



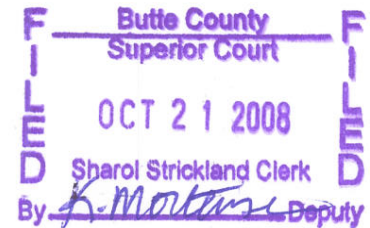
# GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

## INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

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October 16, 2008

Hon. Steven J. Howell, Presiding Judge  
c/o Court Administration  
Superior Court of California, County of Butte  
1 Court Street  
Oroville, CA 95965



Dear Judge Howell:

This memorandum contains my responses to the findings and recommendations contained in the Final Report of the 2007-08 Grand Jury.

### Findings

F1. *"The DGS is in the process of reorganization. Goals have been set to consolidate space for staff, equipment, and functions into one location. There are indications that they will soon be moving to a building adjacent to the county campus. This should improve efficiency and effectiveness."*

**The respondent agrees with this finding.**

F2. *"The Director has shown vision and the ability to lead a department in a difficult transition process. He has established methods for input from the internal staff, as well as other departments, and ways to evaluate the effect of the re-organization. His objective is to remain flexible in order to respond to changing circumstances or to adapt to unanticipated needs."*

**The respondent agrees with this finding.**

F3. *"The management style of the Director is reflected down the line in the positive attitudes and morale of all job classifications of staff interviewed."*

**The respondent agrees with this finding.**

F4. *"The CDBG has provided money to improve the VMH by 2009 to meet ADA requirements."*

**The respondent agrees with this finding.**

F5. *"The staff responsible for the VMH has remarkably improved the relationship and enthusiasm of the Veteran's Committees [Veteran Memorial Hall Committees] in each community."*

**The respondent agrees with this finding.**

F6. *"The VSO is providing assistance to veterans in an office that would greatly benefit from renovation to improve wheelchair access and to create privacy for interviews. FAR Form No. 08-046 has been prepared for consideration during the budget process."*

**The respondent agrees with this finding.**

F7. *"The present Veteran Service Representatives do not currently have the level of accreditation needed to directly access the VA's data base and various veteran agencies. Existing methods are time intensive which reduce the efficiency of service to veterans."*

The respondent agrees with this finding, and adds the following for clarification: Both the Veteran Service Officer (VSO) and the Veteran Service Representative (VSR) are accredited by the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO). In addition, both have passed the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA) accreditation test and have applied for full VA accreditation under the CDVA. With this accreditation, they will have direct access to the VA data base for veterans who filed with CDVA as their Power of Attorney (POA). Although the formal notification of their accreditation takes some time to be processed, even now, if the client has CDVA as their POA, the VSO & VSR can access full information from the VA data base by calling the toll free number. This is because their accreditation is recognized by the VA. In addition, both the VSO and VSR are applying for DAV accreditation along with our CDVA accreditation through a cooperative Memorandum of Understanding with NACVSO.

F8. *"When a Veteran Service Representative position was left vacant in 2003, it reduced the office coverage that allowed staff to attend the required out of office accreditation courses. In addition, the time needed to complete the required training and passing of examinations is long. For example, just one of the required sessions is for one week once a year in July, and other processes take up to six months. If there were loss of staff at the present level, it could further jeopardize the future efficiency of providing services."*

The respondent agrees with this finding, and adds the following for clarification. The vacant position has been requested each year in the budget, and is considered in the context of all staffing requirements in the budget. In the meantime, extra help is used to ensure that the training and accreditation of the two professionals in the office does not suffer.

F9. *"There were some indicators that in the past, newly promoted managers would have liked to have more training in management and people skills. Presently, HR provides a variety of management classes which are well advertised. They are presented by HR staff five to six times each month."*

The respondent agrees with this finding.

F10. *"The Grand Jury's overall impression of the department's operation and staff is extremely positive."*

The respondent agrees with this finding.

### Recommendations

R1. *"The Butte County Board of Supervisors and Chief Administration Officer should continue to support the consolidation of staff into one location."*

This recommendation is in the process of implementation as 2081 Second Street, Oroville, has been acquired and is being readied for occupancy.

R2. *"We encourage the Director, Chief Administration Officer, and the Board of Supervisors to consider as a priority the Facilities Alteration Request (No. 08-046) from the Veterans Service Officer so the office can provide better wheelchair access and privacy for veteran interviews."*

This recommendation, as written, requires additional analysis. Due to very tight budget constraints the FAR noted in the recommendation was not approved for funding in the FY 2008-09 budget, however staff continues to examine options for resolving the access and privacy issues for the VSO and will present options to Administration as they appear feasible.

R3. *“The Director should insure [sic] that the issue of the Veteran Service Officer’s long term staffing, training, and accreditation status be evaluated and resolved.”*

**This recommendation is implemented on a continuing basis. Each year as budget requests are developed, the needs of this division of the department are evaluated, with the results included in the budget request. Training for current employees is reviewed and schedules arranged so that training can occur as needed. The current VSO continues to be very proactive in pursuing and obtaining accreditations that enhance the office’s usefulness to clients.**

R4. *“The Department of General Services’ management should encourage newly promoted middle managers to take advantage of the appropriate Human Resources management training.”*

**This recommendation is implemented on a continual basis as part of the Department’s ongoing efforts to improve employee productivity. With the filling of critical positions in the past year a proactive effort is under way to identify the training needs of employees, particularly supervisors and middle managers, and encourage their participation in appropriate training, such as that provided by HR.**

Sincerely,



Richards L. Hall, Director  
General Services Department

cc: Andy Pickett