This strategic direction established implications on the choice of the A6 Replacement Systems (Chapter 5) and implications on the structure and approach for the County ISS Support Organization (Chapter 6). In addition to reviewing the specific applications which currently reside on the Unisys A6, attention was also paid to the County needs as a whole. To gain insight into this, five (5) Focus Group Meetings were staged. These meetings provided a forum for all county departments to inform this project of their needs and the impact of technology on their ability to provide critical services to the community. The results of these meetings were used to form the basis for establishing Future Directions (Chapter 7) for the County. Finally, risk factors were evaluated to identify those Obstacles to Success (Chapter 8) which challenge the County's plans.

To guide the overall project, the Financial Information Systems Steering Committee (FISSC) was formed. This committee provided the management direction and strategic definition to the assessment and review efforts. The FISSC was made up of the following people:

- > Craig Pedro - Assistant CAO
- > Gregg Jacob - ISS Manager
- > Tim Johnson - Clerk/Auditor/Controller
- > Del Hodges Treasurer-Tax Collector
- > Debi Russell - Assistant Auditor-Controller
- > David Wynne - Assessor & Recorder
- > Joseph Mitchell - Hospital Administrator

The FISSC met regularly to discuss issues and assess progress.

In addition a committee of "super users" was formed to provide feedback on the operational aspects of the current systems. This committee provided information on the ease of use and operational difficulties within the current systems. In addition, they reviewed potential replacement systems and provided the benefit of their hands-on experience with using such systems to get their work done.

This committee included:

- > Sylvia DiVita - Sheriff
- > Cindy Niebla - Auditor
- > Janet Pina Public Works
- > Mary Leach - Social Services
- > Diana Murphy - Environmental Health
- > Mark Eiserer - Social Services
- > Judy Peoples - Building
- ~ Jeanette Ghiorso - Assessor/Recorder
- > Kae Kellogg - Municipal Court
- > Mary Ann Bettridge - Sheriff/Jail

Each of the departments directly served by the AC systems provided representatives knowledgeable in the purpose and needs of their department. In many cases this was the FISSC members themselves. Such high-level management involvement greatly improves the reliability of the assessment. In addition, each of the other departments sent representatives to one of five focus group sessions. These participants were instrumental in forging a strong county consensus on opportunities for technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of each of their operations.

Grand Jury Final Report

Library Services

Overview:

The headquarters of the Tuolumne County Library is located on Greenley Road in Sonora. The County Library System consists of the Main Library in Sonora, and branch libraries in Groveland, Jamestown, Tuolumne City, MiWuk, Twain Harte, and Pinecrest. The Director of Library Services is Shirley Oller.

Reason for Investigation:

The reason for investigation of the Library was to review its recent automation and library card system:

Methodology:

A meeting and interview was held at the Main Library with Ms. Oller. Following the interview, the Committee toured the library facility.

Findings:

The State has recently budgeted more money per capita for libraries and the County has also increased the budget. The materials budget for this year is approximately \$34,000. This is considerably more than in years past.

The Main Library is open six days a week, and late two nights a week. Staffing at the Main Library is currently four full-time, three half time, three 19 hour employees, and one 19 hour Page position. The Main Library is also staffed with various volunteers on a regular basis.

The branch libraries' hours of operation vary, although most are open nine to twelve hours a week. Two library branches are in rented space; the others are in County buildings or donated space. Branch Library Assistants staff these facilities; substitutes are available for vacations and sick days. The staff is usually members of the local community.

Patrons seem happy with the addition of library cards. Circulation and library use has risen considerably in the last year.

Automation of the Main Library and all branches is planned to be completed by June 30, 1998. This includes an inventory of all the books in the library system. Library staff is planning to hold informal training sessions with patrons on use of the new computerized card catalog terminals. Some of the senior patrons are still hesitant to use this new system, so the old manual card catalog will still be available, but not updated.

The Main Library currently has two Internet hookups. Yosemite Bank provides the Internet funding for Groveland. Ms. Oller hopes to have Internet access at all branches as soon as funding is available.

Library volunteers "Friends of the Library", are very active in library operations. They help with book mending, storytelling, assisting at the desk, filing paperbacks, checking in branch transfers, and assisting staff on various special projects. They also raise funds for the library system through their book sales.

Parking has become a problem with the addition of the skate park and increased use of the Senior Center.

The Library's restroom facilities and telephone are being used by patrons of the nearby park and skate park.

Conclusions:

The library system is well run by employees who enjoy their work, and are helpful and considerate to the library patrons.

The automation of the library is going well. Some database updating will have to be done before the system is complete, to include all materials in the Main Library and its branches.

Internet access at all of the branches would be very beneficial. Possible community donations may make it available sooner than waiting for State funding.

Recommendations:

Recommend Internet access at the branches be accomplished as soon as possible.

Recommend the County consider providing additional parking and permanent restroom facilities for the park and skate park.

Observations:

The Grand Jury commends the Library System, Ms. Oller, and staff for the efficient and friendly operation they are able to achieve on the funds available.

The Grand Jury also commends the volunteers participating in the Friends of the Library program. It is with your help that the library system is a success.

Grand Jury Final Report

Planning Department

Reason for Investigation:

To follow-up the 1996/97 Grand Jury's recommendation that the Planning Department should seek ways to become more "user friendly" and correct the non-cooperative and negative attitude perception of the building/development community.

Methodology:

The Grand Jury interviewed Bev Shane, Planning Department Director. Tuolumne County builders and developers were also interviewed. Planning Department files were reviewed.

Findings:

The Planning Department is a complex unit, staffed by personnel qualified to perform their responsibilities, advise and answer questions/inquiries. The Planning Director is authorized to act on Use Permits, Variances, Site Review Permits, Site Development Permits, and Design Review Permits. Each project is assigned a Project Coordinator to oversee the project in conjunction with other involved County departments; it is not the final authority.

There are many variables and conditions to consider before the issuance of a permit. Delays most often occur when the builder/developer asks for costs and information before submitting their plans; the finalized plans often do not match the original inquiry. Delays can be frustrating and the Department's responses can be perceived as non-cooperative, unfriendly and negative.

The Planning Department has available to anyone that asks, printed fee schedules, application review process charts and time processing schedule, County resolutions and ordinances to assist the builder/developer applicant in understanding the permit process.

Conclusions:

The Planning Department is responding positively to all complaints.

Several of the "Permit Required" type projects have been changed to "No Permit Required" status.

There is always someone in charge who can act on an inquiry or request, in the absence of the Director.

The Department's written mission statement is "... to provide service of the highest quality at all times, to assist land owners in achieving their goals and desires for the use of their property, and to protect the County's cultural assets and environment for the enjoyment of current and future residents".

Recommendation:

The Planning Department, realizing the need to project a more "user friendly" image to the building and development community, should continue to develop methods that would simplify the permit application process.

Grand Jury Final Report

Schools Consolidation Issue

Overview:

Currently there are twelve school districts within Tuolumne County. Nine elementary school districts, two high school districts, and one unified district. Most of these are one-school districts with the accompanying administrators and board of trustees necessary to run the district. There are a total of 98 school administrators and trustees to serve 8209 elementary and high school students; a ratio of 1 to 83. The approximate cost to the county for administrators and trustees is \$2,731,617 or \$332.75 per child for administration salaries. There are additional costs not represented above such as expenses for seminars or other trips out of the county and expense of free health insurance for approximately one-half of the trustees.

With a total budget of \$59,607,391 for County schools, administration salaries and benefits take a full 5% of the total money available. And this 5% does not include other administration expenses such as office personnel, capital equipment, and administration buildings.

Reason for Investigation:

Ten years ago (1988) a study was commissioned to investigate the County's school district boundaries and propose all possible organization improvements. The cost of the study was \$30,000 and it took 10 months to complete. The resulting report was largely ignored, and almost none of the recommendations have been acted upon. Only token consolidations such as Pinecrest School into the Twain Harte School District have been done. Practically every year since 1988, the Grand Jury of that year spent time and energy looking into the situation. Several of the past Grand Juries have made recommendations regarding this issue, which have also been largely ignored. This Grand Jury decided that it was time to do a thorough investigation, report the facts found, and make an informed and knowledgeable recommendation that will hopefully bring this issue to a conclusion.

Methodology:

The Schools, Education & Libraries Committee visited the County Office of Education and met with Dr. Millhollin, Superintendent of Schools. The Committee asked for and obtained a copy of the "Tuolumne County School District Organization and Boundary Study" by Santa Clara County Office of Education, dated June 1988. This photocopy was the only copy of the 1988 report that could be located. The existence of the numerous copies of the original deliverables is unknown and presumed lost.

The Committee met with Paul Alderete, Superintendent of Sonora Elementary School District. He is a member of a committee derived from three local schools who are

considering unification. Collected from this visit were materials consisting of meeting minutes, notes, option plans, and lists of advantages and disadvantages for each.

Findings:

Historical Information from the 1988 study:

A thorough review of the entire report was done by the 1997-98 Grand Jury. Even though the report was 10 years old, the prediction of growth and the savings from consolidation options appear to be as valid today as they were in 1988. The 1988 report stated "the County could save millions". Only a couple minor recommendations have been implemented to date.

The following information was taken from the 1988 report and is presented here with comments from the Grand Jury.

In the study, an opinion survey was conducted with 62 school administrators and trustees. Another was conducted with 400 registered voters that were randomly selected from each of the elementary school districts. When asked if they favored unification, the answers were as follows:

	Yes	Unsure	No
Administrators:	23.7%	10.2%	66.1%
Voters:	62.1%	14.7%	23.2%

As you can see, the administrator and voter totals were almost the exact opposite from each other. The main reasons given by the administrators were 1) loss of local control, 2) diversity of the County, and 3) "other". Other was identified as "respondent's dissatisfaction with any unification alternatives." The main reasons given by the voters were 1) to decrease transportation time for students, 2) to maximize the efficiency of dollar spent, and 3) to improve school services.

Further, the voter opinion survey showed that Tuolumne County voters are not completely against a bond or tax election. Fifty seven percent said they would support a school tax increase in the county; 24% said they would not. Given a range of tax increase amounts to select from, over half of the tax supporters (57%) favored a tax of five to ten dollars per month, per household.

The 1988 report gave three main alternatives. The first alternative is for only several minor school districts boundary changes. Boundaries were adjusted to shorten transportation time and to equalize sizes of school enrollments. The second alternative is for the boundary changes plus unionization (grades K-8). The third alternative is for the boundary changes plus unification (grades K-12). There were several variations presented on each of these three choices.

Unification into three districts was the author's recommendation as follows:

Note: Enrollments have been added.
1988 Enrollment shown in []
Current enrollment shown in ()

1. WEST COUNTY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Unify Sonora High School District [1460] (1670) with feeder elementary schools:

Chinese Camp Elementary [23] (27)

Columbia Elementary District

Columbia Elementary [515] (374)

Shaw's Flat Elementary (106)

Curtis Creek Elementary District

Curtis Creek Elementary [943] (688)

Sullivan Creek Elementary (205)

Jamestown Elementary [429] (507)

Sonora Elementary [720] (884)

Total Unified Enrollment [4089] (4461)

2. EAST COUNTY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Unify Summerville High School District [692] (781) with the feeder elementary schools:

Bellevue Elementary [213] (281)

Soulsbyville Elementary [541] (729)

Summerville Elementary [512] (507)

Twain Harte/Long Barn Elementary District

Black Oak (281)

Twain Harte/Long Barn [673] (413)

Pinecrest [69] (55)

South Fork (6)

Total Unified Enrollment [2791] (3053)

3. SOUTH COUNTY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Unify Big Oak Flat/Groveland School district with schools:

Tenaya Elementary (441)

Tioga High School (127)

Don Pedro High School (109)

Total Unified Enrollment [381] (677)

South County was in fact completed before the 1988 final report was released.

See map on page 40

Also mentioned in the report but not explored in depth, was a recommendation when one of the above districts need to expand, they add a junior high school rather than another elementary school. All of the elementary schools in the district would thus feed into a junior high, which would diminish enrollment numbers at the elementary level. The new junior high could then offer selected new programs such as shop and home economics,

which is neither appropriate nor affordable at the elementary school level.

Advantages and disadvantages of this proposal are thoroughly reviewed in the 121-page report. Sections 4.0 through section 7.0, and appendices 3, 6, and 9, of the 1988 study are recapped below.

Advantages

1. Financial

- A. The largest savings are in reduced need for more schools. Instead of each one-school district adding another school site, fewer total school sites are needed when the districts are combined. A unified district with four school sites can add another school more easily than a district with only one school.
- B. Fewer trustees would be needed, and possibly fewer administrators, to support the school system. Having fewer Trustees increases the student to trustee ratio, in most cases doubling it.
- C. Economies of scale make more money available for the purchase of additional goods and services. Whether choosing a school site, hiring a new teacher, or buying textbooks, a unified district can select from a greater variety of choices and can make better decisions.
- D. Programs and services which require capital outlay, such as transportation and library services, can be operated more cheaply and efficiently.
- E. Each school would not have to support its own bus fleet, mechanics, and drivers. There are many ways of saving money on transportation, including scheduling of routes, bus maintenance, and the purchase of tires.
- F. The State Department of Education guarantees that a newly unified district will receive enough new money to adjust employee salaries to the level of the highest paying district of all the component districts.

2. Better Services

- A. Less travel time for students because of more efficient route scheduling.
- B. The number of children at each grade level increases and there are fewer Split-grade classes. For instance, an elementary school with four first grades rather than one or two, will have four first grade teachers who can combine their collective ideas to resolve problems.
- C. Resources and personnel can be moved around to best suit the needs of the children. And when able to control the assignment of personnel completely, the district has more choices of how to use the full-time employee.
- D. A unified district would be better able to provide special services and classes to children such as music, physical education, speech teachers, nurses, and library services. Small districts often cannot afford these programs or do not have enough students to support a full-time staff member.
- E. The wise reduction of overlapping functions and the exercising of choices available should thus result in more money to expand services to children in the new district.

- F. When the high school and elementary districts unify, authority is placed in the hands of one administration and one board. The very nature of the Superintendent's job in a small district makes instructional leadership difficult. He or she must deal with such details as Board meetings, buses, and buildings. The Principal also spends a great deal of time on specific problems such as student behavior or dogs on campus.
 - G. Equalization of sizes for both elementary schools and high schools. With students staying to graduate in their current high school, but new students placed in the correct district, Sonora High would stay about the same and Summerville High would grow.
4. Articulation-The smooth progression from kindergarten through high school.
- A. Subject matter between each grade and each classroom will be coordinated so teachers in upper grades can base their curriculum on what the children have already been taught.
 - B. Teaching methods and philosophies would also be articulated. An example in contrast are two current districts with different emphasis and a substantially different approach to instruction. One pushes hard to attain higher test scores while the other emphasizes self-esteem, arguing that high self-esteem brings high-test scores. Students from these two schools may have trouble adjusting to each other and to their new high school; particularly when the high school has yet another teaching philosophy.
 - C. A comprehensive curriculum delivered with consistently high quality instruction is more likely to occur in a unified district than in small individual schools.
5. Inter-district transfers will decrease substantially. The current drain of students from Sonora to Summerville (30% of Summerville's enrollment) has jeopardized the cooperative relationship between the two high schools. The resulting loss of revenue prevents Sonora High from addressing some of the problems that causes the students to request Inter-district transfers to Summerville in the first place. This as well as other negative side affects occur when you have high inter-district transfers like what is occurring in Tuolumne County.

Disadvantages

- 1. Political
 - A. School politics will change. There will not be the tight local control that is currently found at the one-school district level. There are sometimes concerns that the balance of power on the new Board will favor one of the original schools over the others. Provisions should be included to ensure that each of the component districts have representation on the new Board of Trustees.
 - B. Disputes about resource allocations between the elementary and high school levels. High school students receive a highly specialized program with many teachers. It is more expensive than the integrated core program with one teacher, which is offered at the elementary level. Physics laboratories, fourth-

year foreign language, shop classes, and extensive student activities are some examples of the costly services high schools offer. The County's high schools have a more difficult time than the elementary schools because the high school districts are not as well funded. Elementary district leaders fear, with some basis, that there would be a slow, steady shift of funds from the elementary level to the high school level.

- C. Salary disputes. Because of more extensive training, high school teachers usually command a higher salary than most elementary school teachers do. In Tuolumne County, the cost per high school student is about 20% higher than the cost per elementary student.
- D. Disputes about allocations of resources between employees and programs. As an organization becomes larger, employee organizations tend to be more successful in getting better compensation packages for their members.
- E. An issue occurs when a district with a high income per student merges with a relatively poor district. It stands to reason that the wealthy district will be worse off financially after unification and the poor district will be better off.

2. Financial

- A. The total number of administrators (not trustees) will probably grow back close to the current level. Layers of administrators are generally created in response to the need for more staff assistance and greater administrative specialization such as personnel or curriculum.
- B. Reorganization law mandates that administrators in reorganized districts are given job security for two years following the official date of the reorganization. What usually happens but is not required, is that the administrators that are not needed, step aside so that the new district can hire others who are more specialized in the needs of the new district.

3. Employees

- A. Unfortunately, a number of administrators and trustees will lose their jobs. Some administrators would be replaced with others more specialized in certain fields. And fewer members of the community would be able to be on the new (and reduced) boards of trustees.
- B. Reduced employee moral due to too many layers of administration. The physical and psychological distance makes it difficult for the Board to address the small human problems of the teachers.

1998 Consolidation status

During the summer of 1997, a letter was sent out to all school districts. It was an invitation to meet and discuss the pros and cons of unification and what should be done. Only three schools responded as interested. They are Sonora High School, Sonora Elementary, and Jamestown Elementary. They have subsequently held four meetings and have made some progress. They have explored the pros, cons and options.

One option that they are looking at is to build a new Sonora High School on the Tuolumne Road property that the High School owns. This would provide the needed space to expand the campus and eliminate the parking and traffic nightmare that currently exists at the current high school located on Shaw's Flat Road. The old high school location would be turned into a Junior High School. This new junior high school would already be outfitted for special classes such as shop, art, chemistry, and foods. The feeder elementary schools would be Sonora Elementary and Jamestown Elementary. Other school districts could send their students to this junior high. State ADA money would be shifted to the new junior high for all attending students.

As of this writing, a decision has not been made by this group whether they will or will not unify.

Conclusions:

The Grand Jury's conclusion agrees with the 1988 report as quoted. "The residents of Tuolumne County are not receiving the best value for their tax dollar when it comes to the County school system. The present district boundaries do not provide the greatest service to children in light of current residency patterns and growth trends."

This Grand Jury feels our children are not getting the greatest benefit when they are limited to the services of a one-school district.

Financial Implications

How much money could have been saved had unification been implemented 10 years ago as recommended? It is hard to tell, but the report said, "millions can be saved"! Most of the savings would be in not building more schools than are really needed. Most districts are facing growth problems and need to expand their current sites or build additional schools. In fact, three districts plan on going to the voters this year to ask for funding for new campuses.

Reduction of the number of trustees and associated costs would further the savings. There would be approximately 15-20 school trustees for the entire county rather than the current 57 now serving. More could be saved in transportation expenses and purchasing of goods and services.

The current excess of administrators could be better utilized by hiring administrators who are trained to specialize in specific fields such as personnel or curriculum.

There is a push in California to reduce the ratio of dollars spent on school administration. Should proposition 223 (95-5 initiative) pass in the June election, our county will be in deep trouble. The initiative would heavily penalize any district whose total administrative costs are more than five percent of its total budget. It is impossible for small districts in Tuolumne County to obtain this ratio. Just one example of this is, based on the 1996-97 budget; Sonora Elementary would be fined \$156,000. All of Tuolumne County's school districts except Summerville High School would be thusly fined. The

fine revenue would go to larger, qualifying districts; many of them in Southern California. It would be impossible for Tuolumne County to pay these fines and still deliver an acceptable educational system.

Services Implications

Many students must travel further than necessary to get to school, and some even travel past schools to get to their own designated school. With our mountain roads sometimes covered with snow and ice, this should be carefully considered. Students can learn much better when they do not spend unnecessary hours on the school bus.

Because the individual school districts set their own curriculum and style of teaching, it is difficult at best to have a smooth transition when the students all come together in a high school which has its own style and agenda for curriculum. Our students deserve to receive the best-articulated curriculum and learning process through our school system that we can give them.

Unification into three districts would decrease transportation time for students, maximize the efficiency of dollars spent, and improve the services while maintaining small schools and local control to the extent possible. It should win the support of informed voters.

If Tuolumne County unifies the school districts, a lot of money should be saved, the children will be better served, and they will be better equipped to compete when they go out into the world or off to college.

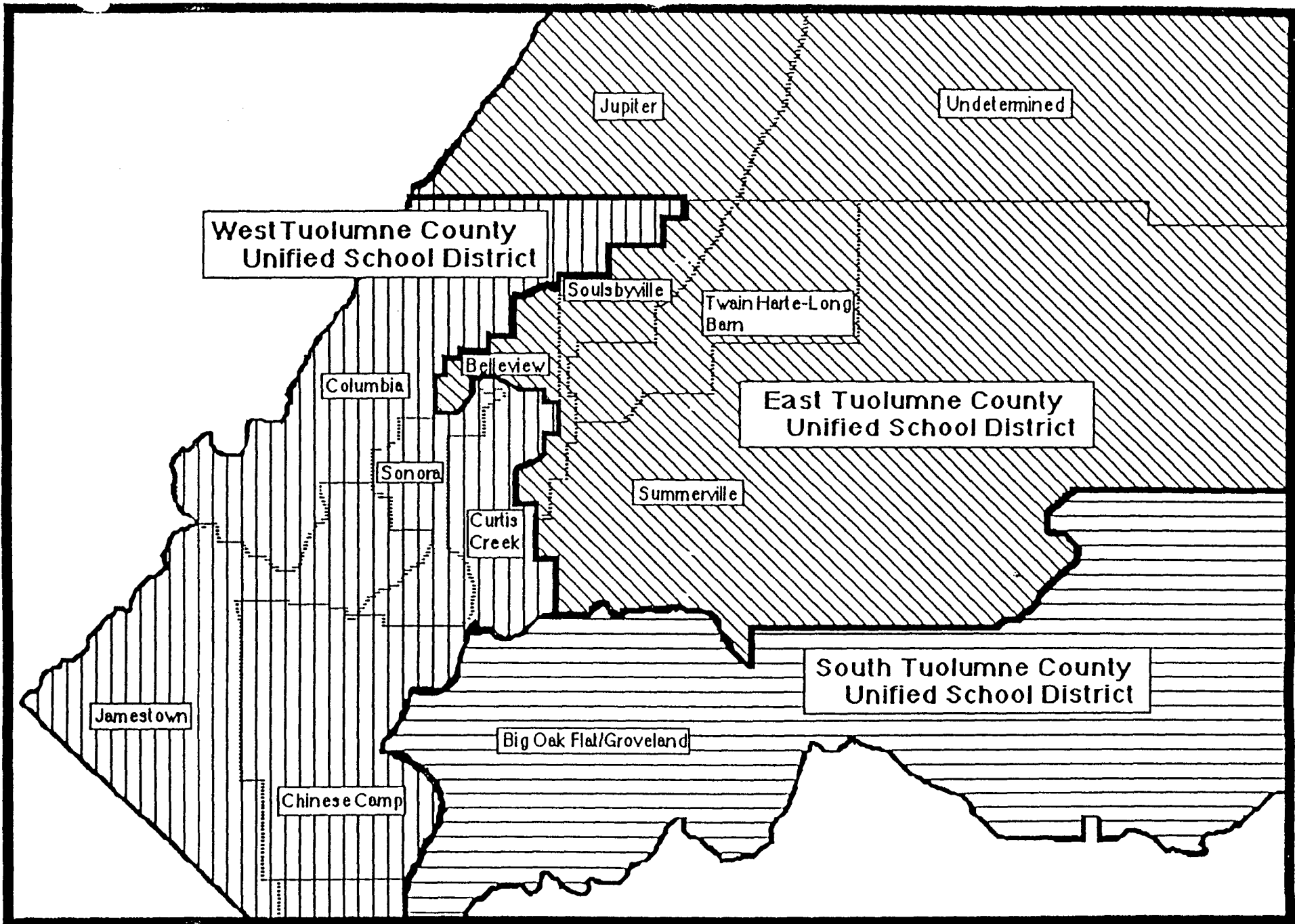
Recommendations:

Recommend the school districts be unified into three districts as indicated in this report.

Recommend when a district needs to expand, a junior high school be considered first instead of adding another elementary school.

Recommend the 1998/99 Grand Jury follow the progress of this issue to determine if a final decision and/or action is taken on unification.

The Grand Jury commends the administrators of Sonora High School, Sonora Elementary School, and Jamestown Elementary School for their interest and involvement in the unification issue. However, the Grand Jury feels that all County districts should be involved.



Tuolumne County School Districts after proposed unifications.

Grand Jury Final Report Sierra Conservation Center

Reason for Investigation:

The 1997/1998 Grand Jury is required to inspect all Prisons within the county.

Methodology:

The Grand Jury was invited to Sierra Conservation Center, Jamestown for their annual inspection of the program and premises. Nine jury members were present at the first visit to the center, conducted by the Chief Deputy Warden, Mrs. K. Prosser and Public Relations Officer, J. Underwood and several heads of departments. On April 17, 1998 a second visit was made to the Baseline Camp Facility. The tour was conducted by Public Relations Officer, J. Underwood, and Warden Kramer made a presentation.

Findings:

Sierra Conservation Center consists of three separate units. The Tuolumne Yard, a level three unit, consists of five separate buildings housing two hundred inmates each. There is an emergency unit housing two hundred forty inmates as an overflow unit. Building number two is the segregation unit, housing inmates that have violated departmental rules or regulations. This unit operates several educational classes such as computer repair, building trades, graphic arts, and trophy manufacturing. Prison Industries Authority has a program where by inmates are paid for making jumpsuits for various state agencies, such as Cal-Trans. The facility has complete medical, educational, religious, and dining facilities for an average population of 1240 level three inmates, which includes 125 life sentence inmates. This unit has, at present, seven gun towers. During 1998 all but two towers will be replaced with an electrified fence around the Tuolumne Unit.

The level two unit has thirty-eight dorms with thirty-six inmates per dorm plus the emergency housing G dorm, with a capacity of three hundred inmates. This unit houses 125 inmates with medical and medication needs requiring them to be housed in this large open dorm, it was converted from the once joint access gymnasium, located between the level one and two units.

The level one unit has thirty-eight dorms with thirty-six inmates per dorm, with a capacity of approximately 1300 inmates. The level one and two housing units are serviced by a central kitchen and four separate dinning halls. The education department, medical facility, and law library are accessible to both units.

Sierra Conservation Center's primary mission is to train and support the Fire Camp Program for California's southern camps. The level one unit has three full time physical fitness coaches in charge of approximately 120 inmates. Their primary mission is to test and make these inmates physically fit for working in the California State Fire Fighter Program. At the completion of the physical fitness program the inmates that pass are

turned over to the California Department of Forestry (CDF) for technical training in fire fighting methods and fire safety. To qualify, they must be minimum security risks, with no history of any violent crime (kidnapping, sex offenses, arson, or escape).

SCC supports twenty fire camps with an average population of 2300 inmates. During the calendar year 1997, inmates assigned to camps jointly operated with CDF logged 3,110,156 hours of work in conservation and other community service projects, including 932,738 hours in fire fighting, and 233,072 hours in flood control. By utilizing inmate labor it is estimated that the camp program has saved California taxpayers \$33,433,912.

Our second visit to SCC was primarily devoted to the Baseline Conservation Camp located in Tuolumne County. The Committee assembled at SCC for a tour of the classrooms, and training facility. The committee was given a ride to the camp located on Peoria Flat Road approximately 12 miles west of Sonora and four miles from SCC. Baseline Camp CC No.30 consists of several housing units and support buildings with well maintained grounds. Lt. R. Anderson, Camp Commander conducted the tour of the Baseline Camp, CDF Fire Chief gave an impressive demonstration of the fire crews intensive training program. The committee was served a good meal similar to what the Fire Crews are served daily.

Due to the above average rains in 1998 and lack of capacity in the evaporation ponds, SCC was forced to haul a large amount of gray water to Chowchilla.

Conclusions:

Security appears adequate throughout the facility and the inmates appeared in good health. The grounds of the levels one, two, and three yards were clean but over-trafficked because of the heavy population. The weight piles on each yard have been removed and in their place are passive dip bars, and pull-up bars as mandated by State legislation. The new grooming standards are in effect for inmates and with few exceptions, the population was properly dressed. Staffing appeared very sparse with one officer for each 200 inmates. Staff appeared well informed and professional.

Security appears adequate throughout all the facilities. The inmate fire fighters were appropriately dressed and appear to have adequate equipment for the tasks at hand. Supervisors and staff were well informed, and correctional staff highly qualified. The base line conservation camp buildings and grounds were well maintained.

Recommendations:

Recommend no staffing cuts by the Department of Corrections at this facility, as this would seriously jeopardize security for staff and inmates.

Future money spent for hauling wastewater from SCC could be spent more effectively to correct the problem.

Observations:

The Warden, Administrative staff, Correctional supervisors, Correctional staff, and Maintenance staff should be commended for their professionalism and outstanding security of this prison facility.

Grand Jury Final Report Tuolumne County Sheriff's Department and Jail

Reason for Investigation:

California County Grand Juries are charged by state statute to visit all Jail facilities within the county once each year to observe and report on operations and conditions.

Methodology:

Four members of the Grand Jury visited the County Jail on October 31, 1997. The Law Enforcement Committee spent approximately three and one half hours with Sheriff, Dick Nutting and Assistant Sheriff, Mike Costa, discussing the Sheriff's Department's operations and problems.

The Grand Jury was given a tour of the Tuolumne County Correctional Facility including the Jail, Search & Rescue Department (Boats and Mountain Units) and Offices, including Record Keeping and Communications.

Findings:

The Sheriff's Department appeared to be well maintained and managed even though there is limited space for offices and the department is scattered throughout the County. This is due to lack of an adequate building to hold the entire operation.

There are a total of 115 personnel in the Sheriff's Department of which 52 are sworn officers. The remainder are civilian personnel.

There are 62 vehicles the oldest model is from the late 1970s. The patrol cars are 1990s models. They have eight 4WD vehicles. Vehicle maintenance is contracted out.

The Department has high school teachers four hours per week to help inmates obtain their GED. There is a legal library in the facility.

The officer's locker room is well lighted and functional.

Last year's Grand Jury reported that the Evidence Room had problems due to water leaks, both sewer and fresh water. This condition has not been corrected and remains a problem, as of this report.

Experienced, well-trained and educated officers are leaving our County to go to counties with higher pay scales.

Conclusions:

The Sheriff's Department is trying to run an efficient department even though they do not have a sufficient budget or personnel to cover their needs. Some areas of the County are without adequate coverage.

Recommendations:

The Grand Jury recommends adequate funding for a centralized Law & Justice Center, which will house the entire Sheriff's Department operation.

The Grand Jury recommends applying for Federal, State and local grants for additional Sheriff's Deputies to give more coverage to outlying areas of our County.

The Grand Jury recommends salary scales commensurate with other counties of our size.

Grand Jury Final Report

Treasurer/Tax Collector

Overview:

The Treasurer/Tax Collector has two sections. The Treasurer and Tax Collection Accounting section consists of a supervisor and four staff members. The Office of Revenue and Recovery (ORR) section was started in April of 1988 has a staff of six and a manager. Charles Wagner is the first employee of this section and he manages the ORR. The collections in 1988 amounted to \$35,000 and returned a profit of \$10,000 to the County. During the 1997-98 fiscal year ORR will collect approximately \$1.67 million.

The ORR has three functions:

1. Collection point for the Community Development Block Grant loans and fines that are current.
2. Collection of delinquent accounts for all County departments.
3. Financial evaluations for the courts in regard to probation fees, public defender costs, juvenile hall costs, and to set up installment payment plans for fines and restitution.

Reason for Investigation:

Tuolumne General Hospital has been having difficulty collecting bad debts. Also, as of January 1, 1998, new legislation in the form of AB233 covering the collection of state and local fines such as DUI's became effective. The County Administration Committee determined that the Tax Collection Department has been reviewed by past Grand Juries; however, no investigation has ever been done on the Office of Revenue and Recovery. Since its start in 1988, it has grown to become an important source for revenue for the County.

Methodology:

The Grand Jury Administration Committee conducted an interview on February 5th 1998 with Del Hodges, Tax Collector/Treasurer, and Charles Wagner, Manager of ORR. Charles Wagner provided additional written statistical information for further review by the Committee.

Findings:

There is almost \$14 million in bad debts in over 24,000 accounts that are owed to the County. It is divided primarily into three main categories: Tuolumne General Hospital, the Municipal Court System, and other County departments. ORR also collects unpaid parking fines for the City of Sonora.

Approximately 100 cases are taken to court monthly to obtain judgments. This can involve attachments of wages, liens, etc. Revenue Recovery has a very satisfactory recovery rate of 10-12% on bad debts. This would be considered good for a commercial collection agency. The County does not use commercial collection agencies if the debtor still lives in California. If a debtor leaves the state, the County will then contact a collection agency near the residence of the debtor. If the account is collected, the collection agency charges from 30-50% for services. There are no charges for uncollected debts.

Tuolumne General Hospital's (TGH) bad debts consist of 5,600 plus accounts, with over \$2.7 million outstanding. During the summer of 1997 a collection clerk was added to ORR staff to work full time on the hospital judgment accounts to improve TGH bad debt collections. Because of this, this fiscal year's collection for TGH will be between \$230,000 and \$270,000. During the two fiscal years prior to 1998, less than \$180,000 was collected on these accounts. When TGH cannot collect payments within six months, the accounts are referred to ORR. There is a 22% collection charge imposed on TGH for debts collected by ORR to offset expenses. This new aggressive collection program should bring additional revenue to the hospital that otherwise would be lost. Hospital accounts are very difficult to collect due to the high rate of uninsured and low-income patients. Most accounts are now set for small monthly payments due to patients' inability to pay their bills in full.

The Municipal Court has over 7,200 accounts totaling \$3.4 million handled by ORR. Additionally, there are over 6,800 accounts with an outstanding amount of \$5.6 million handled for the Probation Department. Collections for fines, judgments, restitution, work releases and probation fees will amount to \$936,000 for this fiscal year. Many problems are encountered with these collections as many of these individuals owing debts are still in jail, unemployed, or do not have the ability to pay. Many will never pay as they have no assets nor employment.

There are over 2,200 additional accounts from other departments with a total outstanding debt of \$1.9 million that will bring in collections of \$284,000 for the current year.

Under the new AB233 the ORR will be able to charge collection costs involved with the court system which could not have been billed previously. Another provision of AB233 is the new reporting system that will require allocation of funds between State and local agencies. Currently, accounting is done with a dBase program on departmental PC's. With the growth of the department, this system will no longer meet departmental needs nor handle the new reporting requirements. A Request for Proposals will be issued for new software programs specifically designed for ORR functions and meet the new allocation requirements while providing better department management controls. It is estimated the new software will cost around \$140,000 and an annual maintenance fee of \$12,000. The cost of the new system will be recouped with the capability to handle the new provisions of AB233.

Currently Revenue Recovery has an on-line interface to a credit bureau to obtain information on debtors. Future plans include adding interfaces to the State DMV and Employment Development Department computers to help track debtors.

Conclusions:

The Revenue Recovery Unit of the Treasurer/Tax Collector's Office is performing a vital function in recovering revenue otherwise lost. The cost is far less to the County than using an outside collection agency. ORR is in need of new software to help manage the department by facilitating tracking of accounts, better reporting, and to comply with the new funds allocation rules. They already have the computer hardware to implement the new software.

Recommendation:

The new software requested is needed and the Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors approve its purchase. Benefits derived will provide more comprehensive information and better management tools to help increase collection revenue.

Grand Jury Final Report

Tuolumne General Hospital

Reason For Investigation:

To investigate the Hospital's administrative function, including the filling of open positions in the Accounting Department and employee morale.

Methodology:

Interviews were conducted with Tuolumne General Hospital (TGH) Management personnel, including Hospital Administrator Joseph Mitchell, and eleven other key staff members. Tours were made of the Hospital and Visiting Nurses Association/Hospice (VNA) facilities.

Findings:

Tuolumne General Hospital has 420 employees, including Tuolumne, Calaveras County VNA, 2 Groveland facilities and the Mother Lode medical office on Cedar Road. There are 90 physicians on staff. The patient floor has 24 beds, plus 4 in ICU. The Psychiatric unit has 16 beds, divided according to the acuteness of symptoms; this unit is for adults only, minors are referred elsewhere. The average patient stay is 5 days, primarily for diagnosis; there is no therapy per se.

TGH has an Adult Day Care Center where patients age 18 and over may come 1 to 3 days per week. Most patients, not all, have been diagnosed as Alzheimer patients.

The primary weakness in the hospital's operation appears to be the Accounting Department. The Accounting Department has been without a qualified Chief Financial Officer, Controller or Analysts for an extended period of time. Without accurate, timely accounting information, it is almost impossible for the departments to know their status, project future action plans and areas of needed correction or adjustment. A good Accounting Department is the backbone of any organization and TGH management deserves a hospital qualified, strong accounting staff.

The morale, good or bad, of the hospital employees seems to coincide with the news coverage, negative publicity causes negative morale. Hospital problems usually make the front page while accomplishments get lost on the inside pages. In spite of rumors of a possible take over of the hospital by a for-profit organization, labor and/or money problems, the hospital workers continue to perform their duties in a professional manner, knowing they are good at their jobs and they work for a fine hospital.

The new computer system is on track and should be in place and functioning by the end of 1998. The current system is very frustrating to everyone and does not meet the needs of the hospital. The lack of an integrated computer system has caused a big gap in the hospital's efficiency.

Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) is capable of standing alone. VNA has its own source of income by fund-raising, donations, private insurance, Medicare, and Medical. The VNA benefit of the TGH affiliation is all the human skills and facilities a hospital can provide. The VNA enjoys a good rapport with the TGH departments with which it works. VNA has its own computer system, installed in 1996. The system is not necessarily compatible and there is no link with TGH or other County offices. Other affiliated departments can access the VNA computers only through VNA due to the stored confidential data. There is back up for all computers functions. Laptops for the VNA registered nurses are in the planning stage.

Conclusions:

The TGH Department Supervisors and Directors and other staff personnel are experienced, knowledgeable, and apparently dedicated to the hospital and to their professions. The Grand Jury Committee was impressed by the caliber of the staff and the praiseworthy services offered, e.g. Adult Day Care.

Besides the computer system and Accounting Department issues there does not appear to be other major problems with TGH that are not just part of daily life in an aging county hospital. There are occasional snags and glitches, but overall, the business at TGH does go on, and for the most part admirably.

The efforts to improve TGH's financial health are being made - collections are getting a better return, insurance pay rates are being renegotiated more favorably, and the new team of Medical Doctors is in place and doing well. But none of this will stabilize the situation like getting a strong hospital experienced CFO or Controller and a reformed Accounting Department.

Recommendations:

Get the new computer system up and running by December 31, 1998.

Fill the CFO and Controller/Analysts positions with hospital-experienced, qualified candidates without further delay.

Grand Jury Final Report Tuolumne Utilities District

Overview:

The Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD) is a combined water and sewer district made up of 14 separate water companies and numerous sewer collection systems. TUD also receives sewage from Twain Harte Community Service District. TUD treats all collected sewage and stores it in Quartz Reservoir awaiting distribution. The treated water is distributed to local ranchers for agricultural use. The agriculture produced cannot be for human consumption or pasture irrigation of dairy cattle.

Reason For Investigation:

A complaint was received from a citizen whose home and property were flooded by sewer backup from a TUD sewer line. As a result the Special Districts Committee decided to investigate TUD and the specific complaint in question. The goal was to review TUD's operation and maintenance practices and collect facts pertaining to the sewage overflow and home inundation problem.

Methodology:

Meetings and interviews were held with the following TUD people: Tim McCullough, General Manager, staff members, TUD's attorney and his secretary. Interviews were also conducted with the citizen who submitted the complaint. Evidence collected includes correspondence between TUD and the California Regional Water Quality Control Board and TUD's 1996 financial report.

Findings:

TUD employs 60 people. Their job assignments are mainly divided between water and sewer, while the maintenance people work on both systems. They have an emergency response team comprised of members from both systems.

State required testing is done for both drinking water and treated wastewater. Some of the tests are sent to outside laboratories, but most are done by TUD. TUD would like to implement a complete in-house testing program for more accurate control.

The average monthly cost of water for residents is \$25. Average monthly cost of sewer is \$12. Treated wastewater is provided free of charge to farmers to encourage recycling of resources. However, due to wet conditions the last three years, a problem has arisen wherein ranchers have been unable to use enough of this treated water. This lack of use, combined with excess sewage trucked in from the Prison has resulted in Quartz Reservoir overflowing treated wastewater into Woods Creek during every year since 1996. As of this writing, it is overflowing and projected to do so until summer.

The expenditure of \$1,678,747.00 for the Clavey River Project was explained as a possible investment. TUD hoped to receive royalty payments from water sent elsewhere. The use of this water has never been intended for Tuolumne County.

TUD stated that they have a preventative maintenance and inspection program, which include line flushing, camera testing and smoke testing. TUD also reported this to the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (CA RWQCB), (letter of May 30, 1997). However, when asked for a copy of the preventive maintenance and inspection schedule, TUD could not produce a copy for the Grand Jury.

As for the complaint, the findings are as follows. The flooding took place during the January floods of 1997 when most of down town Sonora was flooded. The storm water compounded the problem in the affected sewer line from infiltration and inflow. (April 1, 1997 letter from CA RWQCB). In past years and until March 1995, when there were excessive rains, a sewer manhole at this location periodically overflowed which relieved pressure from the sewer lines. However, during March of 1995 the manhole lid was bolted down. This prevented release of pressure and resulted in the overflows into local area homes (April 17, 1997 response letter from CA RWQCB). TUD said the manhole was locked down for security reasons (April 1, 1997 evidence letter)

The complainant reports that TUD did not inspect this particular sewer collection line with a camera until April 6, 1997. In that inspection "massive root intrusion" was found in the line.

Prior to the flood, the homeowner received a postal notice from TUD advising him that; "Damage resulting from sewage backing up into a home or business can be easily prevented through installation of a backflow prevention valve in the sewer service pipeline serving your property". The homeowner chose not to install the device at that time, but has since installed one on his property. These notices are sent annually to some TUD customers.

When the sewage overflow occurred, TUD responded quickly. They unbolted the manhole cover and flushed the line in an attempt to clear any possible obstructions. They vacuumed the inside of the house and returned the next day to steam clean the carpets.

Conclusions:

Since there is now legal action pending for the flooding of sewage into the home, the Grand Jury has chosen to not make a judgment regarding the responsibilities of the parties involved. We only present the facts found and leave it to the discretion of the court.

Based on the 1996 financial report, TUD manages their finances well and has shown a profit.

While TUD claimed to have a preventative maintenance plan, it could not be produced. By their own admission, the entire system is not on a regular inspection schedule and they usually only inspect areas where they have had problems in the past or when a problem arises.

Some of the sewer lines date back to the 1800's and there is no replacement program in evidence.

Quartz Reservoir and the treated water distribution systems are inadequate for the job it is trying to do under weather overload conditions.

Recommendations:

Recommend a routine maintenance and inspection schedule be developed to include all areas of the sewer system. The schedule should include forms to be filled in as documentation that inspections are done on a certain object or pipe, at a certain place, on a certain date, condition found, and resulting work done to correct any problems found. This will ensure better system performance.

Recommend a better distribution plan of treated water to ranchers be developed for wet years.

Recommend planning the development of a contingency plan for the storage of treated wastewater to prevent spillage in wet years. We feel that it is very important to avoid polluting our environment from these spills and incurring large fines when doing so.

Grand Jury Final Report

Twain Harte Community Services District

Overview:

Twain Harte Community Services District (THCSD) was formed August 1, 1996. The District oversees the operation of Water, Sewer, Fire, and Parks for the Twain Harte area. The Water Department portion of the District has existed since 1946 and Parks since 1941. THCSD has over 1,500 water and sewer connections.

Reason For Investigation:

Since THCSD is rather new as a District, the Special Districts Committee elected to review their progress. The purpose was to determine the efficiency of operation and services.

Methodology:

A meeting was held with THCSD October 8, 1997 between Committee members and Bob Sandberg, THCSD Manager, and THCSD staff. Interviews were held and a copy of the 1997-98 budget was obtained.

Findings:

The combined budget for the fiscal year is \$1,032,287. They have a total of 10 staff members for all divisions of the District. The District is currently compiling a policy and procedure manual and organizational chart. A new computer system and software programs have been installed at a cost of \$30,000. In addition to running the District's business accounts, the software includes mapping and sewer programs. The District has been able to reduce insurance costs by combining all the divisions into one unit.

The Board of Directors consists of five members who were appointed by the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors. The appointees were all selected from the previous separate components of Water and Sewer, Parks, and the Fire Department. Their terms will expire in 1999. Then the voters within the district will elect new board members.

Because the District is so diverse, each segment will be addressed separately.

Water Department:

The Water Department is budgeted for \$380,683 of the above total. Income is derived solely from user fees. Three staff members perform the maintenance on both the water and sewer systems.

The new Black Oak School had a combined charge for water and sewer hook ups. The

charge was based on a per-family unit equivalent at \$1,900 per family. The total fee collected by THCS D from the Twain Harte School District was \$90,000.

Sewer Department:

The Sewer Department's budget is \$265,308. Income is derived solely from user fee charges. Maintenance is shared with the Water Department.

The District Director stated that there might be problems in the future as more low-flow toilets are installed because this type of toilet does not provide sufficient water to flush the sewer lines properly. At present, THCS D is able to minimize this problem by diverting water from the required routine flushing of fire hydrants, into and through the sewer system.

Twain Harte has 6" sewer lines except at the golf course, which has 8" lines. Due to the incline, there are no problems handling the capacity. The raw sewage is then piped to TUD facilities for treatment.

Fire Department:

The Fire Department has a budget of \$365,765. Tuolumne County collects the funding through a fire tax assessment on property within the Service District. These funds provide for a staff of four and equipment. The purchase of used equipment from the State and other Fire Districts reduces equipment costs.

Parks Department:

The budget for the Parks Department is \$20,531, of which approximately \$19,000 is funded by the County. They offer the only public tennis courts in the county. The tennis courts are in poor condition and there are plans to refurbish them. The cost to refurbish them is \$74,000. The County will provide \$30,000 of this cost. The district has applied through the Sonora Area Foundation to help with some of the cost. More funding will be needed before it can be finished.

The County is discussing whether or not to have THCS D take over the care and maintenance of the swimming pool. The District does not currently have funds for this.

THCS D has a working agreement with the golf course. THCS D receives free mowing services for the ball field in exchange for allowing the golf course to use a small portion of District property.

Conclusion:

It is the Grand Jury's opinion that the Twain Harte Community Services District is properly staffed, maintained, and operated in an efficient manner.

Recommendations:

Recommend if the County wishes THCS D take over the care and maintenance of the swimming pool, that the County provide the necessary funding.

Recommend THCS D and the County work together to provide the needed funding for refurbishing the tennis courts.

Recommend a future Grand Jury follow up on the above suggestions and to also ascertain if a policy and procedure manual and organizational chart have been completed.